

**CAPITAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY, ISLAMABAD**



**The Impact of Abusive Supervision on  
Workplace Gossip: Mediating Role of Trust in  
Supervisor and Moderating Role of LMX Quality**

by

**Mahin Abid**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the  
degree of Master of Science

in the

**Faculty of Management & Social Sciences  
Department of Management Sciences**

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*Dedicated to my Parents, whose prayers and support enabled me to have success  
in all spheres of life*



## **CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL**

The Impact of Abusive Supervision on Workplace Gossip: Mediating Role of  
Trust in Supervisor and Moderating Role of LMX Quality

by

Mahin Abid

(MMS181021)

### **THESIS EXAMINING COMMITTEE**

S. No.	Examiner	Name	Organization
(a)	External Examiner	Dr. Khurram Shehzad	RIU, Islamabad
(b)	Internal Examiner	Dr. S.M.M Raza Naqvi	CUST, Islamabad
(c)	Supervisor	Dr. Sajid Bashir	CUST, Islamabad

---

Dr. Sajid Bashir

Thesis Supervisor

June, 2020

---

Dr. Mueen Aizaz Zafar

Head

Dept. of Management Sciences

June, 2020

---

Dr. Arshad Hassan

Dean

Faculty of Management & Social Sciences

June, 2020

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(**Mahin Abid**)

Registration No: MMS181021

## *Abstract*

The aim of this research was to investigate the impact of abusive supervision on workplace gossip, on employees which are working in service sector specifically banking sector of Pakistan. Further, this study takes trust in supervisor as mediator and LMX quality as moderator. This study examines the linkages based on affective events theory that work events influences the employee behavior. Low trust in supervisor is emotional response towards supervisors abusive behavior and results in negative outcomes such as indulging in workplace gossip. The findings of study clarified that there is significant positive relationship between mistreatment received from supervisors and employee gossiping behavior. Data was collected from 325 banking employees and quantitative research approach was used. The data was collected from different branches of banks in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The selection of variables with help of previous research work in this area along with the literature review of various articles on workplace gossip, is followed by the survey phase of the research work. Research design consists of questionnaire survey, and the responses were from Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Analysis was done by using SPSS, 21st version. Result of the study showed that trust in supervisor is significant mediator between abusive supervision and workplace gossip while LMX quality was found insignificant as moderator. There are limitations and future research should focus on time-lag studies with large sample size.

**Keywords:** Abusive Supervision, Workplace Gossip, Trust in Supervisor, LMX quality, Affective events theory.



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# Abbreviations

<b>AET</b>	Affective Events Theory
<b>AMOS</b>	Analysis of Moment
<b>CFA</b>	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
<b>CFI</b>	Comparative fit Index
<b>IFI</b>	Incremental Fit Index
<b>LMX</b>	Leader Member Exchange
<b>RMSEA</b>	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>TLI</b>	Tucker-Lewis Index

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Employee don't leave organization, but they leave their supervisors. The dark side of supervision has recently earned much awareness. The widely discussed supervisor treatment in literature of management, is abusive supervision. This topic has gained much importance, as abusive supervision is one of major factors that influences the behaviors of employees (Mackey, Frieder, Brees, & Martinko, 2017; Zhang & Liao, 2015; Tepper, 2007). Prior studies have made much contribution towards literature, discussing the damaging effect on employees. It prevents the employee to involve in organizational citizenship behavior and encourage them to provoke counterproductive work behaviors (Mackey et al., 2017; Xu et al. 2012). About 13% of the employees became target of hostile behavior directed from their supervisors. The increase in victims of abusive supervision caused the US into a great loss towards healthcare, low productivity and withdrawal behavior (Tepper et al., 2009). Thus, this topic remains under great consideration in management research field.

Tepper (2000) has clearly described abusive supervision as the “subordinate’s perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (p. 178), it

can include expressing anger towards subordinates, making fun of subordinates publicly, yelling, giving silence treatment or depicting anger towards employees. Studies have discussed the major consequences of abusive supervision, i.e. it can negatively affect the subordinate's behavior and attitudes. Abusive supervision leads to great psychological stress, thus effecting the mental health of the employees. Employees who become victim may resist to show organizational citizenship behavior and will tend to show deviant behaviors like sabotage or theft (Bowling & Michel, 2011).

Employee always prefer a healthy workplace, to create such an environment it is vital to provide physical safety to employees, along with the physical assurance there is much greater need for psychosocially supporting environment (Loughlin & Mercer, 2014). The workplace environment is greatly influenced by the leadership behavior. Saksvik et al. (2018) also stated that the creation of healthy work environment and the success of organization are truly dependent upon the leadership. The style of leadership in dealing with subordinates and other members, influences the behaviors of other at work. It is up to leaders to make or break the organization, that how well they exercise their leadership. It has been studied that exposure to aggressive treatment causes resource depletion of the target, thus yielding to reduced performance and organizational commitment behaviors and increased retaliatory behaviors (Naseer et al., 2018). Furthermore, prior research indicated that the targeted employees tend to react against their supervisor like being rude, withholding some important information or gossiping behind the back. This is in matching with previous studies that when employees perceive that they are being mistreated at the workplace (e.g. yelled at, humiliated), they depict negative behavior (Robinson & Greenberg, 1998; Bennett & Robinson, 2003). Employees engage in gossip behavior that is directed towards their supervisor, in order to harm their supervisor (Tepper et al., 2009; Thau & Mitchell, 2010).

Gossip can be defined as the producing, hearing other persons comments or participating in evaluative comments about a person, who are absent (Foster, 2004). The workplace gossip can be regarded as the idle talk about coworkers, who are



not present. There are different views about workplace gossip, that how actually it starts and what major role it plays in organizational settings. Gossiping is changing process and its outcomes depends upon the interaction of gossiper, listener and the target (Michelson et al., 2010). Accordance with affective events theory perspective, the subordinates will tend to show negative behavior when they become target of supervisor's abusive behavior. Subordinates will tend to involve in deviant behavior directed towards their supervisor such as gossiping behind his back, in order to harm his reputation (Thau & Mitchell 2010). The hierarchical nature of the relationship of supervisor and subordinates decides the type of behavior subordinates will against abusive supervision. Involving in such a deviant behavior that extremely damaging towards the organization will tend to cost the subordinate a great cost as well. Thus, in result employee chose such a behavior that does not involve higher cost, but still provides opportunity to depict negative attitudes such as gossiping at the workplace (Archer & Coyne 2005).

Studying workplace gossip draws the attention towards HR managers to effectively manage it in organizations. Thus, workplace gossip has recently attracted a great consideration in management field. Wu, Birtch and Chiang (2018) discussed that future research on workplace gossip should consider from the perspective of supervisor and subordinate relationship, and consider the outcomes related to the informal communication or workplace mistreatment (e.g., abusive supervision and workplace ostracism). Prior studies have widely discussed about the possible consequences of the gossip in workplace, highlighting the importance of gossip role in organizational settings. In order to effectively manage gossip at the workplace it is essential to realize what provokes workplace gossip. Thus, providing us the basis for theoretical implications for understanding gossip an organizational behavior (Brady et al., 2017). Our study contributes by linking that gossip flourishes on the perceptions of the subordinates, that how they are treated in organization. Secondly, on the basis of affective events theory, our study explains that the involvement of employees in workplace gossip is actually a behavioral response, towards the perceptions of positive or negative experiences they get from their supervisor.

To effectively deal with present competition, supervisors are required to maintain a great relationship with their subordinates. Leader behavior is one aspect, but there is another important aspect, that is leader and follower relationship, in determining the subordinate's reaction. Leader member exchange (LMX) explains the dyadic relationship of the supervisor and his subordinate (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). Since supervisor and subordinate's relationship is also important in determining the work-related outcomes (Uhl-Bien, 2011), our study linked the LMX and abusive supervision, in order to determine the employee behavioral response towards their experience with their supervisor. Finally, the study focuses on trust in supervisor as mediator, that the abusive supervision targeted employees will lose trust in their supervisor and tend to show negative behavior. In addition, our study will contribute towards the literature by empirical evidence for the linkages, by analyzing the employees working at banking sector in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

## 1.2 Gap of the Study

Individuals at the workplace spends almost 65% of their speaking time in gossips, and it is almost unescapable for them to not involve in gossip (Wu, Birtch, et al., 2018). the context of a situation particularly decides the nature of gossip, its antecedents and its outcomes. Examining the gossip at workplace provides an important contribution towards the literature. Studying workplace gossip draws the attention towards HR managers to effectively manage it in organizations. Thus, workplace gossip has recently attracted a great consideration in management field. Gossiping behavior breaks the social moral rules and influences the other employee's behavior and attitude. It can cause a great level of stress, influences the morale of the employees, encourages workplace cynicism, damages the employee proactive behavior and discourages organizational citizenship behavior (Wu, Kwan, et al., 2018).

Wu, Birtch and Chiang (2018) discussed that future research on workplace gossip should consider from the perspective of supervisor and subordinate relationship,

and consider the outcomes related to the informal communication or workplace mistreatment (e.g., abusive supervision and workplace ostracism). In another research Kong (2018) highlighted that future studies can consider about the different theoretical perspective to analyze the mediating effect on gossip. Furthermore, Affective events theory draws our attention to explain that employee attitude and behavior is greatly influenced by the leader's style and their way of dealing subordinates. However, Kong (2018) explained that gaps still exists in studies and further investigation should consider those moderators which gives boost to workplace gossip. So, this current study considers interpersonal mistreatment such as abusive supervision, as a boundary condition. When being targeted by mistreatment like abusive supervision, being dealt with disrespect and no appreciation from senior managers for their work, employee will have strong negative emotions and will respond towards such behavior in strong manner.

Limited studies have explained the relationship between manager's abusive behavior and workplace gossip, and workplace gossip as an outcome variable. Furthermore, as Kong (2018) has explained that future studies should consider other mediators and moderators in relationship. This study takes LMX quality as moderator and trust in supervisor as a mediator to develop a relationship and proposed new model.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Workplace gossip have a destructive influence towards individual and the organization as well. Researchers have discussed that gossip at the workplace can have a discouraging effect on individuals. Employee who became target of gossip may face difficulty to develop trust on other employees and find it hard to maintain a good relationship with them. Thus, gossip at workplace can influence the employees in a negative way such that it lowers the morale of employees, effects their efficiency and job satisfaction, and bring greater damage towards the team performance. The past studies mainly discussed the considerable outcomes of gossip in workplace, thus highlighting the importance of gossip in organizational settings.

However, the research in workplace gossip are just pioneering and requires more effort in this field. As involvement of the employees in gossips seen everywhere and influences the organization, so it can't be ignored. Little research has been done on workplace gossip as an outcome variable, as most research discussed the consequences of the gossips. Furthermore, there is need to investigate more, that why employees involve in gossip behavior. It is also important to consider the relationship of supervisor and employee that whether the specific behavior of supervisor encourages the employees to engage in gossip behavior or not. So, the current study focuses on what gives rise to gossip behavior by considering whether abusive supervision and trust level in supervisor, motivates the employees to gossip or not.

## 1.4 Research Questions

The current study intends to answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of abusive supervision on workplace gossip?
2. How does trust in supervisor mediate the relationship of abusive supervision and workplace gossip?
3. How does LMX quality moderate the mediating effect of trust in supervisor between abusive supervision and workplace gossip?

## 1.5 Research Objectives

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the impact of abusive supervision on workplace gossip.
2. To analyze the impact of abusive supervision on trust in supervisor.
3. To analyze the impact of trust in supervisor on workplace gossip.

4. To analyze the mediating role of trust in supervisor on the relationship of abusive supervision and workplace gossip.
5. To analyze the moderating role of LMX quality on indirect relationship of abusive supervision and workplace gossip.

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

The prior studies have highlighted that workplace gossip is dominant factor that influence the organizations as well as individuals. Research in this field is still emerging and more efforts are required (Mills, 2010; Brady et al., 2017; Wu, Birtch, et al., 2018). Mostly studies have discussed about negative workplace gossips and its consequences (Wu, Birtch, et al., 2018; Wu, Kwan, et al., 2018), and very few studies have make a distinction between positive and negative workplace gossip (Brady et al., 2017)., and while some studies measured the overall gossip (Kuo et al., 2015; Decoster, Camps, Stouten, Vandevyvere, & Tripp, 2013).

About 65% of communication time of employees includes the gossip, discussing about other persons which are not present. Employees not only involve in negative gossips to damage the target person's reputation, but also involve in positive gossip to highlight the good side of the target person, in front of others (Tassiello, Lombardi, & Costabile, 2018). Past studies majorly discussed about the damaging outcomes of gossips, thus highlighting the importance of the gossip in workplace setting. It is important to understand first, that what gives elicits workplace gossip. This give us a theoretical base to broaden our knowledge on gossip as an organizational behavior and provide us practical suggestions for how to manage workplace gossip effectively (Brady et al., 2017).

To fill the gaps, based on affective events theory, the current study aims to identify antecedents which encourages the employees to instigate gossips about their supervisors and other coworkers. Workplace gossip is individual behavior (Brady et al., 2017), that is in response to situation or event that that they have experienced. Our study focuses on the supervisor's behavior as an important source,

which encourages an employee to involve in the workplace gossip. Secondly, based on the affective events theory, the current study explains that, the involvement of the employee in workplace gossip is actually a behavioral response based on the experience (either positive or negative) from their supervisors. Finally, our study focuses on linking employee behavior of workplace gossip with trust in supervisor and supervisory abusive behavior. In addition, our study will contribute towards the literature by empirical evidence for the linkages, by analyzing the employees working at banking sector in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

## 1.7 Supporting Theory

### Affective Events Theory (AET)

Affective events theory was presented by two psychologists Howard M. Weiss and Russell Cropanzano in 1996. According to them emotions and moods can have influence over the attitudes and behavior of individuals. Theory explains that the situation or event in the workplace can affect the emotions which in turn exert a great impact on the performance and their satisfaction level (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Affective events theory suggests that the employee perceive workplace events are good or damaging to their well-being (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996). AET explains that that the emotions of the individuals are dependent upon the work events, and emotions in turn results into behavioral outcomes. Therefore, workplace events have characterized as “an incident that stimulates appraisal of and emotional reaction to a transitory or ongoing job-related agent, object, or event” (Basch & Fisher 2000, p. 37). The emotional response (positive or negative emotions) of the employee depends upon the kind of event, and these emotional responses leads to workplace behaviors (Gray & Watson 2001). When employees become target of mistreatment like abusive supervision, employees will perceive this as a threatening event and will develop negative emotions, and Fairness theory is also inconsistent with it (Folger & Cropanzano 2001). Employees will appreciate their organization or supervisors, if they perceive them as fair, and their emotional response will be

accordingly. Affective events theory can be served as a major lens to understand that supervisor's behavior influences the employee outcomes and thus helpful to decide that why employees participate in workplace gossip behavior (Michelson et al., 2010). In our theoretical model, employee perceive interactional justice from their supervisors (abusive supervision) which in result causes the employee to have low trust in supervisor, thus leading behavioral response from the employees in the form of workplace gossip.

Thus, it is discussed that the events generate emotions which can be positive or negative, is a response to their perception of fairness (Cropanzano et al. 2000; Murphy & Tyler 2008). Thus, the current study can contribute towards the literature by considering AET theory which can provide the basis to understand the relationship of abusive supervision and workplace gossip. Affective events theory can be served as a major lens to understand that supervisor's behavior influences the employee outcomes and thus helpful to determine that why employees participate in gossiping (Michelson et al., 2010).

Employees who become target of abusive supervision will experience sense of helplessness (Tepper et al. 2006). Subordinates will have low morale, and they feel themselves as outcasted in the workplace. Researchers have explained that targeted employees of abusive supervision will have low self-esteem, feelings of helplessness and then tend to show deviant behaviors (Bennett 1998). Thus, this provides us the basis to link abusive supervision with workplace gossip, as gossip is also a form of behavioral response towards the organization. Employees involve in acts to regain their self-esteem and dignity, when encountered with mistreatment or unfairness like abusive supervision. Employee will entail in deviant behaviors that will be directed towards organization and their supervisors (Bowling & Michel 2011). So, employees who perceive better and justified treatment from their organization and supervisor, are determined to take part in a response that is positive in nature. On the other hand, employees when become target of mistreatment like abusive supervision, will show negative behavioral response in form of workplace gossip, thus causing damage towards the reputation of the supervisor or the organization.

# Chapter 2

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Abusive Supervision

Tepper (2000, p. 178) defines abusive supervision as “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact.” The definition has some aspects. Firstly, supervisor’s abusive behavior is perception of individual, meaning that one employee may feel that supervisor is abusive and other may not. Secondly, it only refers to the behaviors not to the intentions. Thirdly, abusive supervision doesn’t include the physical harm to employees, the physical contact would come under concept of violent behaviors. Finally, abusive supervision includes the continuous depiction of negative behavior, meaning that that this behavior is not only perceived once (Harris et al., 2007; Tepper, 2000).

The supervisors who are abusive, use to threat or embarrass employee, they insult others, shout a lot and make fun of their employee. According to Schat et al. (2006), there are about 13% of the subordinates who become victim of supervisor’s hostile behavior. Thus, the US studies indicated that increase number in targets of abusive supervision resulted into an estimated loss of \$23.8 billion in health care, withdrawal behavior and decreased productivity (Tepper et al. 2009).



Western theories related to organization, stated that employee and supervisor have equal status. But on the other hand, the Asian culture is so different from western culture, they believe that employee and supervisor are not on equal status, rather leaders have some power over their employees. That's why employees are more likely to indulge themselves in behavior that retaliate against leader's behavior such as deviant behavior, being silent or involve in gossiping behavior (Liu & Liu, 2014). Studies suggested that supervisor may use abusive behavior for some reasons, such as supervisor wants to have strict control over employee, or they like to maintain their personal dignity or want to influence the behaviors the employee. This behavior of supervisor helps them to depict personal authority (Liu & Liu, 2014). But employees on the other hand tend to react to such kind of behaviors, by restricting themselves to show citizenship behavior at work and involve in more deviant work behaviors. So, when employees become victim of abusive supervision, they feel insulted, their self-esteem gets affected and their self-confidence is reduced. Thus, leading them to have negative emotions and negative behavior. They go for their own emotional resources to get balanced (Ai-Hua et al., 2018).

Literature has discussed that there are different levels that leads supervisor to be abusive, these levels could include organizational-level, supervisor-level, and employee-level. The actions and behaviors of employees tends to be influenced by the abusive supervision. For example, employees who believe that it is the fault of the organization that their supervisor are abusive, will tend to show more deviant behaviors towards organization rather than towards their supervisor (Bowling & Michel, 2011).

At supervisor-level, researchers have found that abusive supervision has also link with the depression level of supervisor (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006). At organizational-level, literature has discussed that there are links that when supervisor perceives interactional injustice form its organization, they tend to be more abusive towards their employees (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007). When supervisors are not treated fairly by the organization, they are inclined to depict their rage and irritation towards their employees in order to take out their negative

emotions (Hoobler & Brass, 2006). Supervisors who realize that their psychological contract has breached are more likely to have hostile attribution bias towards their employees (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). Researchers also explained the employee level as predictor of abusive supervision. They discussed that subordinates who have hostile attribution styles have positively reported about abusive supervision, for example, blaming supervisor that he has negatively evaluated the employees in performance evaluation, even though supervisor didn't have hostile intentions (Martinko, Harvey, Sikora, & Douglas, 2011).

Most of literature is in detail about the adverse outcomes of the abusive supervision. It has been discussed in prior studies that abusive supervision has negative relationship with organizational outcomes such as organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and self-efficacy (Zellars et al. 2002; Tepper 2000, 2007). And further, abusive supervision was discovered to have positive relationship with negative outcomes like deviant behaviors, turnover, work-family conflict, stress and other health issues (Tepper 2000; Zellars et al. 2002; Duffy et al. 2002). It also affects the physical and mental well-being of employees (Hobman et al., 2009). Moreover, abusive supervision was discovered to have positive relation with supervisor-directed deviance like gossiping about the supervisor, acting ill-mannered towards them, as well as leads to interpersonal or organizational deviance (Mitchell & Ambrose 2007; Mayer et al. 2012). So, the targets of abusive supervision feel less associated not only towards their leader but also feel disconnected towards organization, their coworkers and their job (Mayer et al. 2012).

## 2.2 Workplace Gossip

Gossip was defined as the act of the individuals indulging themselves in hearing, producing or contributing towards making comments about any other third party (Foster, 2004). At the organizational level, gossip was conceptualized as the idle talk of employees about their subordinates and supervisors in their absence (Kurland & Pelled, 2000; Wu et al., 2018a). This definition explains that, gossip is

basically informal discussion among the members (Foster, 2004), and it can be categorized as positive or negative gossip. By positive means sharing good comments and views about the third person, for example discussing the promotion of colleagues, appreciating their skills, while negative gossip can be regarded as discussing the passive behavior of colleague, or making fun of absent person, just to harm their reputation (Ellwardt et al., 2012; Tian et al., 2019). And lastly, the target person of workplace gossip is not present at the moment, it is quite difficult for them to identify the source of gossip (Wu et al., 2018a).

Prior studies have discussed both sides of the gossip, positive as well as negative. Gossip is considered as informal way of communication, the positive side of gossip is that employee gossip in order to share useful information to motivate others, e.g. discussing the promotion or praising the skills of individual. While on other hand, employee use gossip as tool in a negative manner, to harm the third party. This could include spreading false information about absent individual or doubting their skills (Feinberg et al., 2012; Beersma & Van Kleef, 2012). Brady, Brown and Liang (2017) said that employees can also gossip just to judge their own performance in organization. For example, employee who is a low performer start discussing other person's skills and abilities just to get motivation.

Gossiping at the workplace is a very common behavior among employees. It has been found that almost all employees involved in any type gossiping behavior either listening to evaluative comments or participating in idle discussion about the absent person (Wu et al., 2018a). It is not necessary that gossips or reports about the target individual, are confirmed or true. Rather it is just informal discussion or unhindered communication among members (Kurland & Pelled, 2000; Foster, 2004). Researchers indicated that about 14% of the discussion of the employees, at workplace or at tea-break is actually gossip, furthermore about 66% of the general communication among members involves discussing social topics, general idle talk regarding other individuals (Cole & Dalton, 2009). So, gossip is considered as an informal way of communication among the members in order to share information, even though the information shared through gossip may not always be true or complete.

It is very interesting to understand that researchers have quite different views how actually gossips starts and what role it plays at the organizational level. Gossip is actually a continuous process and it impacts all three, the gossiper (who make the comments about others), the listener (one who respond to the gossiper) and thirdly, the target (about whom the gossiper in taking about) and hence makes a gossip triad (Michelson et al., 2010). There are three basic conditions on which gossip flourishes, the socialization among members, shared interests and privacy protection. When individuals interact more due to socialization, gossip will surely start to emerge. Individuals always wanted to be identified with their groups or organization, as socialization increases, and teams and groups are formed, this provides the basic ground for gossip to flourish at the workplace (Rosnow, 2001; Kuo, Chang, Quinton, Lu, & Lee, 2015). It is basically because individuals when interact more, they came to know about other person's perceptions, way of thinking and their values and ethics. Thus, harmony among them increases and probability to involve in gossip behavior also increases (Kurland & Pelled, 2000). Thirdly, when individuals are sure about their privacy, that they have no fear of being held accountable for gossiping about absent person, this provides them a relief to fully emotionally express their views or comments about absent person (Rosnow & Georgoudi, 1985; Kuo et al., 2015).

It was recommended that gossip at workplace should not be eliminated completely. Rather it was suggested that it should be appreciated, as it allows the flow of information among members and used as a tool for informal communication, it was considered as a part of socialization (Mills, 2010). It's better not to eliminate it from root, as managers can keep an eye on employees that what they discuss and what needs to be improved (Grosser et al., 2010). When there is more closeness among members, they gossip, either positive or negative. Employee involvement in workplace gossip is common (Grosser et al., 2010). But there is also a need to understand if this is not taken seriously by the managers, it can create hazards for organization, as gossip have damaging effect on the target person. Its leads them to have negative behavior and their trust level will be affected (Kuo, Chang, Quinton, Lu, & Lee, 2015).

## 2.3 Abusive Supervision and Workplace Gossip

The employee-supervisor relationship is very important to consider, in order to understand the employee behavior at workplace. Previous studies have explained that the relationship between employee and supervisor should be healthy for the effective performance, if not then employee will intend to leave the organization (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2018). Supervisors who lack management skills and appropriate characteristics, may tend to embarrass employee in front of the others (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2018). This type of supervisor behavior contributes in weakening of employee-supervisor relationship. In this study this behavior is referred as abusive supervision. Abusive supervision induces feeling of nervousness, anxious and employee may feel that they are treated unfairly (Zhang, Liu, Xu, Yang, & Bednall, 2019). This leads them to have negative emotions and due to this, employee involve in negative behaviors in order to get balanced. Employee perceive mistreatment from their supervisors will justify themselves by involving in deviant behavior such as gossip at workplace (Kuo, Lu, & Kuo, 2013).

Researchers have discussed that abusive supervision leads to negative outcomes. When employee become victim of abusive behavior from their supervisors, their perceptions towards their organization changes and it reduces their citizenship behavior (Zellars et al., 2002). The victim employees try to harm the reputation of the organization and restrict themselves from showing pro-social behavior (Zellars et al., 2002). This suggest that when employees become victim of abusive behavior, they tend to develop negative attitude towards the organizations and leaders, and in order to depict their negative emotions they involve in negative behavior such as gossiping behind the back.

The relationship of employee and leader can also be supported by leader-member exchange theory (Deluga, 1998), according to this theory, there is always an exchange between leader and his subordinates, and employee's attitudes and behaviors are influenced by the value of this exchange. Employees performance, taking responsibility and decision-making process are all affected by the quality of the

relationship (Kuo, Chang, Quinton, Lu, & Lee, 2015). Thus leader-member exchange theory helps us to understand that supervisor abusive behavior can induce incongruence between members and their organization. Such a dissonance motivates an employee to get engage in gossip behavior (Kuo, Chang, Quinton, Lu, & Lee, 2015). Abusive supervision causes negative attitude in employees, which further leads to disappointment and stress. So, employees are motivated to indulge themselves in gossiping behavior, in order to cope with stress (Mawritz, Folger, & Latham, 2014).

One of extreme examples of mistreatment at work, is abusive behavior of their supervisors. When employees become victim of abusive supervision, their perceived cohesion decreases. According to effective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), individuals react to the situation or event as they perceived it. If employees at workplace, receive positive behavior from their coworkers and supervisor they tend to show positive behavior, such as more cohesiveness with their organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). On the other hand, employee when become victim of mistreatment at work, they tend to respond in a negative way (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Prior studies have pointed that, employee's organizational citizenship behavior decreases due to abusive behavior of their supervisor, and they are more encouraged to depict negative behavior towards their supervisor, coworkers and organization as whole (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007).

Affective events theory explained that negative behavior of supervisor encourages employee to depict negative behavior (Tepper et al., 2009), e.g. participating gossiping behavior. This is in similar with the prior researches which suggested that employee tend to react in a negative way such as indulging themselves in deviant behavior, when they understand that they are not treated well at the organization. This could include being yelled at, humiliated, made fun, being intimidated at work, these behaviors motivate employee to respond in a negative manner towards organization (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). The targets of abusive supervision have feeling of helplessness, low self-esteem, low confidence (Tepper et al., 2006). Furthermore, subordinates who became victim of supervisor abusive behavior, will feel devalued and view themselves as outcasts from other members at

workplace. Study of emotions at workplace found a positive relationship between low self-esteem, feeling of helplessness and workplace deviant behaviors (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Individuals try to involve in revenge behaviors against any threatening situation, just to gain power, self-control and recognize their self-worth (Street et al., 2001). Innes et al. (2005), also confirmed these findings, that victims of mistreatment or injustice, tend to show retaliatory behavior.

Thus, these studies confirmed that when employees experience abusive supervision, they will go for options that help them improve their self-esteem and restore their emotions, by indulging in deviance directed towards their supervisor. They will also show deviance towards their organization, because organization allowed the abuse to occur (Bowling & Michel, 2011). Employees engage themselves in deviant behavior directed towards their supervisor to harm their reputation, just to get their revenge (Dupre et al., 2006; Thau & Mitchell, 2010). When there is high power distance, employee react to mistreatment of the offender, in way that is without danger for oneself (Aquino et al., 2001). Researchers have pointed out that when there is high power distance, employee are less likely to react to supervisor's abusive behavior (Wang et al., 2012). As a result, employee would like to involve in such a behavior that doesn't include higher potential cost, but still gives them a chance to get revenge, so they involve in workplace gossip (Decoster, Camps, Stouten, Vandevyvere, & Tripp, 2013; Archer & Coyne, 2005). So, combining all explanations from the studies and linking it with affective events theory, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Abusive Supervision will have positive impact on Workplace Gossip.*

## 2.4 Trust in Supervisor

Trust can be defined as a “psychological state that compromises the willingness to rely on another and the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Trust has been widely discussed in the research, and still its definition is challenged (Innocenti, Pilati, & Peluso, 2010; Nichols, Danford, &

Tasiran, 2009). Defining the trust from the economic perspective, whenever there is a problem of risk between actors, trust serves as solution to ensure cooperation by reducing the cost of transaction (Luhmann, 1988; Tyler, 2003). Explaining trust from the psychological point of view, it is described as persons willingness to be vulnerable towards others and intention to be dependent on them, with the basis of mutual cooperation (Mayer, Davis, & Shoorman, 1995; Rousseau, Sirkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Furthermore, trust was defined as to enable employees and engage them in cooperation (Creed & Miles, 1996). All these definitions of trust explained that, trust is one of the major factors to maintain a good relationship, cooperation among the parties and stability (Gould-Williams, 2003; Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998). Trust is conceptualized as one party keep its confidence in another party, that they will not expose their weaknesses Luhmann (1979).

Literature explained that trust is composed of three components i.e. cognitive trust which is beliefs about another's trustworthiness, secondly the affective trust that explains the importance of emotion in the process of trust and thirdly the behavioral trust on another person, on basis of which sensitive part of information is shared (Gillespie & Mann, 2004). Trust is based on the mutuality between the parties, when one party notices the actions or activities of another and reconsider its own behavior or actions depends on that observations (Serva, Fuller, & Mayer, 2005). Furthermore, trust was conceptualized as faith in aims or attitudes of leader or a particular group or as organization as a whole, and expecting to be treated to be fairly, ethically and in non-threatening manner and also focuses on the rights of other party in mutual relationship (Zeffane, 2010).

Interpersonal trust is developed through frequent and friendly relationships (Nootboom & Six, 2003). Friendly relationships help to develop confidence in one another's kindness (Nootboom, 2002; Rus, 2005), also Grosser et al. (2010) explained interpersonal trust as friendly ties between the parties in his sociometric study. The effective and regular communication helps to develop trust among the parties. The frequent communication can prevent one party for exploiting of trust, because the trustor may punish for the betrayal in upcoming interactions. Trust



is basically developed on the expectation that the same type of cooperation will be depicted by the trustor (Grosser et al., 2010).

All these explanations of trust, more study was needed. Dirks and Ferrin (2002) explained that mediation effect and outcomes must be studied. In their meta-analysis study, interactional justice, organizational support and transformational leadership were found to be as important determinants of developing trust (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). The attitudes of employees and their performance in organization is dependent on the level of trust in their supervisor (Albrecht's, 2010). According to social exchange theory, in the relationship perspective, studies confirmed that that employee will reciprocate against the behavior of their supervisor, because the relationship is built on trust and social exchanges (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

The direct supervisor of employee plays a vital role in influencing the behavior of employee (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Another study by Zhang et al. (2008), also highlighted that the development of trust in employee-supervisor relationship is affected by the support and treatment provided by the supervisor. The development of trust can be served as an indicator to explain the quality of relationship. The behavior of supervisor is highly influential on well-being of subordinates and their career development (Zhang et al., 2008). Supervisors who treat their employees well and show concern for them, their subordinates will tend to value their work and organization. Thus, trust is built among subordinates and supervisors. And employees then tend to invest more towards their organization. As trust in supervisor will elevate, employees tend to develop a better understanding towards their organization. And on the basis of trust level, employees expect that investments towards organization will not be wasted, rather these will be reciprocated in the future (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

When trust is built in supervisor-subordinate relationship, it improves the perceptions of employees. The perception could be about the cohesion between subordinates and their supervisor, feeling of equity, that everybody at workplace is treated equally, and lastly about responsive behavior of supervisor, that their supervisor will respond towards their point of views (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Chong & Law 2016). All these conditions contribute towards organizational commitment,

as it creates the harmony in relationship, and employees show more concern towards their supervisor and organization, they tend to depict emotional attachment (Costa & Anderson, 2011).

In organizations, trust in a relationship plays a vital role in reducing conflicts among members (Morrison, 2011). Trust in supervisor is a major factor to develop a high-quality relationship with supervisor. When employees feel secured and realize that their supervisors can be trusted, a relationship of mutual respect is thus formed, they tend to work hard and share their opinions and suggestions freely with their supervisor (Turnage & Goodboy, 2014). Another study also confirmed that when trust in supervisor is high, employees tend to be more productive and organizational conflicts are reduced (Payne, 2014). The relationship of employee and supervisor develops on the basis of trust, as this can lead to better communication, cooperation and reduce the agency problems. Trust development in relationship promotes the flow of information and help employees to look for more opportunities and it also influences their behavior (Chong & Law 2016). Organizations make sure that trust is developed among the relationships, so that individuals feel free to share information and suggestions, as difference in opinion is also important for efficient working of organization. Thus, subordinates who trust their supervisor will be more involved in positive behavior while on the other hand, subordinates who have low level of trust will tend to involve in negative behavior (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2011).

Management research has pointed that high trust level towards supervisor can help reduce the tensions related to job (Lau & Tan, 2006). Openness to communication and frankness to share opinions and different point of views comes with the development of trust. Employee feel more relaxed and comfortable in workplace when they are frank in their communication with their boss. Thus, employee's frustration and anxiety are reduced, they feel less stressed at workplace and conflicts among coworkers also reduce. Thus, trust in supervisor helps the individual to be relaxed and they can easily share their feelings, as a result their overall performance is enhanced (Lau & Tan, 2006).

Organizational behavior studies have explained that trust in supervisor will lead to positive outcomes such as improved performance and positive attitudes towards organization (Li & Tan, 2013). High trust level motivates the individual to contribute more towards their organization (Cremer et al., 2001). According to Li and tan (2013, p.5) individuals with higher level of trust “would not have to devote unnecessary resources toward defending against their superior, (which leads to) less uncertainty perceived in the social context of workplace”. Thus, trust in supervisor is related to the behavioral outcomes of the employees.

## **2.5 Abusive Supervision and Trust in Supervisor**

The studies about fairness explained that the employees at work want to be recognized as a part of the group while being part of any social group can also increase the likelihood of exploitation and rejection. This social dilemma makes the employee uncertain and in weak position, which focuses on their attention whether their supervisors can be trustworthy or not. A trust is always needed in relationship. It is very challenging for the employee to consider each and every factor in relationship to suggest that whether the supervisor is trustworthy or not (Cropanzano et al., 2001). Employee rely on their justice perceptions and these perceptions can lead an employee to consider whether his supervisor can be trusted or not. Lind (2001) argued that “when people think about fairness, they think about where they stand in long-term, enduring relationships” (p.80). So, when employees are treated fairly by their supervisor, then they tend to invest more towards their relationship and result in trusting their supervisor more.

In developing perceptions of trust, supervisor play a vital role (Whitener, Brodt, Korsguard, & Werner, 1998). When employee have strong trust in their supervisor, it will be depicted in their outcomes (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). According to Zhang et al. (2008) study, supervisor attitude and behavior was found to influence the trust level between the employee and their supervisor. Social exchange

theory also explains when supervisor treats their subordinates in good manner and support them, subordinates consider their behavior as a measure of quality of the relationship, between supervisor and subordinates (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Supervisor positive behavior and attitudes helps an employee to realize that their supervisor is concerned with them, they concerned for the well-being of the employee and their career development. Thus, this leads an employee to be motivated and to value their work. As a result, employee put more trust towards their supervisor, and put much greater effort towards their work. On the basis of trust, understanding is developed between subordinates and their supervisors, so, subordinates make effort for emotional investment for the relationship. Such investments will be reciprocated based on social exchange experience (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

If leaders in organization, follow the principles of fairness and equality towards their subordinates, then it will be easy for them to win trust from them (Hua, 2008). On other hand, when supervisors involve in negative behavior and mistreat their employee, it will certainly decrease the trust level of their subordinates (Sims & Lorenzi, 1992). The level of trust may increase or decrease with time, but it plays an important role in relationship. According to effective events theory, the negative events or situations leads to negative emotions and attitudes (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996), thus abusive supervision is also an unpleasant situation that contribute towards negative feelings such as aggression and distrust (Tepper, 2007). In order to enhance the trust level of employees, supervisors must realize that they need to depict positive behavior, encourage them, being helpful towards their subordinates, so employees would pay back by working hard for their organization (Xiaqi, Kun, Chongsen, & Sufang 2012).

Interpersonal justice perceptions (to treat employee with respect and dignity) can provide a basis for understanding the relationship of supervisor and trust. Cropanzano et al. (2001) explained that interpersonal justice perceptions help subordinates to evaluate about the supervisor that whether the supervisor has treated them with a non-biased manner and considered them as important member of the group or not. On the other hand, subordinates who believe that their supervisor

has not treated them fairly and they will continue to treat them as in same manner would less likely to trust their supervisor (Cropanzano et al., 2001). These arguments from the literature has discussed that employee's trust on their supervisor is influenced by the perception of how their supervisor treats them. When supervisor is abusive in nature meaning that he doesn't maintain the interpersonal justice, the employee would less likely to trust them. So, following hypothesis is proposed:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *Abusive supervision is negatively related to employee trust in supervisor.*

## 2.6 Trust in Supervisor and Workplace Gossip

Managers play a vital role in organization. The subordinate-supervisor relationship is built on trust. Employees gossiping behavior will be influenced by the level of trust in their supervisor. If they have a good relationship and better understanding with their boss, they would less likely to involve in negative gossip, rather they would involve in positive gossip, praising the skills of their supervisor. While negative gossip will increase among the subordinates when level of trust with their supervisor declines (Ellwardt, Wittek, & Wielers 2012).

Literature discussed that when individuals gossip, they transfer information to other coworkers, and they use that information to identify the trustworthiness or reliability of indirect third parties (Ferrin, Dirks, & Shah, 2006). Thus, this leads to transfer of trust from one individual to whole network, while other coworkers may not have direct contact with that supervisor. The level of trust increases between the parties of relationship, when there is ease in communication and the information shared among them is accurate (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Positive news about supervisor will travel through the organization, if employees considers him as a trustworthy person. On the other hand, if supervisor is not trustworthy among his subordinates, negative gossip will take place.

Negative gossip at workplace further increases the demands in other coworkers for negative news about the high-status people within organization (De Backer & Gurven, 2006; McAndrew et al., 2007). Managers actions and attitudes affect the

subordinates, but their negative behavior such as mistreating employees, has more effect on subordinates as compared to their positive actions. Individuals spread gossip about a person to warn other people about his acts or actions and try to inform whether the person is trustworthy or not. Furthermore, employees consider the benevolent actions of their supervisors as a part of their psychological contract, while on the other hand malevolent actions of supervisor are critically evaluated, as these actions cause the decline of trust on supervisor (Robinson, 1996).

Organizations and supervisor must try hard to be trusted by their members, for the effective working of the organization (Woolthuis, Hillebrand, & Nooteboom, 2005). Employees perceive that organization will value the individual's standards, norms and values and will be concerned about their well-being, on the basis of this employee put their trust in organization and towards their boss. Employee may have low trust towards their organization, but still have high trust on supervisor, vice versa (Ellwardt, Wittek, & Wielers 2012).

Employees look for the sources of information and are concerned about the information regarding their immediate supervisor. They are interested in participating in gossips to collect evidence that whether the supervisor is trustworthy or not (Dietz & Fortin, 2007). Trust plays a key role in relationships, and trust level will affect the subordinate's decision making, communication, attitudes and behaviors (Holland et al., 2012). When employees trust their supervisors, they feel psychologically safe, then tend to show efficient performance towards organization while on other hand low level of trust makes employees to be less interested in work and more to interested towards deviant behaviors (Schneider, Macey, Barbera & Young, 2010).

Studies indicated that, trust level influences the behavior of employees, according to affective events theory, low trust towards their supervisor creates a negative feeling in subordinates, and to which employee react negatively (Schneider et al., 2010), such as participating gossiping behavior (Decoster et al., 2013). Thus, following hypothesis is proposed:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** *Trust in supervisor will have negative impact on the workplace gossip.*

In organizations, the ease of communication must be ensured. It is only possible when members in relationship are frank i.e., they can easily share their opinions and views, and trust exists between them. When relationship lacks communication and trust, gossip is likely to take place. A study explained that employees involve in spreading rumors and negative gossip about their supervisors, just to harm his reputation because their managers have failed to win trust level of employees (Bies & Tripp, 1996). Another study reported that, individuals who felt that they are mistreated by their bosses, shared their feelings of grief with their coworkers, while others had direct conflict with their supervisor (Tucker, 1993).

On the other hand, employees who have good relationship with their supervisors, would not take risk to harm their relationships. Also, leader-member exchange studies explained that employees who are treated well by their managers will tend to trust them more, and thus reciprocate in positive manner (Frazier et al., 2010). They tend to involve in behavior that could be beneficial towards organization such as organizational citizenship behavior, prosocial behavior (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). As a result, employees are not determined to cause damage towards organization and will not risk their relationship by involving in gossiping behavior (Burt & Knez, 1996). Thus, following hypothesis is suggested:

**H<sub>4</sub>:** *Trust in supervisor will mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace gossip.*

## 2.7 Moderating role of LMX Quality

Leader-member exchange theory (LMX) is very popular in understanding the exchange in relationship of employee and their supervisor (Chun & Dansereau, 2005). LMX theory was presented by Dansereau, Graen and colleagues during the 1970s, the main focus of the study was to explain that that supervisors use different ways to treat different employees, thus their quality of relationship is different with each subordinate (Dansereau et al., 1975). Previous studies indicated that when the quality of relationship is high, there will be positive outcomes (Anand, Hu, Liden, & Vidhyarthi, 2011).

The relationships with supervisor can be divided into two, high-quality relationship and low-quality relationship. These can also be termed as in-groups and out groups (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In-group refers to those subordinates who get special attention from their supervisor, their supervisor trusts them, and they get more information and receive more appreciation from supervisor. While on contrary to this, out-group refers to those such employees in which exchange is just through formal rules and rights (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The in-group subordinates get extra support from their managers, not only in workplace but also in their private life (Boyd & Taylor, 1998). So, employees at workplace show different behavior, to same supervisor just because their supervisor treats them differently. The recent studies have indicated that, subordinates with high-quality LMX, will affect positively on their overall work experience, either it is in-role or extra role performance (Martin et al., 2016). When there is good relationship between supervisor and subordinates, it enhances the effectiveness of organization, helps in improving coordination and achievement of goals is easy (Ferris et al., 2009). LMX theory is based on social exchange theory, which explains that employee-supervisor relationship is unique in nature, and this relationship is improved or get worse over the time because of expectations and their fulfillment between leader and subordinates (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Employee perceive the overall quality of the relationship, on the basis of exchange between subordinate and his supervisor. But in work-settings tough and critical situations can also occur. Supervisor abusive behavior is one of the critical situations, where supervisor involve in hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors (Tepper & Henle, 2011).

Employees who have high-quality LMX doesn't mean that they couldn't become targets of abusive supervision. It was explained in studies that even in dyadic relationship of husband and wife, it was reported that even though the relationship was high quality, still depiction of stressed feelings towards husband occurred (Fincham & Linfield, 1997). Same as the situation for employees, even though they have high-quality relationship, but still supervisor may sometime use abusive behavior towards them (Lian et al., 2012).



Tepper (2000) uses the work of Walker (1979) to explain the spousal abusive behavior, in order to develop a link between domestic abuse and supervisor abusive behavior. He also tried to explain that why some targets of abuse, still remain in their relationship and not leave their partner. It was explained in studies, that partners may remain in their relationship, as they consider abuse is a normal behavior, which leads to inducing hope in them that this abusive behavior will eventually end (Walker, 1979). Same on the other hand, in organizations, subordinates remain with their supervisor, even though he is abusive in nature, just because that their supervisor provides them the support and show positive attitudes towards them. This leads to the perception that their supervisor cares for them, and it alters the perception that supervisor show destructive behaviors. Furthermore, recent researches also indicated that supervisor could depict both positive and abusive behaviors. They can be abusive towards their high LMX members as well (Lin et al., 2016).

LMX theory suggested that, leaders who have high-quality relationships with their subordinates, will lead them to have positive outcomes such as increased job satisfaction and commitment (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Theory further explained that high-quality relationships have characteristics of mutual respect and expected that same type of positive behavior would be reciprocated. Hence, increasing the overall affective commitment of employees (Dulebohn et al., 2012). High-quality relationships are maintained because when employee and supervisor both fulfil their mutual expectations. Supervisor expect that his subordinates are competent enough and will invest their skills more towards organization. While on other hand subordinates expect that supervisor will be sociable towards them and treats them with justice and respect (Xu et al., 2012).

The in-group subordinates are always close to supervisor they have ease in communication with their boss, and level of trust is high among them, so they understand their supervisor and realize the implications of abusive behavior (Scandura, Graen & Novak, 1986). While on the other hand, out-group members don't have a good relationship with supervisor, so they don't understand them much as a result they perceive abusive behavior as political behavior (Ai-Hua et al., 2018).

As already explained that the relationship is based on the social exchanges, trust is another factor that helps in understanding that supervisor behavior influences the subordinate attitudes. The social association is based on the exchanges between the two parties, these exchanges could be in terms of any activity, it could be tangible or intangible, and could be rewarding or costly (Homans, 1961). When individuals interact with others, they look for exchanges that other party is willing to give, individual then consider it beneficial or not. If the exchanges are beneficial, individuals would like to maintain their social interaction, thus exchange between parties encourages the interaction (Blau, 1964). According to social exchange principle, when one party favors or benefits other party, the party is obligated to return exchange in same manner. People not only share economic values but also share rituals, norms, beliefs just to maintain a contact and worthy relationship (Mauss, 1954). Individuals only do favor in expectations for a return. And the return for a favor is only possible when there is trust among the parties. At the start of relationship, there is very little trust between the two parties, so the exchange between parties is also at small level because the risk is involved (Blau, 1964). LMX play a leading role in building employee trust on supervisor, higher level of LMX higher will be the trust (Jin et al., 2007).

So, employee who become victim of supervisor's abusive behavior, will tend to lose trust in their supervisor. But if they have high-quality LMX, they will understand that supervisor use abusive behavior for some reasons and will continue to trust their supervisor. As subordinates know that their supervisor provides support and encouragement as well. Thus, we propose following hypotheses:

**H<sub>5a</sub>:** *LMX quality will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and trust in supervisor such that, high quality LMX will weaken the relationship of abusive supervision and employee trust in supervisor.*

**H<sub>5b</sub>:** *LMX quality will moderate the indirect effect of abusive supervision on workplace gossip through trust in supervisor, such that high quality LMX will weaken the mediated relationship.*

## 2.8 Theoretical Framework

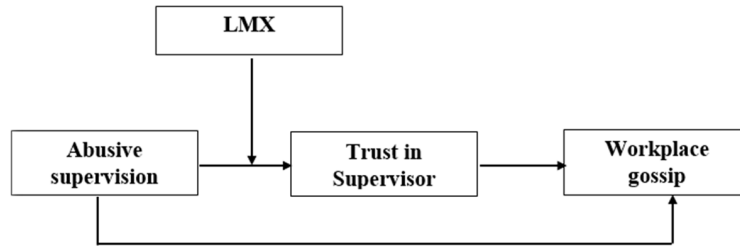


FIGURE 2.1: Research model of abusive supervision and workplace gossip, mediating role of trust in supervisor and moderating role of LMX quality.

## 2.9 Research Hypotheses

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Abusive Supervision will have positive impact on Workplace Gossip.*

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *Abusive supervision is negatively related to employee trust in supervisor.*

**H<sub>3</sub>:** *Trust in supervisor will have negative impact on the workplace gossip.*

**H<sub>4</sub>:** *Trust in supervisor will mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace gossip.*

**H<sub>5a</sub>:** *LMX quality will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and trust in supervisor such that, high quality LMX will weaken the relationship of abusive supervision and employee trust in supervisor.*

**H<sub>5b</sub>:** *LMX quality will moderate the indirect effect of abusive supervision on workplace gossip through trust in supervisor, such that high quality LMX will weaken the mediated relationship.*

# Chapter 3

## Methodology

This section of thesis will include the research methods, which were utilized to carry out this research. The approach used to carry out current research is dependent upon the theoretical background of the variables. Before finding answers to our research hypotheses this chapter focused on identifying reliability and validity of the constructs, so that further analysis could be done. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the details of population, sampling technique, process of collection of data and instruments in our survey.

### 3.1 Research Approach

The research approach plays a very significant role in analyzing the validity and generalizability of the research. There are two types of research approach i.e. Qualitative research and Quantitative Research.

One of these two approaches must be used. In exploratory research, qualitative research approach is used. Research in social sciences area used qualitative approach in most cases. Various objects, items and events are explained by researcher. This type of research is used to get in-depth information about the study and to understand of fundamental reasons, opinions, and motivations and provide basis for identifying problem or an idea which is further used to make a hypothesis for further testing in quantitative research. However, in this approach there is chances

that researcher show his/her personal biasness during collecting and analyzing data. Due to this reason the result become distorted (Pride et al., 2008).

Quantitative research is mostly used in economics and financial analysis. However social sciences researchers are also focusing towards the use of quantitative approach for conducting research. Quantification of items is basically used in quantitative research approach. Quantification is done for the evaluation of different procedures and processes. This feature made quantitative research very reliable. Generalizability is always very high in this approach. The biasness chances from the researcher side are also reduced in quantitative approach. This ensures results with no misleading aspects (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Present research used quantitative approach to study. This approach was used due to its major advantages of reducing the biasness level of researcher and its reliability and generalizability to the results (Zikmund et al, 2003). The current research is quantitative in nature.

## **3.2 Research Design**

Research design explains about the approach we used to integrate the different components of the study, explaining the collection, measurement and analysis of the data. The research design consists of following important points.

1. Purpose of the study
2. Type of investigation
3. Study setting
4. Data collection
5. Time horizon
6. Measurement

### **3.2.1 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of our study is hypotheses testing. The main aim is to test the theoretical relationships among variables, that whether abusive supervision leads to workplace gossip or not.

### **3.2.2 Type of Investigation**

The type of our investigation is causal study. There is cause and effect among the variables. The literature explained that mistreatment received from supervisors will invoke employees to engage in negative behaviors. So, abusive supervision will cause gossip at workplace.

### **3.2.3 Study Setting**

The setting of the study was non-contrived. The involvement of researcher was minimal. The data was collected in natural settings.

### **3.2.4 Data Collection**

The collection of the individuals which are the main focus of the study, explains the population. The following lines explains the data collection method and sampling technique used in our research.

#### **3.2.4.1 Procedure**

Survey method was used for data collection. A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed among sample. Individually going to banks and meetings with senior managers were done to explain the purpose of our research. After permissions received from senior managers, employees at banks received the envelopes which contain the survey questionnaire, a pen and cover page that briefly explains the aim and purpose to conduct the research. Furthermore, the confidentiality of

employees and secrecy of answers of employees were ensured. It was guaranteed that responses of employees will only be for research objectives and not for any other purpose. Employees were requested to fill the forms in private and return.

Out of 600 questionnaires, 275 questionnaires were discarded as they were of no use. Out of those 275 questionnaires, about 58 questionnaires were returned totally unfilled, 43 questionnaires were half filled mostly because of the reason respondents didn't check backside of their questionnaire, almost 63 questionnaires were responded not seriously like respondents selected neutral option for all the questions and 111 out 275 questionnaires were never returned. The remaining 325 were accurate and were used for analysis. So, the overall response rate of the respondents was 54.1%.

#### **3.2.4.2 Population**

The population of the study consists of the employees working in service sector of Pakistan, and more specifically employees working in banking sector of twin cities Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The main reason for selecting service for our research was that the in services organizations competition is very high as compared to private sector, and in these services employees have to face customers daily and have to fulfill their demands or expectations, thus they are in constant stress at workplace. This increases their chances of being target of supervisor abusive behavior. As opposed to manufacturing organizations, service organizations are more towards dealing with people thus the chances of occurrence of gossips are more.

The proposed study has selected the banking sector of Pakistan. Data were filled by the managers and subordinates working at banks. The current study collected data from the private banks in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. There are about 25 private banks in Pakistan, which mainly include: Summit bank, bank Al-Falah, bank Al-Habib, Askari bank, Dubai Islamic bank, Faysal bank, Habib Bank, Allied bank, JS bank, MCB, Meezan bank, Standard Chartered, Silk Bank, UBL and others.

### 3.2.4.3 Sampling Technique

To conduct research the non-probability sampling technique was used. In non-probability sampling technique samples are gathered in such a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected. And within the non-probability sampling the convenience sampling method was used. This sampling technique is considered to be the most preferable when there is an issue of time and budget (Cooper & Schindler, 2007).

Convenience sampling is perhaps the most popular of all sampling techniques. With convenience sampling, the samples are chosen because they are easily approachable to the researcher. This technique is considered easiest, cheapest and least time consuming.

### 3.2.4.4 Characteristics of Sample

#### 3.2.4.4.1 Gender

TABLE 3.1: Frequency by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	206	63.4
Female	119	36.6
Total	325	100

The above table shows that in a sample of 325, 206 were male respondents and 119 were female respondents. And in terms of percentage 63% were male and 37% were female, indicating male respondents were almost double than female.

#### 3.2.4.4.2 Age

Above table shows that 23.7% were respondents whose age range from 20-25, 45.2% were from 26-30 age range, 19.4% were belong to 31-35 age group, 8.3% were in range of 35-40 years of age and 3.4% respondents were above 40 years of age. Maximum respondents were in range 26-30 years.



TABLE 3.2: Frequency by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-25	77	23.7
26-30	147	45.2
31-35	63	19.4
35-40	27	8.3
Above 40	11	3.4
Total	325	100

### 3.2.4.4.3 Qualification

TABLE 3.3: Frequency by Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelors	84	25.8
Masters	139	42.8
MS/ MPhil	90	27.7
PhD	12	3.7
Total	325	100

According to table above, 25.8% respondents had bachelor's level degree, 42.8% respondents had master's degree, 27.7% were having MS/ MPhil degree and only 3.7 had PhD degree. Maximum respondents were holding master's degree.

### 3.2.4.4.4 Experience

TABLE 3.4: Frequency by Experience

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-3 years	128	39.4
4-6 years	126	38.8
7-9 years	36	11.1
10 years and above	35	10.8
Total	325	100

Maximum respondents 39.4%, were having experience of 1-3 years, 38.8% respondents had experience of 4-6 years, 11.1 had 7-9 years of experience and 10.8% respondents had 10 years or above experience.

### 3.2.4.4.5 Bank Name

TABLE 3.5: Frequency by Bank Name

Bank Name	Frequency	Percentage
Allied Bank	21	6.5
UBL	25	7.7
MCB	22	6.8
Habib Bank Ltd	33	10.2
Silk Bank	23	7.1
Bank Al-Habib	18	5.5
Bank Alfalah	23	7.1
Askari Bank	23	7.1
Faisal Bank	15	4.6
Finca Bank	8	2.5
Bank of Punjab	26	8.0
Dubai Islamic Bank	18	5.5
Meezan Bank	15	4.6
Habib Metropolitan Bank	12	3.7
JS Bank	18	5.5
Summit Bank	14	4.3
Standard Chartered Bank	11	3.4
Total	325	100

The above table explains about respondents from different banks. From table it can be seen that, maximum respondents are from Habib Bank Ltd i.e. 33 respondents which is 10.2% while respondents from Finca bank were the least i.e. 8 or 2.5%. The overall data were collected from 17 different private banks in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

### 3.2.5 Time Horizon

Cross-sectional method was used to collect the data, in which data for every variable is collected at single time. Due to time limitation, this approach was used. It took two months to collect the data just from 325 respondents. Time-lag study on the other hand reduces the common-method biasness, but time shortage and low response rate from respondents, lead us to collect data at single point.

### 3.2.6 Measures

Questionnaire was used as tool for data collection. This is termed as instrument as it is used as a measuring tool for the measurement of variables under study. There were total of 40 items in the questionnaire in addition to demographic variables.

#### 3.2.6.1 Abusive Supervision

To assess the abusive supervision, 15-items questionnaire developed by Tepper (2000) was used. Example items are “my boss invades my privacy” and “my boss lies to me”. Items were measured on five-point Likert scale. Where 1=*never*, 2=*Seldom*, 3=*occasionally*, 4=*moderately*, 5=*very often*. The data regarding abusive supervision were filled by the subordinates.

#### 3.2.6.2 Trust in Supervisor

Tepper and Henle’s 3-item scale was used to measure trust in supervisor, 5-point Likert scale was used to obtain responses, where 5 = *Strongly agree* and 1= *Strongly disagree*. Example of item is “My supervisor is trustworthy”. Response were taken from subordinates.

#### 3.2.6.3 Workplace Gossip

11-item scale developed by (Wittek & Wielers, 1998) was used to assess gossip at workplace. The responses were obtained through 5-point Likert scale ranging

from 1= *Never* to 5= *Always*. The items of the scale are, “Classmates/Colleagues criticizing uncooperative behavior of an absent person”, “Classmates/Colleagues praising the skills of an absent person”.

#### 3.2.6.4 LMX

11-items scale given by Liden and Maslyn, (1998), was used to measure leader member exchange quality. The examples of items are “I like my supervisor very much as a person.”, “I admire my supervisor’s professional skills”. 5-point Likert scale was used to obtain responses, where 5 = *Always* and 1= *Never*. Subordinates filled data regarding LMX quality.

### 3.3 Tool for Analysis

The analysis of the data were done through the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). SPSS is one of the most popular statistical packages which can perform highly complex data manipulation and analysis with simple instructions. The reliability, descriptive analysis, demographic analysis, regression, correlations, mediation analysis and moderation analysis were run to check the hypothesis of the study.

### 3.4 Pilot Testing

TABLE 3.6: Reliability of pilot testing

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Abusive Supervision	15	0.911
Trust in Supervisor	03	0.877
Workplace Gossip	11	0.853
LMX	11	0.885

$N = 40$

Pilot study is an integrated term used for pretest on instrument used for data collection i.e. questionnaire in this case. Pilot study is applied on small sample that is used before collection of data from large sample. Moreover, Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001), stated that pilot study is done for investigating the validity of constructs. Pilot study is done on 40-50 respondents on random basis. If the value of Cronbach's alpha is  $>.70$  then it is an acceptable value (Hair et al., 2006). The table above shows that the reliability of items of 40 respondents are all above 0.7. Thus, it indicates further analysis can be done with complete 325 sample size.

### 3.5 Reliability of the Scales

TABLE 3.7: Reliability Analysis

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Abusive Supervision	15	0.90
Trust in Supervisor	03	0.72
Workplace Gossip	11	0.77
LMX	11	0.84

$N = 325$

In order to check the internal consistency of all factors the value of Cronbach alpha was computed. The value of Alpha that is  $>.70$  is an acceptable value (Hair et al., 2006). Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability. The value of alpha for all constructs along with the number of items is shown in Table above. The value of Cronbach alpha for abusive supervision, trust in supervisor, workplace gossip, and LMX is 0.90, 0.72, 0.77 and 0.84 respectively. Alpha values for all the variable are in the acceptable range so the data is reliable for further computations.

### 3.6 Research Ethics

While conducting the research, research ethics were strictly followed especially with collection of data. Respondents were briefly given overview of purpose of the research and after the agreement from supervisor and employees, they were handed questionnaires to be filled. Respondents were assured that information they will provide will be kept confidential and secret and would not be disclosed with any other person. The response from the surveys will be used for academic purpose only. In addition, responses were collected in natural settings, employees were not forced to fill questionnaire, if their willingness was not there. Respondents were not forced to complete survey in short time rather they were given ample time so that they can read properly every item and respond accordingly. Despite providing much cooperation with respondents, some of them still had careless behavior like did not return questionnaire or they tick items without properly reading it. But still this can be neglected as their behavior were not inappropriate or didn't use any bad wordings.

### 3.7 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

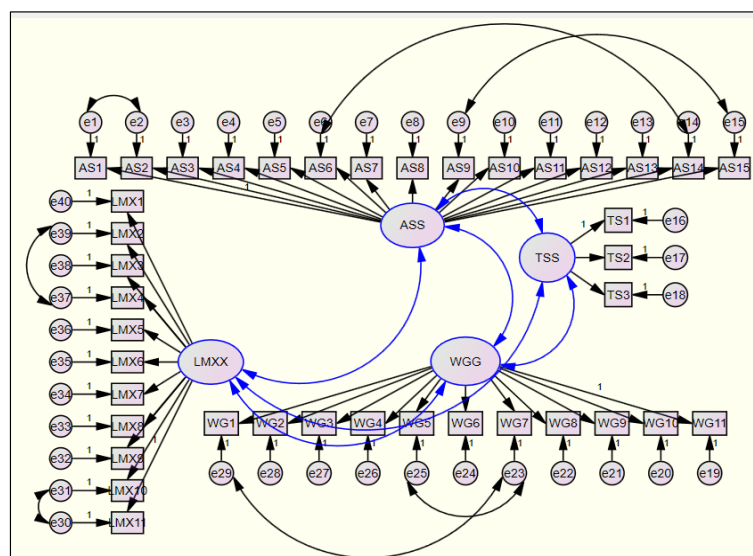


FIGURE 3.1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (path diagram)

TABLE 3.8: Confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model

	<b>CMIN/ DF</b>	<b>IFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
<b>Initial model</b>	1.598	0.884	0.872	0.882	0.045
<b>Modified model</b>	1.544	0.902	0.889	0.900	0.044

We use IBM Amos to find the fit indices, which tell either the model is acceptable or not. If model is fit, then we go for further analysis. Our study examines the fit indices which include chi-square, IFI, TLI, CFI and RMSEA. The acceptable values for these are:

The comparative fit index (CFI) should be 0.90 or greater (Byrne, 1994). Incremental fit index (IFI) values that are greater than 0.9 are considered acceptable (Byrne, 1994). Tucker Lewis index (TLI) also called the Non-normed fit index (NNFI) and its value greater 0.9 or 0.95 are considered acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The Chi-square also called the goodness of fit, measures difference between the observed covariance matrix and the predicted model covariance matrix. The relative chi-square should be less than 2 or 3 (Kline, 1998; Ullman, 2001). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), researchers suggest that its value should be smaller than 0.8 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993) and more preferably lower than 0.5 (Stieger, 1990).

The above table shows that values before drawing covariances, values were not much in range but after drawing covariances in the model, the values improved, and model becomes fit for further analysis. No items of variables were deleted. All the values lie in acceptable range except TLI value is bit lower than 0.9, but overall model is fit so further analyses can be conducted to find whether the different paths are significant or not.

# Chapter 4

## Analysis and Findings

This chapter is about analysis of data collected from respondents through questionnaires. Being the most crucial part of this research, it analyzes everything very critically.

### 4.1 Descriptive and Normality Analysis

TABLE 4.1: Descriptive and Normality Analysis

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Abusive Supervision	2.68	0.85	0.14	0.00
Trust in supervisor	3.25	0.97	-0.20	-0.45
Workplace Gossip	3.00	0.65	0.08	0.54
LMX	3.32	0.73	-0.08	0.24

According to McDowall and Saunders (2010), descriptive statistic help us to deal with large data in practical manner. The mean value tells about the central tendency of the responses, explains the where the average response lies while standard deviation helps us to explain the deviation from average point. It actually tells us about the outliers, as outlier can influence the data. The mean value of all the variables is approximately 3 which shows that majority response is towards neutral, and for abusive supervision it is 2.68, showing that the major response is towards seldom, that supervisor seldom uses abusive behavior. The standard



deviation shows that how much responses are deviating from the mean value. If the deviation is high it shows that there are outliers in data. The value of standard deviation must be less than one, here the above table shows that the standard deviation of all the variables is less than 1 and lies within range from 0.65-0.97.

The value of skewness between -1 to +1 is an acceptable value. Skewness values of abusive supervision, trust in supervisor, workplace gossip and LMX are 0.14, -0.20, 0.08 and -0.08 respectively, lie in acceptable range. While the acceptable range for kurtosis is between -3 to +3. All the kurtosis values lie in acceptable range. Kurtosis values for abusive supervision, trust in supervisor, workplace gossip and LMX are 0.00, -0.45, 0.54 and 0.24 respectively. The acceptable values of skewness and kurtosis show that the data is normal, skewness tells about symmetry of data while kurtosis tells about normal distribution.

## 4.2 Correlation Analysis

TABLE 4.2: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Abusive Supervision	Trust in Supervisor	Workplace Gossip	LMX
<b>Abusive Supervision</b>	1			
<b>Trust in Supervisor</b>	-0.477**	1		
<b>Workplace Gossip</b>	0.441**	-0.057	1	
<b>LMX</b>	-0.398**	0.476**	-0.083	1

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

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

The correlation results in above Table shows whether and how strongly pairs of variables are related. A correlation is a single number that describes the degree of relationship between two variables. The Pearson product-moment correlation is used to determine the relationship between the variables. The acceptable range for correlation is between -1 to +1. According to Cohen, West and Aiken (2014) the value of correlation is 0.10 to 0.29 represents weak/ smaller correlation, value of correlation between range of 0.30 to 0.49 represents moderate correlation and if correlation is between range of 0.5 to 0.8 then it represents strong correlation.

While if the value of correlation exceeds 0.80 then it shows the error of multicollinearity.

The above table of Pearson Correlation shows that the correlation value between abusive supervision and trust in supervisor is -0.477, which is negative and moderate value. The negative sign indicates that there is negative relationship between these variables. As supervisor's abusive behavior increases the trust in supervisor decreases. The correlation between abusive supervision and workplace gossip is 0.441, which is positive and a moderate value. It shows that with increases in abusive behavior from supervisor, the gossiping behavior among employees also increases. The correlation between trust in supervisor and workplace gossip is -0.057, it's a negative value but it's also insignificant. The correlation between abusive supervision and LMX is -0.398, its negative and a moderate value. Trust in supervisor and LMX shows a value of 0.476, it's a positive and a moderate value, it explains that with higher level LMX quality will lead to higher level of trust in supervisor. Workplace gossip and LMX shows a correlation of -0.083, its negative and insignificant value.

The p-value is significance value, if p-value is smaller or equal to 0.01 then hypothesis is accepted at 1% meaning that there is 1% chance of error in results, while if p-value is smaller or equal to 0.05 then it means the hypothesis is accepted at 5% meaning that there is 5% chance of error in the results of this study. The above table shows that all the correlation values are significant on 1% chance of error.

### **4.3 Testing Theoretical Relationships**

To test the mediation and moderation effects, the study use the PROCESS macros tool given by Hayes 2012. The PROCESS Macros use the bootstrapping method, in which the random samples are generated from the data and to assess the required statistic in each resample (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Model 4 was used to test the mediation analysis of trust in supervisor between abusive supervision and workplace gossip, while Model 7 was used to test the moderating effect of LMX.

### 4.3.1 Mediation Analysis

Model 4 consists of three steps. In first step, we see effect of independent variable on dependent variable, without the inclusion of mediator in between them (path-c). In second step, path-a is calculated which is the effect of independent variable on mediator. In third step, independent variable and mediator together predicts the dependent variable. This step further consists of path-b and path-c.

From the table below we can see that, abusive supervision is a significant predictor of workplace gossip and it accounts for 33-units change in workplace gossip (path-c), with one unit increase in abusive supervision it accounts 33 units change in gossip behavior. Also, the positive sign indicates the positive relationship that increase in abusive behavior will also increase the gossiping behavior among employees. So, the first hypothesis of the study i.e. Abusive Supervision will have positive impact on Workplace Gossip, is accepted.

Further abusive supervision was also a significant predictor of trust in supervisor which brought 5-units change in trust in supervisor (path-a), the negative sign indicates the negative relationship, that with increase in abusive behavior from supervisor, the trust level in supervisors will decrease hence the second hypothesis of our study which was Abusive supervision is negatively related to employee trust in supervisor, is accepted.

The path-b which is from mediator to dependent variable is also significant, as trust in supervisor brings 13-units change in workplace gossip, but here the coefficient sign is positive showing that there is positive relationship between these variables while our study proposed that there is negative relationship so third hypothesis of our study i.e. Trust in supervisor will have negative impact on the workplace gossip, is rejected.

The direct effect is significant as it brings 41-units change in workplace gossip. The overall indirect effect of abusive supervision on workplace gossip through trust in supervisor is significant as values of UPCI and LLCI are -0.1212 and -0.0286 respectively. As we can see that both signs of ULCI and LLCI are same, and there is no zero in between hence mediation is present. Furthermore, there

is partial mediation, as direct effect and indirect are both significant. Hence, the hypothesis 4 i.e. Trust in supervisor will mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace gossip, is accepted.

TABLE 4.3: Trust in Supervisor as Mediator between Abusive Supervision and Workplace Gossip

Predictors	$\beta$	SE	t	p	R <sup>2</sup>	F
<b>1 Path a</b>						
X to M	-0.054	0.55	-9.75	0.000	0.22	95.25
<b>2 Path b</b>						
M to Y	0.133	0.03	3.57	0.000	0.22	46.86
<b>3 Path C</b>						
X to Y	0.33	0.382	8.83	0.000	0.19	78.12
<b>4 Path c'</b>						
X to Y	0.41	0.42	9.61	0.000	0.22	46.86
<b>Bootstrap for Indirect Effect</b>			$\beta$	SE	LLCI(95%)	UPCI(95%)
Trust in Supervisor			-0.0728	0.236	-0.121	-0.028

*X = Abusive supervision, Y = Workplace gossip, M = trust in supervisor, LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit. N = 325; Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported.*

### 4.3.2 Moderation Analysis

TABLE 4.4: LMX as Moderator between Abusive Supervision and Trust in Supervisor

	$\beta$	SE	t	p	LLCI (95%)	UPCI (95%)
<b>Int-Term</b>	0.0158	0.055	0.283	0.776	-0.0936	0.1251

*N = 325, abusive supervision x LMX = int-term*

Model 7 was used to analyze the moderating role of LMX between abusive supervision and trust in supervisor, the above table explains that the LMX is insignificant moderator, as  $p > 0.05$  and LLCI and UPCI don't have matching signs hence the hypothesis 5a i.e. "LMX quality will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and trust in supervisor such that, high quality LMX will weaken the relationship of abusive supervision and employee trust in supervisor", is not supported.

TABLE 4.5: Index of Moderated Mediation

Mediator	Index	SE	LLCI (95%)	ULCI (95%)
Trust in supervisor	0.0021	0.0080	-0.0158	0.0160

*N* = 325

The above table explains the index of moderated mediation, as LLCI and ULCI have opposite signs and doesn't contain zero in between so our hypothesis 5b i.e. LMX will moderate the indirect effect of abusive supervision on workplace gossip through trust in supervisor, such that high quality LMX will weaken the mediated relationship, is not supported.

TABLE 4.6: Hypotheses Result Summary

Hypotheses	Statements	Results
H <sub>1</sub>	Abusive Supervision will have positive impact on Workplace Gossip.	Accepted
H <sub>2</sub>	Abusive supervision is negatively related to employee trust in supervisor.	Accepted
H <sub>3</sub>	Trust in supervisor will have negative impact on the workplace gossip.	Rejected
H <sub>4</sub>	Trust in supervisor will mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace gossip.	Accepted
H <sub>5a</sub>	LMX quality will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and trust in supervisor such that, high quality LMX will strengthen the relationship of abusive supervision and employee trust in supervisor.	Rejected
H <sub>5b</sub>	LMX will moderate the indirect effect of abusive supervision on workplace gossip through trust in supervisor, such that high quality LMX will weaken the mediated relationship.	Rejected

# Chapter 5

## Discussion and Conclusion

### 5.1 Discussion

The basic purpose of the study was to analyze the theoretical relationships. Our study proposed the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace gossip. In addition to this, the mediating role of trust in supervisor and moderating role of LMX quality was also observed. This portion of the study will critically discuss the results reported in chapter 4, and analysis done with statistical tool SPSS. This chapter will focus in evaluating the reported outcomes of the relationships. Furthermore, it will connect it with previous studies to conceptualize that current study matches with previous concepts and how much it deviates. The prior discussed objective of the study will be linked with hypothesis to guide our discussion in order to draw possible implications.

#### 5.1.1 Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis of the study was “*abusive supervision will have positive impact on workplace gossip*” is accepted. This proposed study is in line with the previous researches which discussed about employee behavior. Employees attitude and behavior are greatly influenced by the way their supervisor treats them. Prior

studies have explained that performance of an employee in organization is dependent upon the employee-supervisor relationship. If the relationship is healthy, mean there is understanding and communication is better, then the performance will be enhanced. On the other hand, if the relation is not healthy employee tend to involve in deviant behaviors, additionally employee will look for reasons to quit organization (Valle et al., 2018).

Employee performance is guided by the strategy their managers use. The managers who are loud and abusive towards their employees will result in employees to depict negative emotions and behaviors while contrary to this, employees who become successful and flourish in organization is mainly because the effective behavior and proper guidance provided by their managers. Supervisors need to develop high skills to effectively manage employees at work. Supervisors who lack management skills and other leader's characteristics may involve in embarrassing employees in front of other, pass passive comments, yell at them for no major reason or may use sarcastic jokes to humiliate employees (Valle et al, 2018). These supervisors are abusive in nature, and their abusive behavior will highly affect their relationship with their employees. Employee become threaten, anxious, feeling of nervousness increases and employee realizes that they are unfairly treated at the work (Zhang et al., 2019).

Employee morale is also linked with supervisor's attitude and behavior. The way supervisors treat their employees, guide them, help them to achieve their goals and motives them, helps to them to higher morale. Managers who effectively deal with their employees, make strong bond by effective communication makes them achieve accomplishments, encourages the employee to be motivated to work for organization. On the other hand, when subordinates become target of mistreatment from their supervisors, they develop negative emotions and in order to get balanced they depict negative behavior. Supervisors abusive behavior will lead employee to change their opinions about their organization and supervisors, and thus involve in restricting themselves from showing citizenship behavior (Zellars et al., 2002). Managers abusive behavior can damage the relationship between mangers and their subordinates. Mistreatment received from the boss can give

rise to dissonance between subordinates and their organization. Thus, leading employee towards stress and frustration. Employee retaliate against stressors by indulging in negative behavior. Engaging in gossiping behavior is one such way to cope with stress (Kuo, Chang, Quinton, Lu, & Lee, 2015).

Our study also contributes towards affective events theory, which explains that employee tend to react in a negative way towards a negative situation. They tend to react in a negative way such as indulging themselves in deviant behavior, when they perceive that they are not treated well at the organization (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Abusive supervision causes a feeling of helplessness and low self-esteem among employees (Tepper et al., 2006), and previous studies have mentioned that individuals react towards any threatening situation to gain power and improve self-esteem (Street et al., 2001). Researchers have pointed out that when there is high power distance, employee are less likely to react to supervisor's abusive behavior (Wang et al., 2012). As a result, employee would like to involve in such a behavior that doesn't include higher potential cost, but still gives them a chance to get revenge, so they involve in workplace gossip (Decoster et al., 2013). Our study contributes towards the literature by enlightening the role of gossip in organizations, by creating links to its antecedent, that manager's behavior is important factor that encourages employees to involve in gossiping behavior. Previous studies mainly discussed the about possible outcomes of the workplace gossip, it was discussed in previous studies that gossip could have positive and negative impacts on individuals. While our study focused on discussing the originators of gossip, that what actually gives rise to workplace gossip.

### 5.1.2 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis of our study was "*Abusive supervision is negatively related to employee trust in supervisor*", is accepted. This proposed hypothesis of study is also in matching with previous studies, which explained that manager's behavior influences the trust level in their subordinates. The relationships require trust, and without trust no relationship can hold long. Individuals wanted to be treated



fairly in relationship, and whenever they go for relationship, they view whether this relationship would be long-term or short term. Similarly, employees will tend to invest more towards their relationship, when they find out their supervisors are trustworthy (Lind, 2001).

When employees trust their supervisors, it will be depicted in their outcomes. Studies have mentioned that supervisor's behavior and the way they treat their subordinates, influences the trust level of their subordinates (Zhang et al., 2008). Social exchange theory also confirms this linkage, subordinates will tend to consider the relationship as healthy and strong when they perceive that their supervisor treats them with respect and dignity. Employee considers the behavior of their manager as measure of their relationship, and as result employee tend to reciprocate accordingly. Good behavior and support received from supervisors help employees to consider their relationship as important and they tend to invest more towards it. The exchange is dependent upon rule of reciprocity. So, employers win the positive attitudes and behavior from their employees when they treat them properly (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

One easy way to win trust of subordinates is treating them fairly (Hua, 2008), and trust level will be highly effected if supervisor fail to treat their subordinates properly. Affective events theory is in line with study and supports our hypothesis. We know that negative events or situations can lead individuals towards negative emotions which further results in negative behavior (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996). Thus, supervisor's abusive behavior is also a contributor towards negative emotion, leading employees to have feelings of aggression and distrust (Tepper, 2007). While positive behavior received from supervisors encourages employees to devote heartedly towards their organization and manager (Xiaqi et al., 2012). Combining all these arguments and findings of our research are in matching with previous literature.

### 5.1.3 Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis of our study was “*Trust in supervisor will have negative impact on the workplace gossip*”, is not supported. The results of our study don't prove the significant negative relationship. The findings of our research indicated that there is a significant but positive effect of trust in supervisor and workplace gossip, but the literature explains that there is negative relationship, with the decrease in trust level towards supervisors, employee tend to involve more in gossiping behavior.

As already discussed, supervisor's behavior and attitude influence the trust level among its employees. And trust level can serve as an indicator to explain the quality of the employee-employer relationship. The gossiping behavior of employees is also influenced by the level of trust. Low trust in supervisor leads an employee to involve in more gossip behavior. When there is better understanding between employee and employer, negative gossip is less likely to elevate. While employee may involve in positive gossip. Employees who considers that their supervisors are trustworthy, they are inclined to discuss and gossip about their supervisors in positive manner like discussing their skills and abilities and appreciating how their supervisors support them during difficult situations (Ellwardt, Wittek, & Wielers 2012). High trust level towards supervisors only increases the positive gossip in organizations. This is in line with our study findings, that trust and gossip have positive impact. But our proposed hypothesis suggested that high level of trust reduces the gossip behavior.

Trust plays an important role in relationships, as it can affect the decision-making ability of employees, communication is improved and direct their attitudes in organization (Holland et al., 2012). When there is high level of trust among subordinates then tend to devote more towards their organization and performance, while low trust in relationships encourage them to involve in deviant behaviors, because employees feels psychological safe (Schneider et al., 2010). Studies indicated that, trust level influences the behavior of employees, according to affective

events theory, low trust towards their supervisor creates a negative feeling in subordinates, and to which employee react negatively (Schneider et al., 2010), such as participating gossiping behavior (Decoster, Camps, Stouten, Vandevyvere, & Tripp, 2013).

During informal discussion with employees working in banking sector, we questioned them frankly about their gossiping behavior. The reply was almost same from many employees, saying that they do involve in gossiping behavior either positive or negative. Gossip continues during the working hours. Employees mentioned that, trust level towards their supervisors doesn't matter much for gossiping behavior. Supervisors actions and behaviors make them targets for gossip. Sometimes trust is developed in long-terms, and supervisor mistreatment is just for short-term not permanent. Hence even little act of mistreatment towards their employees makes them centered of discussion for days. Employees wanted that their supervisors must communicate more frequently and discuss the issues with them, so they can get guidance properly, but employees discussed that, sometimes the information provided by the managers is not enough thus putting an employee towards helplessness and anxiety. Thus, employee gossip to seek help from other workers as according to them gossip was easier way to communication. Furthermore, employees explained that skills are enough, and employees feel incompetent to complete a task, so they involve became frustrated. Their frustrations lead them to involve in little chit-chat with other coworkers to get themselves relaxed. This gives an explanation to us, that trust level may not always induce the gossiping behavior besides there are other factors as well.

#### **5.1.4 Hypothesis 4**

The fourth hypothesis of our study was “*Trust in supervisor will mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace gossip*”, is supported. The findings of our study match with previous literature. As already discussed above that supervisor plays an important role in influencing the employee attitudes and actions. Managers must focus on maintaining healthy relationships with their subordinates, as they are the assets of the organization. Subordinates should feel

an ease to communicate with their bosses, and it's only possible when employees know that their supervisors are trustworthy. They know that their supervisors will be available for help and support and will look for subordinate's interests. When managers fail to win trust of their subordinates, employees get involve in spreading rumors and gossip just to harm the reputation of their supervisor (Decoster et al., 2013). Also, previous studies explained that targets of mistreatment received from supervisors, tend to share their grief with coworkers, hence involve in gossip.

The leader-member exchange theory also explains that, employees who are fairly treated by their supervisors, are happy and satisfied by them, thus depict positive attitude towards the organization and towards their boss. They tend to trust their managers and will more motivated in showing pro-social behavior. High trust of employees in their supervisors, encourages them not to take risk of harming the relationship (Frazier et al., 2010). Employees always prefer a friendly relationship rather than a hostile relationship because friendly relationship promotes trust level. The hostile relationship on other hand increases the chances of flow of gossip among the members. Literature discussed that employees tend to take revenge from supervisors when they feel perception of abusive supervision. Subordinates participate in derogatory comments and gossip behavior in order to get revenge, when their supervisors fail to win subordinates trust (Ellwardt et al., 2012).

The current study findings and previous literature supports our hypothesis. As mentioned in above section, that informal discussion was also held with employees in banks. Employees mentioned that behavior of supervisor is very important. How our supervisor treats us impacts our performance and actions. They mentioned that sometimes supervisor uses abusive behavior towards employees, which could be due to any reason. But the trust level towards supervisors decreases and employees become frustrated and helpless. The work-overload or working extra-long hours makes senior management to become aggressive, more and that's why they participate in abusive behavior. Thus, trust towards supervisor decreases. Employees further mentioned that mistreatment received from supervisor induces negative emotions in employees and then they have feeling of helplessness and anxiety. Thus, they share it with other coworkers and seek for help. As coworkers

are more interested to ask about the manager's behavior, because they use that information to test trustworthiness of manager. This leads the employees towards idle talk at work and gossip starts to flourish. Furthermore, employees discussed that negative actions of supervisors becomes hotter topic for gossip rather than positive actions, as people are more interested to hear about negative news from high-status people.

This discussion with employees also matches the studies of McAndrew et al., (2007), which says that managers actions and attitudes affect the subordinates, but their negative behavior such as mistreating employees, has more effect on subordinates as compared to their positive actions. Individuals spread gossip about a person to warn other people about his acts or actions and try to inform whether the person is trustworthy or not. Hence, it is clear from above discussion that trust in supervisor plays a deep role, and it act mediator between abusive supervision and workplace gossip.

### **5.1.5 Hypothesis 5a and 5b**

The last hypotheses of our study was LMX quality will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and trust in supervisor such that, high quality LMX will weaken the relationship of abusive supervision and employee trust in supervisor, is not supported. And LMX will moderate the indirect effect of abusive supervision on workplace gossip through trust in supervisor, such that high quality LMX will weaken the mediated relationship, is not supported.

The employee-employer relationship is dependent upon the quality. It could be high quality or low quality. In high-quality relationships employees are more closed to supervisor. They get direct information and support from them, while in low-quality relationships the exchange between employees and supervisors is just according to rules and norms. Previous studies have mentioned that high-quality relationships always lead towards positive outcomes and positively impact the overall work experience. High-quality LMX leads to better coordination and goal accomplishment is easy (Martin et al., 2016). The improvement or devastation

of employee-supervisor relationship depends upon the exchange between parties. When they fulfil each other's expectations, the trust is built which further leads to positive outcomes (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The literature has discussed it is not necessary that subordinates who have high-quality relationship with supervisor may not become victim of abusive supervision (Lian et al., 2012). Furthermore, studies of Tepper (2000), explains that even employees become victim of supervisor's abusive behavior, they don't leave the organization as they knew that this behavior is for short-term and it will eventually end (Walker, 1979). The reason that employees don't leave organization is that trust is built in long-term relationships, and employees know that their supervisor will be available for support and help during critical times.

The reason for the rejection of our hypothesis could be explained from different factors. Firstly, the supervisor's abusive behavior is differently viewed in different cultures. In USA culture, employees perceive abusive supervision as an inappropriate and unfair behavior because it is the violation of norms. While on other hand, Asian culture have different perspective. There is high-power distance and supervisors need to have a control and authority over their employees, so they use abusive behavior (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). While employees in Asian culture also wants a boss, who is strict, give order and put targets for employees to achieve. The strict behavior makes the employee worry about his target's achievement and a continuous reminder for them that their boss will be aggressive if they haven't achieved them. Thus, it leads us to understand that employees from Asian culture may perceive abusive supervision as fair behavior.

The high-quality LMX in Asian culture may not necessarily leads employees to have high trust level on supervisors. It is mainly because Asian cultures show high collectivism and high-power distance. It is already mentioned in literature, even if there is high-quality LMX, subordinates still have a chance to become victim of abusive supervision. Furthermore, literature has discussed that employees who have high-quality LMX will understand their supervisors more. They understand that supervisor's abusive behavior is because of some reasons, and supervisor still

provides them support and encouragement during critical situations. Thus, employees trust level is not affected much.

But employees from our study mentioned that when there is high-quality LMX, subordinates put their trust in supervisor, and when they use abusive behavior towards them, trust in supervisor is first likely to be affected. Employees lose trust over their supervisor and hence involve more towards deviant behaviors. Thus, it gives us understanding that LMX quality will not necessarily leads employee to develop high trust. So, the high-quality LMX will not act as moderator to weaken the relationship of abusive supervision and trust in supervisor.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The current study focused on contributing towards literature, that gossip play an important role in organizations. As many studies have already explained about gossip but still large gaps are present. Previous studies mostly explained the outcomes of gossip that how gossip can influence the behavior of other employees. While our research explained the antecedent of gossips. The way supervisor deal with their subordinates can lead them to involve in gossip behavior. Our research aimed to find linkage between supervisor mistreatment can give emergence to workplace gossip.

Gossip are widely practiced in organizations. Almost every employee involves in some sort of gossiping behavior. It could be initiating, participating or spreading news which may be incomplete or totally unauthentic. This gossiping behavior have both positive as well as negative impacts towards organizations and individuals. Organizations are deeply affected with negative behaviors of the employees. When employees involve in workplace gossip then the whole work environment becomes less productive. So, this study creates a base knowledge by developing a research model to investigate the relationship of abusive supervision and workplace along with trust in supervisor as mediator and moderation of LMX quality, with in context of AET theory.

Gossips are considered as most informal way of communication but spread like fire. The findings of our study explained that employee involvement in workplace gossip is dependent upon employee-supervisor relationship that is built on trust. If trust level of employee upon supervisor is reduced, then chances of involvement in workplace gossip would be more. Furthermore, supervisor mistreatment or abusive supervision is considered as negative event which give rise to negative emotions thus employees lose trust towards their supervisor and involve in workplace gossip.

In organizations gossips are sure thing to emerge, especially in large organizations where high-power distance exists. Employee when become target of abusive supervision becomes frustrated and anxious, this leads to negative emotions. So, employee involve in negative behavior just to get balanced. But involvement in deviant behaviors could be highly costly especially when job insecurity is high. As a result, employee involve in such behaviors which have lower potential cost but still give them a chance to get revenge, hence employee involve in workplace gossip to harm reputation of managers and organization. This is least negative behavior because the proper source for starting of gossip is hard to find.

Our study provides implications for the human resource practitioners that senior managers must look for the behavior of supervisors with their employees. A proper healthy work environment must be ensured so that employees not feel frustrated or helpless in any situation. Gossip can't be eliminated completely, but managers can monitor what do employees discuss during work. When flow of information is only from top to bottom, employees point of views are held unanswerable, thus they spent more time in spreading rumors and gossip, because employees wants to be identified with organizations and wants to be heard, so managers should focus on providing proper communication channels, and employees can easily share their options and suggestions.

Our study was conducted in service sector (banking sector) of Pakistan, and findings of our study are in line with previous studies and provide theoretical contributions towards AET theory. In service sector employees interact more with customers and their expectations are needed to be fulfilled. And it gives us understanding that more abusive supervision could be observed as supervisors also have



great expectations from employees and would like targets to be fulfilled. As our culture of high-power distance and collectivism also provides support for abusive supervision, that managers want to be aggressive to have a control over employees to get the things done. Thus, employee's involvement in gossip behavior also raises. The study is inconsistent with previous studies and provides support to AET theory, that negative events lead to negative behaviors.

### **5.3 Theoretical Contributions**

The current study contributes towards literature by discussing abusive supervision as an antecedent of workplace gossip. The study findings show that employee when become target of abusive supervision involves in behavior of gossip. As already discussed, that previous studies of gossip focused on the outcomes and mentioned that how gossip leads to negative consequences. Our study on gossip focused on the aim of looking for the other side of equation, that what actually gives rise to workplace gossip. Although previous researches have discussed gossip in wide detail still gaps in the study were present. Current study focused on developing new theoretical framework by drawing linkage that supervisor's abusive behavior encourages the employees to engage in gossip. Furthermore, our study considered trust in supervisor as a mediator and LMX quality as moderator to describe the relationship of abusive supervision on workplace gossip.

Drawing from perspective of affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), we know that, events or situations can trigger the emotions of individuals which further leads to their attitudes and behaviors. Here in our study we took abusive supervision as a negative event which leads to negative emotions such as decrease of trust in supervisor, which further results in behavioral outcome such as engaging in gossip. The way managers treat their employees always influences their attitudes and behaviors. When managers lack the skills to effectively deal with employees, they embarrass employees in front of others, rude towards them or lies to them or takes credit for employee's work. This mistreatment here is called abusive supervision, which contributes towards weakening of relationship. Thus, leaving

employees in situation of helplessness, anxiety and nervousness. This leads them to develop negative emotions and trust level will be affected, so they involve in deviant behaviors to get balanced. The perception of abusive behavior will be justified by employees by indulging in negative behaviors, such as workplace gossip.

Furthermore, our research mentioned LMX quality as moderator. Connecting it to affective events theory, it was deliberated that employees who develop high-quality LMX with supervisor tend to understand them better and trust level will not be much affected when supervisor use abusive behavior. But findings didn't support our literature, hence leading us to understand negative events or situations do cause negative emotions and results in negative behavioral response. Workplace events provides a platform to employees where attitudes are influenced by the emotions hence leading them to involve in either positive or negative behavior accordingly. Therefore, any activity or event inside work environment will result in positive or negative behaviors depending upon the feelings of employees. So, the findings of study are aligned and provide support to theoretical foundations of affective events theory.

## **5.4 Managerial Implications**

This study has several implications for organizations, for their improvement in creating healthy work-environment. The current study contributes towards literature and can help policy makers to develop policies that contributes towards effective working of organization. The consequences of abusive supervision and workplace gossip are alarming and highlighted by the literature. Therefore, it is necessary to take measures to control such behaviors. Thus, the implications are suggested.

There should be proper training for supervisors to enhance their skills which help to handle employees. Proper evaluation of supervisor by their subordinates must be done so the executives of organization can monitor and the behavior of supervisor and how they treat their subordinates. The evaluation must be often held in organizations and must be taken seriously. Managers who are reported to be involve in mistreatment behavior towards employees should be held answerable and should

be on record list for training sessions. Proper communications channels must be ensured in organizations, so that employees can easily share their viewpoints and opinions on issues. Thus, when employees become target of abusive supervision, they can easily report to higher supervisors rather than feeling helpless or anxious. Organizations should promote whistle-blowing and human resource management should develop policies that promote great standards for managers so that they can be represented as role models to their subordinates. Further, there should be proper personality assessment test for selecting senior management and organization must try to avoid selecting those supervisors who get irritated fast and have tendency of abusive behavior.

Winning employee's trust is very essential, organization must promote those managers who made great effort in making employee's commitment towards organization by developing healthy relationship based on trust and understanding.

Organizations must consider the fact that workplace gossip can't be eliminated. Studies have also found positive impacts of workplace gossips in organization, as it promotes communication, ease the way of social interaction and increases the flow of information. But the dark side of gossip still exists. As workplace gossip can also have negative impacts. Individuals promoting false or incomplete information about a third party may lead a coworker to develop negative perceptions about that third party. Organizations should focus on encouraging employees towards healthy job-related conversation and must monitor employees what do they discuss in their break-time. Organizations must attempt to develop policies or at least make a culture in which employees prefer discussion about their work and work issues rather than engaging in spreading rumors and gossip. Finally, organizations must focus on promoting Islamic work ethics, the promotion of Islamic values will help reduce the gossiping behavior among employees. Strong religious values must be ensured, and management must convey those values to employees so that employee involvement in unnecessary gossip behavior is reduced.

## **5.5 Future Directions**

Proposed study focused on linking abusive supervision with workplace gossip through trust in supervisor. Future directions can be drawn for further study in this field. Apart from negative outcomes, positive consequences of gossip can be a strong contribution towards literature. Further, consequences of gossip can be taken from perspective of employees that what type or nature of gossip or its frequency that offends the target employees. Secondly, researchers can focus on considering other factors that contributes towards gossip. For example, apart from abusive supervision, workplace ostracism can be studied in relationship with gossip. Thirdly, Islamic work ethics and organizational culture also have great linkage towards defining the employee behavior, thus it must be considered. Fourthly, culture also plays important role in organizational behavior thus, cultural factor such as high-power distance, collectivism must be considered as moderator for the study. Fifthly, personality traits also explain employee behavior, for future studies personality traits like extroversion and introversion can be taken that how different personality behaves towards gossip. Lastly, further research can discuss about negative outcomes such health and well-being of employees also in future the equation can be reversed that how gossip can affect the mental well-being of supervisors or how it can lead them to be abusive in nature.

## **5.6 Limitations**

Our study also has many limitations. The current study is limited to only banking sector of Pakistan. Future studies can consider about taking other sectors like telecom sector, textile or public sector, as it is genuine that different working environment will result in different findings. Secondly, data were collected by convenience sampling method which may limit the generalizability of the results. Thirdly, leaving the questionnaire in the bank branches and later collect them would not necessarily give the desired information, as most of the employees are not willing to fill up the questionnaires or they may have greater workload, so they

fill the questionnaires without reading the questions, hence the response rate was very low, which limits the generalizability. Fourthly, the range of the validity is applicable to the selected population of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Furthermore, the proposed research needs ample of time. As of now, it was hard and difficult to conduct research properly. As there are many branches of banks countrywide and surveying, personally recording and collecting data was not feasible. Time factor is a major limitation for our study. The research requires a great time and if the population was to be specifically increased, then the time frame must be increased as well. Due to time factor, data were collected in cross sectional method. Future research can be done through time lag studies, as data collected at different points of time gives improved results and reduce the common method biasness. Lastly, the current study used SPSS for analysis, further studies can use advance analysis tools like Mplus or SmartPLS to handle complex models.

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# APPENDIX

## Questionnaire

Dear Respondent

I am Student at Capital University of Science and Technology, enrolled in MS. Management Sciences program. I am collecting data for my research, titled The Impact of Abusive Supervision on Workplace Gossip: Mediating Role of Trust and Moderating Role of LMX quality. The research sample chosen for analysis are the employees working at Private Banks in Rawalpindi / Islamabad. For this purpose, I need some of your valued time to answer the questions. This questionnaire will hardly take your 5-10 minutes. Please feel free to share precise information as its optimal confidentiality will be ensured, and data will only be used for academic purposes.

Thank you!

Mahin Abid

MS Scholar

Capital University of Science and Technology

<b>Gender</b>	Male	Female			
<b>Age</b>	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	Above 40
<b>Qualification</b>	Bachelors	Masters	MS/MPhil	PhD	
<b>Experience</b>	1-3 years.	4-6 years.	7-9 years	10 years and above	
<b>Bank Name</b>					

## Section 1

Please tick the relevant choice.

**1 = Never, 2 = Seldom, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Moderately, 5 = Very Often**

ABUSIVE SUPERVISION						
My boss						
1	Ridicules me	1	2	3	4	5
2	Tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid	1	2	3	4	5
3	Gives me the silent treatment	1	2	3	4	5
4	Puts me down in front of others	1	2	3	4	5
5	Invades my privacy	1	2	3	4	5
6	Reminds me of my past mistakes and failures	1	2	3	4	5
7	Doesn't give me credit for jobs requiring a lot of effort	1	2	3	4	5
8	Blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment	1	2	3	4	5
9	Breaks promises he/she makes	1	2	3	4	5
10	Expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason	1	2	3	4	5
11	Makes negative comments about me to others	1	2	3	4	5
12	Is rude to me	1	2	3	4	5
13	Does not allow me to interact with my coworkers	1	2	3	4	5
14	Tells me I'm incompetent	1	2	3	4	5
15	Lies to me	1	2	3	4	5

## Section 2

Please tick the relevant choice.

**1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree**

TRUST IN SUPERVISOR						
1	I trust my supervisor to look out for my best interests	1	2	3	4	5
2	My supervisor is trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5
3	I can count on my supervisor to protect my interests	1	2	3	4	5

## Section 3

Please tick the relevant choice.

**1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very Often, 5 = Always**

WORKPLACE GOSSIP						
1	Colleagues praising the skills of an absent person. (R)	1	2	3	4	5
2	Colleagues criticizing uncooperative behavior of an absent person	1	2	3	4	5
3	Colleagues making fun of the behavior of an absent person	1	2	3	4	5
4	Colleagues expressing their irritation about a strange remark of an absent person	1	2	3	4	5
5	Colleagues asking the opinion of others concerning a particular behavior of an absent person	1	2	3	4	5
6	Colleagues who say they feel treated badly by an absent person	1	2	3	4	5
7	Colleagues trying to justify or defend a specific behavior of an absent person	1	2	3	4	5
8	Colleagues just informing others about some interesting news concerning an absent person (e.g., relationships). (R)	1	2	3	4	5
9	Colleagues comparing their own performance at office to the performance of an absent person	1	2	3	4	5
10	Colleagues criticizing something they regard as a negative trait or feature of an absent person	1	2	3	4	5
11	Colleagues criticizing the passive behavior of an absent person	1	2	3	4	5



## Section 4

Please tick the relevant choice.

**1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very Often, 5 = Always**

LMX						
1	I like my supervisor very much as a person.	1	2	3	4	5
2	My supervisor is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend	1	2	3	4	5
3	My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with.	1	2	3	4	5
4	My supervisor defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question.	1	2	3	4	5
5	My supervisor would come to my defense if I were "attacked" by others.	1	2	3	4	5
6	My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake	1	2	3	4	5
7	I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job description.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to further the interests of my work group	1	2	3	4	5
9	I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his/ her job.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I respect my supervisor's knowledge of and competence on the job.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I admire my supervisor's professional skills.	1	2	3	4	5