Envy and Employee Job Engagement: The Mediating Role of Abusive Supervision

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The purpose of this research was to examine an impact of envy (E) on employee job engagement (EJE) by examined the Mediating role of abusive supervision (AS). Test like Reliability, Correlation and multiple linear regressions were used in analysis. Mediation was tested by utilizing the Baron and Kenny method. This research shows the relationship of envy, abusive supervision and employee job engagement. Results revealed that envy has negative impact on employee job engagement and envy has positive impact on abusive supervision. Moreover, abusive supervision has negative effect on employee job engagement. Current research examines wide-ranging framework for developing countries for envy, abusive supervision and employee job engagement in a single model. This research explores the phenomenon of E, AS and EJE in textile sector which is infrequently addressed in developing countries and will helpful for countries like Pakistan for improving the level of EJE. This research examined that AS act as partial mediator for the relation of E with EJE.
1. Introduction

Promotive speech and prohibitive voice are two distinct characteristics of employee voice behaviour that both support decision-making, innovation, and process improvements (Wu and Du, 2022). Because they perceive the loss of valuable resources, workers who work in an environment that undermines their productivity, such as those who experience abusive supervisory behaviours, are more likely to display high levels of EE (Qi et al., 2022). This study clarifies the connection between abusive supervision and employee job engagement. In addition, it counsels’ supervisors at various levels to apply abusive supervision when they can effectively consider a specific employee's view of the causes beneath their behaviour and must consider the employee's prior inclusiveness in the supervisor's loop of members, in addition to the link between the hard pressures they confront and innovative work behaviour to cope with such supervisory actions (Chhangkang et al. 2022). This research has been conducted to establish a link between abusive supervision (AS), envy (E) and employee job engagement (EJE). For this study, E is considered as the independent variable while the EJE considers as the dependent variable but the AS as a mediating variable. E could be described as “an unpleasant and often painful blend of feelings characterized by inferiority, hostility, and resentment caused by a comparison with a person or group of people who possess something we desire” (Smith & Kim, 2007). E could cause behavioural problems and some emotional conditions to arouse, which would make the procedure much more challenging. According to Murphy et al. (2021), E is one of the typical adverse feelings people encounter when they evaluate themselves to others in a social setting and feel inferior. Individually illogical judgements and other anti-social behaviours, both constructive and destructive, may occur in society (Xiang et al., 2020; Urriaga et al., 2020).

A comparison of Benign E with high-level living individuals inside their civilization led to the realization that they might be superior to them (Hong et al., 2020). E might bring on behavioural issues and some emotional difficulties, making management even more difficult. E is one of the usual negative emotions people experience when they compare themselves with others in a social environment and feel less valuable, according to Murphy et al. (2021). In society, it is possible for individuals to make irrational decisions and engage in various anti-social actions that can be both beneficial and harmful (Xiang et al., 2020; Urriaga et al., 2020).

The realization that Benign E might be more advanced than high-level living people within their civilization came about through comparison (Hong et al., 2020). However, “focusing on what others have (that a person himself/herself lacks) is the same condition that elicits both types of E although the feeling of envy is even stronger if basic childhood needs have not been met, failure to meet basic needs in the early stages of a person’s life is the core of childhood maltreatment, this lack of early basic needs that is positively correlated with less self-control in adults, similarly the sense of control potential was a key factor in distinguishing between the two types of E, people with a higher sense of control are more likely to have benign E, while those with a lower sense of
control are more likely to have malicious E” (Xiang et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2020; Dong et al., 2020).

Pakistan textile industry is consisting on both kind of scales such as SME’s including cottage units and organized sector (LCCI, 2019). Pakistan’s economic growth will be down particularly in coming two years (World Bank, 2019). GDP growth will be decreased to 3.4% in 2018-2019 and further drop to 2.7% in year of 2020. Reason for this decline could be the tight monetary policies figure out the imbalance of macroeconomics (Rahman et al., 2020). Immense re-structural reforms enable the economic growth get back on track. According to Rahman et al. (2020) if fiscal management related policies are incorporated properly like structural reforms and intense improvements in macroeconomics then economic growth could be achieved about 4% in the year of 2021 (Rahman et al., 2020).

According to Mitchell & Ambrose (2007) and Tepper (2000), abusive supervision is essentially bad and abusive behaviour on the part of the supervisor expressed through communication and body language. The supervisors completely mistreat their staff members (Baasc et al., 2021). It requires a person to make a sustained effort to deal with (Frieder, 2021). According to Liu et al. (2012), a company can only continue to provide exceptional service if its personnel are engaged. According to earlier studies, employees engage in dishonest behaviours such fraud, sluggish work, and theft as a response to abusive supervision (Machado et al., 2021).

Ampofo (2021) has analyzed the reverse effect of abusive supervision on employee job engagement. Researchers have tried to understand the negative effect of abusive supervision on process innovation as well (Menon et al., 2018), (Scheuer et al., 2016), (Huang et al., 2018) & (Vogel et al., 2017). There are number of differential and inconsistent definitions are available about the employee engagement and there is also identifiable difference is present among the industrial and academic point of view about the employee engagement (Saks, 2006). According to Luncheon et al. (2021), it is crucial for organizations to handle their human resources and engage potential. Undoubtedly, numerous global polls show an unusually low level of employee engagement (Li et al., 2021). According to the findings of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2015) and Gallup (2016–2017), just 15% of employees worldwide are totally engaged in their work. Social exchange theory of Saks et al. (2021) explain that engagement can further divided into two kinds i.e., organization engagement and job engagement. These are different terms. Originally, engagement is basically the psychological connection of employees to their job/task (Huang et al., 2020).

Employees have a connection to the company beyond their employment (Saks et al., 2021). The interaction with the organization forms the basis of the organizational role. Saks et al. (2021) has expressed that “organization engagement could be conceptualized as the greater investment of the self for higher job performance, in response to organizational factors or decisions, this conceptualization introduced a multidimensional approach to the meaning of engagement, identify that though the success of an organization is measured by the increase in market share and revenue,
yet the real impetus behind this success is the employee’s engagement with the organization, employee engagement is a two way exchange of effort between the employees and top management” (Oluwatayo et al., 2020). Following research questions are address in this research.

1. Does Envy have an impact on abusive supervision and employee job engagement?
2. Does Abusive supervision have an impact on employee job engagement?
3. Does Abusive Supervision mediate the relationship of envy and employee job engagement?

The Rationale of current study is given below. Firstly, current research examines wide-ranging framework for developing countries for envy, abusive supervision, employee job engagement, and in a single model. Secondly, this research explores the phenomenon of envy, abusive supervision, and employee job engagement in textile sector which is infrequently addressed in developing countries. Lastly, this research is contributed to take interconnected variables envy, abusive supervision, and employee job Engagement on the basis of social comparison Theory.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Job Engagement

Employee engagement has been defined in a variety of ways over the past 20 years by academic academics as well as business professionals (Shrotryia et al., 2020; Song et al., 2021; Abdullah et al., 2020). For organizations, it is essential to effectively manage personnel and engage talent (Cartwright et al., 2006). Employee engagement levels are quite low, according to many polls and research being undertaken globally (Blessing White, 2011; Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development [CIPD], 2015; Gallup, 2016). In the global workforce, only 15% of employees are totally engaged, according to a 2017 Gallup survey. To increase employee engagement levels and help organizations achieve their goals, it is necessary to implement a variety of initiatives and tactics.

Alvi et al. (2020) and Saks (2006) investigations have led to conclusions that acknowledge the fundamental advantages of employee engagement and its influence on future outcomes in nonprofit organizations. The distinction between organizational engagement and work engagement was explained by the social exchange theory. According to the literature, engagement primarily focuses on how connected the mind is to the work (Alvi et al., 2020). Employees play a similar role in the organization (Saks, 2006). The organizational engagement is expressed in the working roles. According to Saks (2006), organizational involvement may be the best investment for the person to make in order to achieve higher performance with regard to organizational decisions. According to researchers, organizations can boost employee engagement and produce high profitability. Employee engagement has long been acknowledged as a challenge for business leaders around the world. According to Gallup (2018), organizations with highly engaged employees "realize significantly better customer engagement, higher productivity, better retention, fewer accidents, and 21% higher profitability" About 15% of employees, as per the survey done
in 155 countries, were involved with the organizations, according to Gallup (2017) and State of the Global Workplace (2017). Employee engagement is a little bit greater in the United States. According to the Gallup poll from 2018, only 34% of U.S. workers are totally involved, 16.5% are fully disengaged, and 53% are not engaged at all (Harter, 2018).

Engagement is defined as "harnessing the organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement people employ and express themselves physically cognitively and emotionally during role performances; engagement at work means a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption," according to Alvi et al. (2020). Similar to how Zhou et al. (2018) stated that it is a challenge for managers and organizations to keep their employees engaged in work roles and jobs, Ewing et al. (2019) defined the concept of employee engagement as a state of devoting all of one's energies to one's work in order to make a contribution. According to a similar methodology, Shuck et al. (2017) defined employee engagement as "an active, work-related positive psychological state functionalized by the intensity and direction of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural energy." From the perspective of the firms, employee engagement may be viewed as associated to the emotional level of satisfaction with job circumstances. According to Erdil and Müceldili, (2014) envy has negative impact on employee job engagement. Based on this fact current study proposes the following hypothesis.

**H1: Envy has negative impact on employee job engagement**

2.2 Envy

According to Duffy et al. (2012), Khan et al. (2014), and Milic (2019), it can be the root of many undesirable behaviours and negative emotional experiences, making it the hardest scenario for society to adjust. Envy is one of the management-related phenomena that, as reported by Ahmad et al. (2020), has received fewer studies from academics. As a result, there is a dearth of studies and literature on this idea. Envy is a powerful emotion that comprises unhappiness and negative thoughts, which causes a high level of external response. People that are envious want to adopt the positive traits, abilities, and accomplishments of other successful people (Miceli et al., 2019; Vrabel et al., 2018). The most common critique of the study work on envy is that it is entirely based on correlation. According to (Vrabel et al., 2018; Zhan et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2021) there hasn't been any research done to explore the effects of envy on an interpersonal level. To understand the effects of jealousy, all research has been conducted at the workplace. However, recent research has focused on the effects of envy at the social level and has produced some promising findings (Shu et al., 2017). According to Van de Ven et al. (2012), there is a distinction between benign and malignant jealousy.

According to the strategic interference hypothesis developed by Krems et al. (2021), envy is a painful emotion that may also be highly beneficial for increasing worker productivity. Hilal et al. (2021) proposed that people who are envious put in extra effort to complete tasks. There is intense competition for the distribution of resources because of the sudden emotional condition of
envy at work, which a true leader effectively manages. Due of its destructive behaviour, it is the strongest emotion and may end relationships (Al-Abedi et al., 2021). In actuality, envy destroys interpersonal relationships through hostility and unnecessary rivalry (Li et al., 2021). Theoretically, dyadic relationships are the primary setting for routine behaviours in organisational life. Unexpectedly, most of the behaviours are being connected to envy, according to Pan et al. (2021). This "social comparison, envy occurs when an observer lacks the perception of the awarded peer's superior quality, achievement, or possession and either desires it or wishes that the other lacked it" (Hong et al., 2020). By creating obstacles, making bad decisions, rewriting the success story, and developing oneself as well, an envious individual might ruin their rivals (Awee et al., 2020).

It could be a boosting tool for a positive competition and motivation for change and secondly it may enhance interpersonal aggression and distrust Abeyratna et al. (2021), and in spite of that it is being linked with negative reactions (Thompson, et al., 2016). At the workplace, when others are at the same level in performance even in competition then there are more chances to be envy of others (Montal-Rosenberg, et al., 2020). High level competition in the society may enhance the level of envy (Wright, et al., 2020). According to Abeyratna et al. (2021) it is too good to be envied at workplace instead to remain envy towards others. Although, both situations may be result in due to competition but it is easy to be envied instead being envious (Shousha, et al., 2020). As suggested by Awee et al. (2020), feeling envious means that one should feel that others are enjoying their lives within social setting. Envy could be proved as a good tool at workplace, when an individual put efforts to enhance self-performance and even self-improvement to reduce the envious feeling (Duffy, et al., 2008; Schaubroeck & Lam, 2004). But on other side envy could be harmful particular for professional life Hilal et al. (2021), and it is very disturbing and hurtful state (Lieberman, et al., 2009). Subsequently, one’s should be motivated enough to decrease the feelings of envy. Psychological aspects explore that when an individual doesn’t able to reduce envy and feelings of envy remains there then multiple things can be happened like aggression, crime and even violence (Oren-Yagoda, et al., 2021). Similarly, envy is “often argued to be a call to action to engage in interpersonal harms doing, especially actions that reduce or, better yet, fully remove the envied person’s advantage” (Oren-Yagoda, et al., 2021). Yu, et al., (2018) examines that envy has positive impact on abusive supervision. Based on this fact current study proposes the following hypothesis.

**H2: Envy has positive impact on abusive supervision**

**Abusive Supervision**
The perceptions of abusive supervision are generated when the supervisor disgraced and neglect their subordinates (Baasch, et al., 2021). Every individual's adjusted him/herself to cope with this situation (Baasch, et al., 2021). The workers who were closely interacting with customers closely must adopt careful and positive behavior (Liu et al., 2012). In every complex situation it is a need of a customer that they provide positive approach to their clients (Liu et al., 2012). Thus, devoted employees become a critical component in maintaining service brilliance (Liu et al., 2012). The critical result of abusive supervision is that this generates the bad relations with job colleagues and others. Aggressive behaviors of subordinates are an essential consequence of Rice, et al., (2021) originate that their family members and abused employees informed that social discouragement from that subordinate in their families. Inness, Lyubykh et al. (2021) found that in a “tit for tat” condition, abused employees, replied in an aggressive behavior in non-physical way to their managers. Wang et al., (2020) examines that abusive supervision has negative impact on employee job engagement.

Based on this fact current study proposes the following hypothesis.

**H3: Abusive Supervision has negative relationship with employee job engagement**

Current study also proposes following mediating hypothesis.

**H4: Abusive supervision play a mediating role for relationship of envy and employee job engagement.**

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Conceptual Model

Following is the conceptual model.

**Figure No 1: Conceptual Model**

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Envy

H1 (-) H2(+)

Abusive Supervision

H3(-)

Employee Job Engagement
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3.2 Variables of Study
Following are variable of the current research:

1. Independent variable is Envy (IV=E)
2. Dependent variable is Employee Job Engagement (DV=EJE)
3. Mediating variable are Abusive Supervision (MV=AS)

3.3 Theoretical framework of research
In this context, the social comparison theory provides the best mechanism to explain how envy affects social goals (Duffy et al., 2012). According to Wood (1996), "the process of thinking about information about one or more people in relation to the self" is what social comparison is. Every person has a tendency to evaluate and compare themselves to others before passing either good or negative judgement (Duffy et al., 2012; Wood, 1996). When people negatively compare themselves to others, envy may also develop (Smith & Kim, 2007), and it is especially common in young people (Henniger & Harris, 2015). Because of this, the current study includes envy as an independent variable. Furthermore, taking this theory into account, Erdil, and Müceldili (2014) evaluated that envy had a negative impact on employee job engagement. Yu, et al. (2018) came to the conclusion that jealousy has a beneficial effect on abusive supervision. Additionally, harsh supervision was projected by Wang et al. (2020) to have a detrimental impact on employee job engagement.

3.4 Research Methodology
3.4.1 Research Design
In the present investigation, a cross-sectional study design is employed.

3.4.2 Target Population
The target population is comprised of employees working for textile companies.

3.4.3 Sample Size
The sample consists of 440 participants.

3.4.3 Sampling Procedure
The sampling technique known as convenience sampling is used to gather data from organizations. 3.9 Sampling Technique
A convenience sample strategy was used to obtain data from 440 employees from a list of selected units on the basis of 1:10 (item response theory). (Kim 2014; McCarthy, & Milner, 2020; Jackson, 2003).

3.4.4 Data Analysis
SPSS 22 was used for data analysis.
3.4.5 Instruments
Following is the detail of measurement and Instrument.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>No of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Envy</td>
<td>Cohen-Charash (2009)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive Supervision</td>
<td>Tepper (2020)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Data and Discussion

For testing the mediation linking AS, The study applies Baron & Kenny's (1986) methodology. When the impact of envy is assessed on EJE during the intervening process, it is noted that p less than 0.01 also beta value = -0.39, So, the first stage of mediation is concluded also H1 is accepted. Envy influences abusive supervision favorably in step two "a" (β = 0.519), and p is less than 0.01. The second stage of mediation is thus fulfilled also H3 is accepted.

Regression analysis in step 3A shows that abusive supervision has a negative influence (= -0.60) on EJE and that path "b" had a p value of less than 0.01 also H3 is accepted. In step 3B, we look at how envy and abusive supervision interact to affect process creativity, and the results are β = -0.26 and p equals 0.0. Because of this, the value of β is explained as dropping from -0.39 to -0.26. This finding suggests that there is some partial mediation.

Figure No 2: Mediation of AS for relationship of E and EJE
5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This research shows the relationship of envy, AS, EJE and PI. Results reveal that envy has negative impact on EJE and envy has positive impact on AS. Moreover, AS has negative effect on EJE. Moreover, AS partially mediates the relation of envy and EJE.

5.1 Limitations

There are certain limitations of present research.

- The present study reflects only the employees of Textile sector.
- The variables of demographic are dealt as control variables.
- The employees are also obligated to respond to the variables of proposed framework.
- This research includes only a few predictors of Envy.
- The present research does not integrate the key significances of Envy.

5.2 Future Researches

- Longitudinal studies will be understanding and facilitate generalization about the proposed framework.
- Due to cost and time constrained present study is done within the given framework of research, in future researches some other variables as predictors and outcomes may also include for explanation the phenomenon of Envy.
- In the future, studies of this kind will also be conducted in the construction, banking, and telecom sectors.
- As abusive supervision is partial mediator among the relationship of Envy with Employee job Engagement, it is better to include some other potential mediators (Pro social behavior, Self-efficacy, LMX, Cohesiveness, Social loafing), for getting the complete mediation.

5.3 Implication for Marketing, Theory and Practice

Current study is carried out on employees of textile sector which may be used as guideline research for employees of another sector as well. Research being done now looks at a broad framework for emerging economies for envy, AS and employee job engagement in a single model. This research explores the phenomenon of Envy, Abusive Supervision and employee job
engagement in textile sector which is infrequently addressed in developing countries. In line with social comparison theory, this research may significantly contribute to broaden the scope of Envy i.e., AS and EJE.

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