A COR-Based Analysis of Abusive Supervision in Retail Banking: Examining the Moderating Influence of Islamic Work Ethics

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ABSTRACT

This study strived to focus on the influence of Abusive Supervision on Employee Task Performance, considering the mediating role of Deviant Workplace Behaviour (DWB). Grounded in Conservation of Resources theory, this research dwells further into exploration of moderating role of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) in influencing the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Deviant Work Behaviour (DWB). This study focused on banking sector of Punjab region was conducted in the banking sector of Punjab, Pakistan, employing a structured questionnaire dispensed to 256 employees from major banks including Meezan Bank, National Bank of Pakistan, Bank Islami, Habib Bank Ltd. (HBL), Bank of Punjab, Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB), and Allied Bank.". Data collected through convenience sampling technique was analyzed by employing structural equation modelling (SEM). Evidence from this study demonstrates that Abusive Supervision intensifies deviant workplace conduct and hampers employee task performance. Moreover, this study indicates that the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Employee Task Performance is mediated by Deviant Work Behavior. Notably,

strong Islamic Work Ethics diminish the positive association between Abusive Supervision and Deviant Workplace Behavior highlighting a buffering effect.

Keywords: *Abusive supervision, Task performance, Islamic work ethics, Deviant workplace behaviour.*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays crucial role in determining organizational success and influencing employee experiences. While effective leaders may inspire and direct their teams towards achieving goals, others, even with their ostensible success, may fail to earn the trust and respect from their followers (Sharma and Jain 2013). Situational Contexts and Leader's style verily and widely impact leadership behaviour. While, contemporary researchers acknowledge that not all leaders use their authority constructively, a growing body of researchers has started focusing on darker aspects of leadership from traditional positive leadership (Goute, Goute et al. 2021, Santos, Coelho et al. 2023, Shafqat, Mushtaq et al. 2025). One such aspect, Abusive Supervision refers to sustained displays of hostile non-verbal and verbal behaviour by supervisor, excluding physical contact (Tepper 2000, Tierney and Tepper 2007). Abusive Supervision has arisen as a critical issue affecting performance, psychological wellbeing, and employee morale. In United States estimated an estimated annual loss of $65 billion in health care and productivity has been attributed to exposure to abusive supervision (Tepper, Duffy et al. 2004). Abusive Leadership has also been associated with reduced creativity, psychological

distress and deviant workplace behaviour(Wang, Mao et al. 2012, Eschleman, Madsen et al. 2014, Priesemuth, Schminke et al. 2014, Aleassa 2025) at both team and individual level (Marchant-Pérez, Leitão et al. 2024). Early studies considered abusive supervision as unidimensional construct (Tepper 2000); subsequently two dimensions i.e., active aggressive and passive aggressive were introduced (Mitchell and Ambrose 2007).

In Pakistani context, the issue is further complicated under cultural dynamics such as high power distance characterizations (Iqbal, Bashir et al. 2025), strong hierarchical structures(Safdar, Mubarak et al. 2025) and authoritarian leadership norms(Asim, Zhiying et al. 2025). In such settings, the misuse of authority is often normalized, and abusive supervision tend to be more prevalent; sometimes mistakenly perceived as effective. A study has reported that approximately 15% of Pakistani employees experience workplace abuse, with men at 16% being slightly more affected than women at 13%(Mehmood, Faraz et al. 2020). Recent studies in also indicate towards growing concern concerning abusive leadership in Pakistan (Irshad, Hussain et al. 2021, Tahir, Bashir et al. 2022, Khalid, Malik et al. 2024, Bhatti, Zahid et al. 2025).

It is worth indicating that such behaviour is in sharp contrast to Islamic values which determine both moral as well as cultural frameworks in Pakistan. With over 96% of population identifying as Muslims (Mehfooz 2021), religion is deeply woven into employees' personal as well as professional lives. Islam advocates compassion, fairness and ethical treatment of others while it condemns abuse of power(Ahmad, Islam et al. 2021, Ahmed and Brasted 2021, Abdul Mutalib, Rafiki et al. 2022). This provides the ethical foundation holding Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) that promotes discipline, sincerity and social justice in the workplace(Yahya, Sarif et al. 2025). Employees bearing strong Islamic work ethics are committed to ethical conduct and may exhibit higher resilience in face of abusive supervision (Raja, Haq et al. 2020).

According to Robinson and Bennett (1995), DWB encompasses intentional actions that breach important organizational norms, thereby putting institution and it's members at risk. This behaviour encompasses minor rule violations as well as more serious actions such as withdrawal, aggression, or sabotage. In context of abusive supervision, deviant work behaviour is often reaction to perceived mistreatment, stress or unfairness which serves as coping mechanism or form of retaliation by employees(Mitchell and Ambrose 2007). Conservation of Resource Theory points towards employees when facing resource depletion due to abusive supervision such as loss of respect, self-worth or emotional energy, they may consequently engage in deviant behaviour to regain sense of control or justice (Hobfoll 1989). Such behaviour may be detrimental to performance at bother individual and organizational level. Studies have reported link between abusive supervision and both workplace deviance and work related outcomes (Zhang and Liao 2015, Santos, Coelho et al. 2023). With leading role in stressor-strain-outcome framework, deviant workplace behaviour is important mechanism through which leadership impairs employee performance, necessitating further investigation in culturally specific contexts such as Pakistan's banking sector.

Employee Task Performance refers to "effectiveness with which employees carry out the core responsibilities and duties outlined in their job roles"(Borman and Motowidlo 1997). In services industry such as banks, employees directly influence customer satisfaction and operational efficiency which is indicative of importance of high task performance for organizational performance. Task performance is sensitive to quality of leadership that employees experience, particularly, abusive supervision has been linked with decline in task performance as it psychological safety get eroded, motivation diminishes and stress and emotional exhaustion increase (Tepper 2000, Xu, Huang et al. 2012). With high power distance cultural context in Pakistan where challenging authority is culturally discouraged, effects of abusive leadership on task performance can be particularly distinct. Therefore, examining how

abusive leadership impairs task performance, and the potential moderating role of Islamic Work Ethic is essential for advancing both theoretical understanding and practical approaches in leadership and performance management.

This study, drawing on Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, explores the effect of abusive supervision on employee task performance, emphasizing the mediating role of deviant workplace behaviour. Furthermore, it examines how Islamic Work Ethics moderateates the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Deviant Work Behaviour, potentially buffering the harmful effects of toxic leadership in Pakistan's banking sector.

The introduction lays the groundwork for understanding how abusive supervision affects workplace relationships and employee performance. It explains why this issue matters, especially in the context of Pakistan's banking sector, where leadership styles and workplace culture play a big role in shaping employee behaviour. By highlighting key ideas like how people react to mistreatment at work and the possible role of personal values such as Islamic Work Ethics, the introduction sets foundation for the deeper exploration and findings presented in subsequent sections.

Research Gap

Abusive Supervision is a multifaceted construct that can manifest in various forms, workplace contexts and intensities. Research has consistently indicated that abusive supervision can provoke counterwork behaviour but empirical evidence regarding its effect on employee task performance remain inconsistent (Liang, Yan et al. 2024). This highlights the need for contextual research of abusive leadership and its outcomes on both performance and workplace deviance, in this case, the banking sector of Pakistan. Besides, religiosity and ethical belief system may shape employees' interpretation of abusive supervision.

In this regard, Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), that emphasizes integrity, accountability, patience, and altruism, (Alwi, Parmitasari et al. 2021) may function as a resource that buffers the psychological strain associated with supervisory abuse. Although cultural and ethical moderators have been suggested as important buffer, The influence of Islamic Work Ethics remains significantly unexplored. Studies that have explored Islamic work ethics as moderator (Islam, Ahmad et al. 2021, Islam, Ahmed et al. 2021) have considered constructs as knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing. Only few studies have explored how IWE weakens the effect of abusive supervision on deviant behaviour in non-Western, such as Pakistan that has high power distance culture (Javed et al., 2019; Khalid et al., 2018).This study addresses important research gap by integrating deviance and mediator and IWE as cultural moderator to build contextually embedded understanding of how abusive supervision impairs employee task performance.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1. To understand the impact of abusive supervision on task performance mediated by deviant workplace behaviour.
2. To understand the moderation of Islamic work ethics between the relationship of abusive supervision and deviant workplace behaviour.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Orientation for the Study: Conservation of Resource (COR) theory

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory provides the foundation of this study. COR postulates that individuals strive to acquire, and protect resources such as energy, emotional well being, self esteem etc. If these resources are threatened or drained, particularly in the form of stressors such as abusive supervision, individual suffer psychological strain and may engage

in maladaptive behaviour or become defensive to conserve what remains. Abusive supervision functions as resource depleting force that undermines employees' emotional stability who may resort to deviant workplace behaviour as coping mechanism to retaliate (Mitchell and Ambrose 2007). Concurrently, the disengagement caused by abusive supervision may affect task performance as employees have fewer resources to invest (Halbesleben, Neveu et al. 2014). Islamic Work Ethics serves as personal resource reservoir that can buffer the negative effects of abusive supervision. Islamic work ethics can enhance psychological resilience; helping employees reinterpret abusive behaviour through faith driven lens.

Abusive Supervision

In his ground breaking work, Hornstein (1996) characterized abusive supervision as "one whose major purpose is the control of others, and such control is attained by different ways that induce fear and intimidation." Tepper (2000) further defined abusive supervision as: "subordinates' perceived sustained hostile "verbal and non-verbal" supervisory behaviour, excluding physical contact." Abusive Supervision has been linked with various job outcomes including job dissatisfaction, turnover, reduced job performance among others (Tepper 2000, Tepper, Duffy et al. 2004, Tierney and Tepper 2007). Supervisor abuse includes lying to subordinates, expression of anger to them and ridiculing them (Moin and Khan 2025).

Harris, Kacmar et al. (2007) in reflection of Tepper's definition of abusive supervision noted that abusive supervision is subjective judgement and may vary from employee to employee. Secondly, he notes that abusive supervision has a long-term exhibition of unfavourable supervisory activities associated with it. Thirdly, abusive behaviour includes unpleasant nonverbal as well as verbal behaviour, falling short of physical contact.

As suggested by Mitchell and Ambrose (2007), Passive-Aggressive abusive behaviour has been referred as the behaviour that is accidental in nature but does exhibit unconscious aggressive motive. Active-Aggressive Abusive behaviour on the other hand describes hostile behaviour targeting subordinates through physical or verbal means such as swearing, gossiping, spreading rumours, breaking mug etc.

Deviant Workplace Behaviour

The term Deviant Workplace Behavior describes "employees' behavior that violates organizational norms, policies or values" (Robinson and Bennett 1995). Deviant workplace behaviors can be considered as collection of distinct behavior that harm or attempt to hurt organization and its stake holders (Bujang, Kamaluddin et al. 2024). Deviant Workplace Behavior may be characterized as either interpersonal or organizational. Interpersonal deviant behavior focus on fellow members whereas organizational deviant behavior are aimed at organizations (Abbasi, Amran et al. 2025). Despite being perceived as unethical and inappropriate within the workplace, Deviant Workplace Behavior continues to occur among employees (Restubog, Zagenczyk et al. 2015). As suggested by Skarlicki and Folger (1997) engagement in deviant workplace behavior is a means to tackle perceived inequalities and to re-establish a sense of fairness. Workplace deviance can have severe financial repercussions, leading to losses in the range of millions to billions of dollars (Nauman, Basit et al. 2025).

Islamic Work Ethics

For Muslim employees, the Islamic work ethic holds a place of high importance in both professional and personal spheres (Ateeq, Alzoraiki et al. 2025). They are based on Islamic principles derived from Quran and Hadith. They are founded on the moral and ethical framework of Islam. Besides stressing qualities of work ethics, another important consideration is the intention to serve Allah (Maqbool, Lyu et al. 2024). The focus on intention than outcome and all acts that are deemed immoral are considered forbidden, irrespective of their rewards (Al-Douri, Aldabbagh et al. 2020). Islam, through the Qur'an and Sunnah, directs individuals

to use their talents for the benefit of society, highlighting the importance of productivity and ethical contribution in the workplace (Islam, Ahmed et al. 2021). Islam's work ethics emphasize on importance of economic activities as means for achieving major goals in life and earn sovereignty (Javed, Fatima et al. 2019). Islam prohibits any activity that are ineffective and pointless (Yousef 2000).

Task Performance

Task Performance has been defined as "the effectiveness with which job incumbents perform activities that contribute to the organization's technical core either directly by implementing a part of its technological process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services"(Borman and Motowidlo 1997). Employee task performance has been highlighted as crucial importance for organizational growth and survival (Adekiya 2024). Task Performance has been reported to be affected by number of factors including inspiring the individual, increasing effort, extending effort over time and directing attention and action (Locke, Shaw et al. 1981).

Literature has consistently identified Abusive supervision as critical antecedent to deviant workplace behaviour. Abusive behaviour often leads to retaliate by exhibiting deviant workplace behaviour. This association is also grounded in reciprocity and social exchange theories (Kim, Cohen et al. 2023, Tu, Fan et al. 2025). Empirical evidence also suggests significant positive relationship between both interpersonal as well as organizational deviance (Mitchell and Ambrose 2007). Evidence from another study supports the existence of a dynamic, two-way association between abusive supervision and workplace deviance (Lian, Ferris et al. 2014). Collectively, prior studies offer substantial evidence reinforcing the proposed link between abusive supervision and increased deviant behaviour in the workplace.

H1: Abusive supervision is positively related to deviant workplace behaviour of employees.

Abusive supervision undermines employees' capacity to carry out their tasks efficiently. Tepper (2000) argues that abusive supervision negatively influences multiple job-related outcomes, including task performance. A study of public service officers in Korea reported significant negative correlation ($r= -0.34$, $p< 0.1$) between abusive supervision and task performance (Kim, Lee et al. 2020). Another study validates the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance by highlighting buffering effect of high levels of goal commitment, explaining that while performance may not always decline in every situation but generally it remains negative under abusive leadership (Velez and Neves 2016). Therefore, empirical findings largely align with the notion that abusive supervision adversely affects task-related outcomes.

H2: Abusive Supervision is negatively associated with task performance.

Deviant workplace behaviour has been consistently reported found to diminish task performance. A study conducted in Bangladesh indicates significant negative correlation between deviant workplace practices; this includes various forms of deviant behaviour such as production, political, and property deviance—as well as personal aggression and diminished task performance., contending that such misconduct is early sign of poor job performance (Rahman, Karan et al. 2013). Another study which surveyed Chinese employees, reported that deviant workplace behaviour negatively predicted employee performance ($\beta = –0.18$, $p < .01$) with perceived organizational support buffering its impact (Tian and Guo 2023). Another study contended that deviant behaviour undermines job performance, although transformational leadership can moderate this effect (Howladar, Rahman et al. 2018). These findings align with Conservation of Resources (COR) theory engaging in deviance deplete employee's cognitive and emotional resources, diminishing their capacity to perform effectively. Overall, the literature robustly supports.

H3: *Deviant workplace behaviour is negatively associated with task performance.*

Abusive supervision not only undermines task performance directly but also indirectly through its influence on deviant workplace behaviour. Based in Social Exchange Theory and fairness theories, abusive supervision erodes perception of interactional justice, instigating employees to engage in deviant workplace behaviour (Wang, Mao et al. 2012). It was revealed in their findings that the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance was fully mediated by interactional justice, leading to a decline in performance.

Further substantiating this mediation model, empirical studies contend that abusive supervision provokes deviance (Mitchell and Ambrose 2007, Tepper, Carr et al. 2009). The deviant behaviour then depletes energy and attention leading to performance in routine tasks. Tepper, Carr et al. (2009) further revealed that workplace deviance prompted abusive treatment which is negatively correlated with objective performance indicators. Although, most studies examined simple mediation (abuse → deviance → performance), the integrated evidence supports the hypothesis.

H4: *Deviant workplace behaviour significantly mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance.*

A study by (Javed, Fatima et al. 2019) involving 336 employees from various industries in Pakistan have found a positive relationship between abusive supervision and deviant workplace behaviour, but this relationship was much less pronounced employees with high levels of Islamic work ethics. In context of COR theory, the authors arugued that Islamic Work Ethics provided employees with psychological and moral resources that buffer emotional exhaustion triggered by abusive supervision, thereby reducing the likelihood to get involved in deviance. Another study reported that Islamic work ethics weakenthe impact of abusive supervision on knowledge hiding through enhancement of interpersonal justice (Khalid, Bashir et al. 2018). Future orientation and Islamic work ethics lessen the positive association between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding behaviour. These studies consistently show that high levels of Islamic Work Ethics—even in the face of abusive supervision—dampen employees' tendency to act out through deviant behaviour, thus substantiating H5.

H5: *Islamic Work Ethics moderateates the significant relationship between abusive supervision and deviant workplace behaviour such that the relationship is weaker with high Islamic Work Ethics but high with low Islamic Work Ethics.*

The literature review furnishes a strong theoretical and empirical foundation that supports the development of the proposed research hypotheses by carefully examining existing studies on abusive supervision, deviant workplace behaviour, and employee task performance. It synthesizes past research to highlight established patterns, gaps in knowledge, and conflicting findings, thereby justifying the need for further investigation, particularly in the cultural and organizational context of Pakistan. Additionally, the literature review introduces key frameworks showing how they help explain the relationships between variables and guide the formulation of testable hypotheses. This groundwork not only clarifies the direction of the current study but also ensures that the research is well grounded.

Conceptual Model

Conceptual Model of study is shown in Figure 1 depicting all proposed hypothesis.
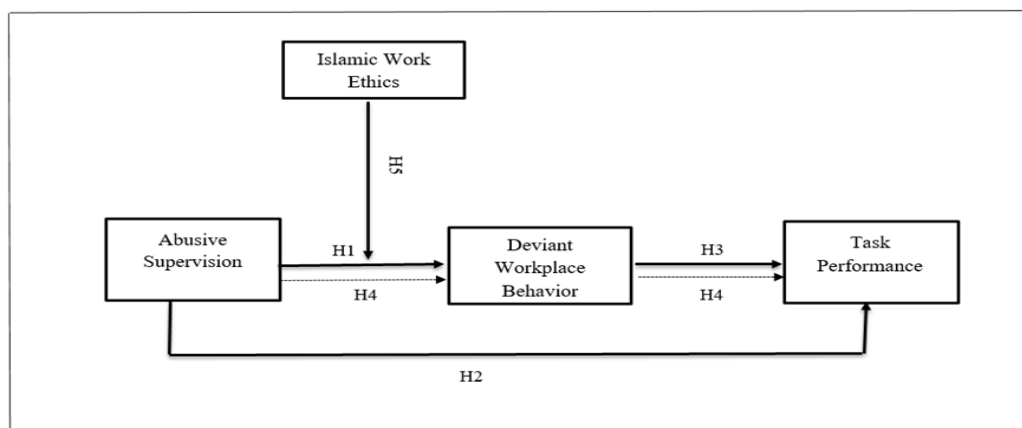
Figure 01: Conceptual Model

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study is explanatory, and cross sectional focusing on mediating role of Deviant Workplace Behaviour between Abusive Supervision and Task Performance and the moderation role of Islamic Work Ethics in the relation of Abusive Supervision and Deviant Workplace Behaviour. Quantitative primary data was collected to examine the proposed relationships. This study follows positivist philosophy as the role of scholar in such studies is merely of data collection and interpretation (Acharyya and Bhattacharya 2019). This study considered individual employees as unit of analysis in this study, which included employees by banking sector.

Population and Sampling

Out of 760 population of retail bank employees, sample size has been kept 256 referring to formula (Bougie and Sekaran 2019). Data for the present research were gathered from staff members of major banks operating in Pakistan including Meezan Bank, National Bank of Pakistan, Bank Islami, Habib Bank Ltd. (HBL), Bank of Punjab, Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB), and Allied Bank using convenience sampling technique.

Data Collection

In present research, data was collected by using primary means via a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by using the measures abusive supervision (15 items) developed by Tepper (2000) , Task Performance (07 items) developed by Andrade, Queiroga et al. (2020), Deviant Workplace Behaviour (19 items) developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000) and Islamic Work Ethics (4 items) developed by Murtaza, Abbas et al. (2016) with a total of 48 items based on five-point Likert scale. The data was collected from permanent bank employees working in both public and private banks in District Vehari. Each respondent was asked the same, identical questions, and they were all easy to understand and follow.

Data Analysis

This study used Smart PLS 3.0 to analyse the data, performing as the primary tool for both measurement model assessment and structural model evaluation through bootstrapping and path analysis.

The methodology chalks out the systematic approach employed to explore the proposed relationships in Pakistani banking sector

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Measurement Model Evaluation

To ensure the robustness of the measurement model, a series of descriptive, reliability, and validity assessments were conducted. Among the four core constructs, Deviant Workplace Behaviour (DWB) exhibited the highest mean score (M = 3.68), followed by Abusive Supervision (AS) (M = 3.64), indicating a relatively high prevalence of perceived negative workplace behaviour. Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) was moderately endorsed (M = 3.46), while Task Performance (TP) recorded the lowest mean (M = 2.52), reflecting comparatively low self-rated performance among respondents.

Internal consistency reliability was confirmed, as all Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values also surpassed acceptable cutoffs (CR > 0.70; AVE > 0.50), supporting the presence of convergent validity across all constructs.

To assess discriminant validity, the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was calculated, confirming acceptable construct distinction. Table 1 details that all HTMT estimates were found to be beneath the conservative limit of 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015), indicating that each construct was empirically distinct and free from conceptual redundancy.

Table 1: *Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) for Discriminant Validity*

	AS	DWB	IWE	TP
AS				
DWB	0.586			
IWE	0.379	0.358		
TP	0.504	0.547	0.289	

Note: AS *= Abusive Supervision**, DWB** = Deviant Workplace Behavior**, IWE** = Islam Work Ethics**, TP** = Task Performance.*

Assessment of Multicollinearity

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were computed to detect potential multicollinearity among predictor constructs in the structural model. With VIF values falling between 1.136 and 1.481, well under the standard cutoff of 5, the results confirm that multicollinearity was not present This affirms the statistical independence of the predictor variables and the stability of path estimates.

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was evaluated using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) algorithm and bootstrapping procedures (5,000 resamples) in Smart PLS. The results revealed significant indirect, direct, and moderating effects among the study constructs, as illustrated in Figure 2.
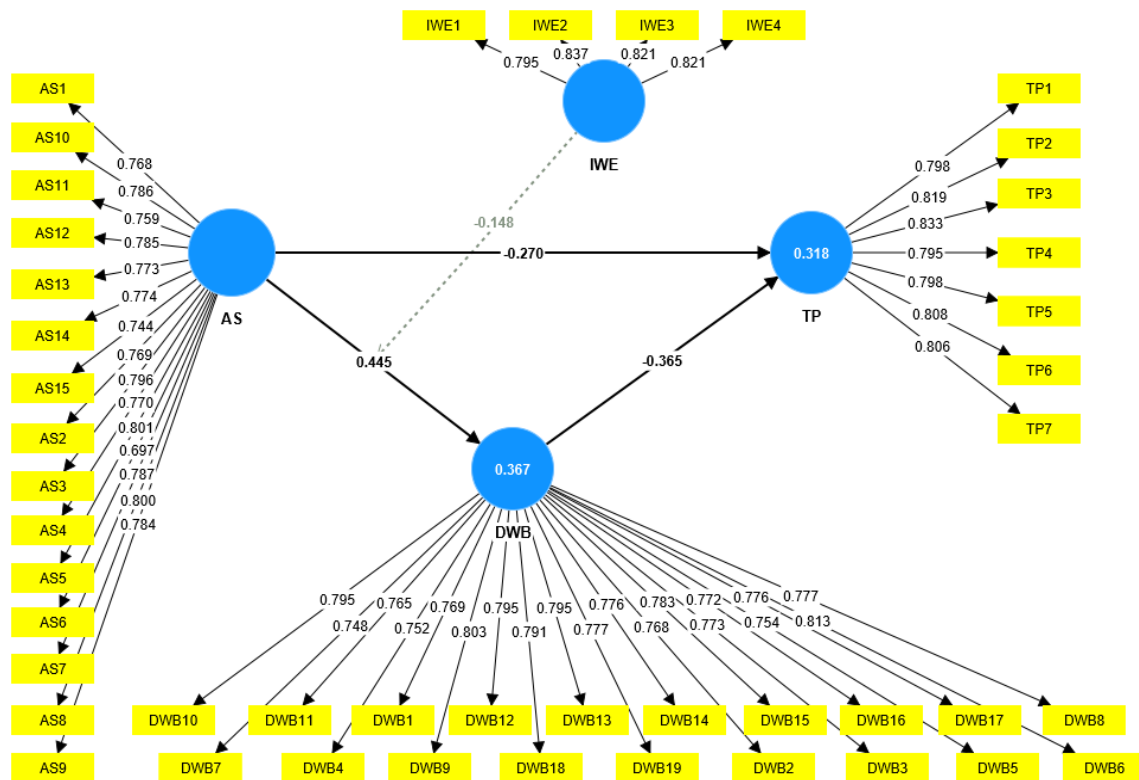
Figure 02: *Structural Model*

Direct, Indirect, and Moderating Effects

The structural model revealed several significant direct relationships among the study variables as detailed in Table 3. The analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between abusive supervision (AS) and deviant workplace behaviour (DWB) (β = 0.445, p < 0.001), implying that greater exposure to supervisory mistreatment increases the likelihood of employees engaging in workplace deviance.. Moreover, AS was found to negatively influence task performance (TP) (β = -0.270, p = 0.001), suggesting that the detrimental effects of abusive supervision extend to undermining employees' ability to perform effectively. Additionally, DWB itself exerted a significant negative impact on TP (β = -0.365, p < 0.001), further emphasizing the performance-related costs associated with dysfunctional employee behaviour.

In terms of indirect effects, the analysis supported a partial mediation pathway whereby DWB mediated the relationship between AS and TP (β = -0.162, p = 0.001). This finding implies that the negative effect of abusive supervision on task performance operates, in part, through its ability to elicit deviant behaviour from subordinates. Furthermore, the study confirmed the presence of a significant moderating effect of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) on the AS–DWB relationship (β = -0.148, p = 0.014). Specifically, the strength of the positive association between AS and DWB diminished at higher levels of IWE, suggesting that employees with strong ethical beliefs rooted in Islamic values are less likely to respond to abusive supervision with deviant actions. This moderation supports the buffering role of ethical frameworks in mitigating negative behavioural outcomes in toxic leadership contexts.

Table 3: Bootstrapping Path coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T statisti (|O/STDEV|)	P values
AS -> DWB	0.445	0.445	0.079	5.628	0.000
AS -> TP	-0.270	-0.272	0.082	3.298	0.001
DWB -> TP	-0.365	-0.366	0.082	4.464	0.000
AS -> DWB -> TP	-0.162	-0.163	0.048	3.413	0.001
IWE x AS -> DWB	-0.148	-0.150	0.060	2.466	0.014

Note: AS = *Abusive Supervision*, **DWB** = *Deviant Workplace Behavior*, **IWE** = *Islamic Wo*

Ethics, **TP** = *Task Performance. P < 0.05, t > 1.96*

Model Explanatory Power and Effect Sizes

The R^2 values indicate that the model explains 36.7% of the variance in DWB and 31.8% in TP, demonstrating substantial explanatory power for behavioural and performance outcomes. Effect size (f^2) analysis further revealed firstly, A medium effect of Abusive Supervision on Deviant Work Behaviour with ($f^2 = 0.229$), secondly, a small effect of Abusive behaviour on Task Performance ($f^2 = 0.072$) and lastly a moderateate effect of Deviant Work Behaviour on Task Performance ($f^2 = 0.164$).

These results collectively validate the hypothesized theoretical framework, demonstrating the vital role of deviant behaviour as a mechanism through which abusive supervision impairs task performance, and the mitigating influence of Islamic Work Ethics as a contextual buffer.

Table 4: Summary regarding Hypothesis on the base of findings of the study results

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Abusive supervision is positively related to deviant workplace behavior of employees.	**Accepted**
H2	Abusive Supervision is negatively associated with task performance.	**Accepted**
H3	Deviant workplace behavior is negatively associated with task performance.	**Accepted**
H4	Deviant workplace behavior significantly mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance.	**Accepted**
H5	Islamic Work Ethics moderates the significant relationship between abusive supervision and deviant workplace behavior such that the relationship is weaker with hig Islamic Work Ethics but high with low Islamic Work Ethics.	**Accepted**

DISCUSSION

This study presents understanding of abusive supervision of how abusive supervision adversely impacts employee task performance through deviant workplace behaviour. It also dwells on how Islamic work ethics function as a contextual buffer. Conducted within Pakistani banking sector, the results assert all five hypothesized relationships and contribute to broader management literature in culturally embedded context.

Firstly, abusive supervision's positive association with deviant workplace behaviour confirmation (H1) upholds prior empirical studies conducted in both Eastern and Western settings. The findings are in consistence with Mitchell and Ambrose (2007), who found that mistreated employees retaliate with deviance, this study confirms that even in conservative and collective culture like Pakistan, abusive supervision prompt backlash. This finding emphasizes how such toxic behaviours manifest in a tightly controlled banking environment, where hierarchical dynamics often limit subordinates from expressing dissent overtly. In such cultures, deviance may emerge in more covert forms—such as withdrawal, passive aggression, or minor rule-breaking—as a coping strategy.

Abusive supervision adversely affects task performance (H2) confirms earlier work where sustained supervisor mistreatment impairing performance and employee motivation was reported (Lian, Ferris et al. 2014). This study extends these finding by exhibiting this effect within high power distance, South Asian service industry context. This finding is robustly explained by Conservation of Resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll 1989) indicating that resource depleted employees underperform due to disengagement and diminished psychological capacity. Our findings highlight the compounded effects of this relationship in the banking sector of Pakistan, where performance targets are rigid, and customer service expectations are high. Employees under abusive supervision are not only demotivated but also become emotionally detached from organizational goals. This emotional exhaustion, viewed through the Conservation of Resources (COR) lens, further explains the depletion of psychological reserves critical for maintaining consistent performance.

The inverse association between deviant workplace behaviour and task performance (H3) is also well aligned with previous research work (Robinson and Bennett 1995, Rahman, Karan et al. 2013) who argued that workplace deviance whether interpersonal or production related-distracts from goal orientation behaviour and undermines individual output. Our finding further strengthens the notion that deviance carries quantifiable performance costs and may not be deemed as victimless act. In the service-driven banking sector, where employee-client interactions directly affect outcomes, any lapse in conduct—no matter how minor—can have significant implications for customer experience and trust. Thus, this finding underlines the tangible cost of workplace deviance, challenging the notion that such behaviours are victimless or inconsequential.

Importantly, mediation of deviant workplace behaviour between the relationship of abusive supervision and task performance (H4) was confirmed that reinforces the assertation that performance decline is not always direct outcome of abuse but is channelled through deviance. This finding is in line with previous works (Wang, Mao et al. 2012, Xu, Huang et al. 2012) that reported the role of mediators (LXM and justice perception) in explaining the association of abusive leadership and lower productivity and misconduct. This study advances literature by underlining deviant behaviour as singular mediator, highlighting its explanatory power in compliance driven banking environment. The DWB mediating the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance adds a vital layer of behavioural understanding.

An important contribution of the study is finding that Islamic work ethics moderateate the relationship between abusive leadership and deviant work behaviour (H5). This finding is in line with previous studies done by (Javed, Fatima et al. 2019) and (Khalid, Bashir et al. 2018) who reported that Islamic work ethics buffer the psychological strain of toxic leadership and discourages reciprocal behaviour. It must be highlighted that our study unlike previous literature that examined Islamic work ethics in relation to positive behaviour, positions Islamic work ethics as restraint mechanism, one that actively constrains unethical reactions in the face of provocation. This distinction marks a valuable theoretical expansion, particularly for cross-cultural organizational research. This interpretation of IWE adds a moral self-regulation dimension to the broader ethical framework, highlighting that deeply held religious or ethical convictions can serve as psychological buffers against situational negativity. Employees with strong adherence to IWE are more likely to internalize principles such as patience, accountability, and forgiveness, and less likely to resort to deviant responses, even when provoked. This has significant implications for managerial practice, suggesting that ethical reinforcement rooted in local belief systems can be an effective tool in curbing undesirable workplace outcomes.

In sum, our findings not only validate the well-established Western framework of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory—demonstrating that resource depletion caused by abusive supervision leads to negative workplace outcomes—but also reveal the unique cultural dimensions that shape how these dynamics unfold in a specific context. By highlighting the moderating role of Islamic Work Ethics, the study shows how deeply rooted moral and spiritual values can influence employee responses to mistreatment, offering a culturally grounded mechanism that restrains deviant behaviour. This dual insight underscores the importance of considering both universal psychological principles and local belief systems when examining organizational behaviour. In doing so, the study successfully bridges the gap between global behavioural science and culturally sensitive interpretations, making its findings particularly relevant for Muslim-majority, hierarchical work environments where leadership styles and ethical values are closely intertwined with employee conduct and performance.

Theoretical Implications

This study enriches the COR theory by demonstrating that abusive supervision depletes emotion and psychological resources, triggering deviant workplace behaviour that consequently impairs task performance. It highlights nuance by exhibiting that deviance is not mere direct reaction but a behavioural mediator of resource loss. The buffering role of Islamic work ethics contributes to cross-cultural Organizational Behaviour research by demonstrating how contextual belief systems can buffer negative outcomes of toxic leadership, bridging Western theory with Islamic ethics principles. This study also indicates that deviant behaviour is not just an outcome but a functional mediator offering dynamic perspective on how mistreatment turns into lost performance.

Practical Implications

This study offers vital practical implications for the Pakistani banking sector, where power distance and hierarchical leadership styles are common. The findings highlight the urgent need for banks to invest in ethical leadership development programs that go beyond technical skills and focus on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and respectful supervisory conduct. Creating leadership pipelines rooted in ethical awareness can help prevent the emergence of abusive supervision, which, as shown, can significantly impair employee performance through deviant workplace behaviour. Additionally, HR departments should proactively implement

behavioural monitoring systems, regular employee feedback mechanisms, and confidential reporting platforms to identify and address workplace toxicity before it escalates.

Another critical implication is the strategic use of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) as a cultural buffer against workplace deviance. Embedding IWE principles such as justice, patience, and trustworthiness into the whole array of HR practices can reinforce moral conduct and discourage unethical retaliation to abusive supervision. Formal IWE training programs can guide both managers and employees in aligning their professional behaviour with deeply held ethical and spiritual values, promoting workplace harmony even under challenging conditions.

Global and local firms operating in Muslim-majority environments stand to benefit by incorporating IWE into their organizational culture. Such alignment enhances employee engagement, trust, and loyalty while also demonstrating cultural sensitivity and moral integrity. Ethical recognition systems that reward positive leadership behaviours and hold abusive supervisors accountable can further institutionalize the desired workplace culture. By embedding these ethical foundations into day-to-day operations, organizations not only improve individual performance but also foster sustainable, values-driven cultures that support long-term success.

Future Studies

This study opens several avenues for future research that can further deepen our understanding of abusive supervision, deviant workplace behaviour, and the mitigating role of ethical and cultural variables. Firstly, future research should consider employing longitudinal designs to examine how the effects of abusive supervision and deviant behaviour unfold and interact over time. While cross-sectional studies like the present one offer valuable insights, they may not fully capture the dynamic and cumulative nature of these behaviours. A longitudinal approach could reveal how prolonged exposure to abusive supervision influences employee burnout, turnover intentions, and organizational citizenship behaviours over extended periods, offering a more nuanced understanding of behavioural trajectories.

Secondly, future studies should prioritize the use of multi-source and multi-level data to address the common method bias inherent in self-reported survey designs. Behavioural assessments can be better validated by drawing on data from a range of respondents within the organization, including supervisors, peers, and subordinates and provide a more comprehensive view of the workplace environment. Additionally, using objective performance metrics and triangulating qualitative and quantitative data can significantly enhance the credibility and richness of findings.

CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive and culturally grounded understanding of how abusive supervision influences employee behaviour and performance within Pakistan's banking sector. It confirms the harmful ripple effect of toxic leadership by establishing a positive linkage between abusive supervision and deviant workplace behaviour, alongside a negative link with task performance. Crucially, it reveals that deviant behaviour functions as a key behavioural mechanism through which abusive supervision translates into reduced task effectiveness. The study further underscores the moderating role of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE), demonstrating

how moral and spiritual values at the individual level can buffer the psychological impact of abusive leadership. Employees with strong adherence to IWE are less likely to retaliate with deviance, even when subjected to mistreatment, reflecting the power of intrinsic ethical values in restraining negative behavioural responses. This culturally specific insight adds a valuable moral dimension to organizational behaviour literature, particularly in Muslim-majority, high power-distance contexts, where ethical frameworks deeply influence professional conduct and interpersonal dynamics.

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