

# “Navigating Supervisory Abuse: Victims' Coping Strategies And The Ineffectiveness Of Organizational Support”

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## Abstract

*This study aimed at exploring the responses of victims of abusive supervision and it also aimed to explore what weaknesses of management are perceived by the victims that according to them tend to become obstacles in the way of minimizing abusive supervision. The study also sheds light on how individuals are affected by this experience and how they cop up with supervisory abuse. Numerous qualitative studies have been conducted with a view to identify the characteristics of abusers. However, this study has been undertaken with a view to explore the phenomena of supervisory abuse from the lens of the victim. With the passage of time, abusive behavior becomes more persistent and it keeps on increasing if the matter <sup>1</sup>is not resolved. However, an individual may seek emotional support from peers so as to deal with the matter. But many individuals end up in dismay and give up when they seek advice and assistance from organizational management to deal with abusive supervisor. They don't get enough support from the management. Hence their job insecurity increases that may result in job turn-over. Therefore, this qualitative study aimed to identify to what extent the individuals perceive the actions, policies and procedures of the Human Resource Management as helpful, effective and supportive enough so that they may not decide to withdraw themselves from work, socializing or the organization.*

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Workplace supervisory abuse has now become a critical phenomenon to be studied with the advent and development in psychology and social sciences. It is estimated that in the West the rate of such an abuse is approximately 6%. Irrespective of industry and nature of organization, individuals frequently experience negative acts of their supervisors (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008). Literature is replete with many evidences whereby abuse has been studied with a view to assimilate its impact on the organization and the victim's performance. Behaviors of victims like absenteeism, turnover, depression and anxiety are common consequences of workplace abuse (Hogh, Mikkelsen, & Hansen, 2010)

Workplace abuse is highly subjective and is spread over a range of perspectives and behaviors. It is recognized and addressed by using various terms that include bad

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leadership, aggression, tyranny, insult and bullying (Grandy, 2010). One of the seminal works by Ashforth in 1994 highlighted six characteristic behaviors of those leaders who repeatedly try to overpower others by their compulsive behaviors. These include:

1. Actions are capricious and self-dignifying
2. Disparages juniors
3. Not empathetic
4. Compels conflict resolution
5. Discourages resourcefulness
6. Uses absurd punishment

On a similar foundation a research carried out by Alison and Gina was carried out with the purpose to develop a model of abuse whereby upon interacting with respondents they identified the following actions that were reported and perceived to be abusive and negative by the victims. These include:

1. Favouritism and Nepotism
2. Dealing dirty work as retribution
3. Menacing employees
4. Blurring personal and professional boundaries
5. Back-biting employees and juniors
6. Belittling employees
7. Unrestricted disparagement
8. Unrealistic outlooks
9. Telling lies
10. Illicit actions

While organizations take necessary steps to discourage and minimize behaviors like aggression, verbal violence and insults, researches also gauge the success and failures of certain trainings and mentorship programs that are conducted to train employees so as to make them capable of dealing with such instances successfully (Duffy & Sperry, 2011). However, the challenge facing the Human Resource Management today is to deal with the emotions of the victims in a manner so that the victims feel supported and avoid demonstrating the behaviors like absenteeism, anxiety and retaliation. The existence of scarce literature in this domain suggests that probing and investigation is required to explore the short-comings of the steps taken by organizations and managers in order to empathize the victims of abuse and bullying. This study is designed to shed light on the employees' side of the abusive incidents.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review:**

Workplace abuse may be regarded as persistent negative acts performed by individuals or groups verbally or nonverbally that consequently harm individuals or groups. The abuser intentionally acts in a particular manner so as to denounce the abused. The effects of such actions are profoundly negative and the victims are psychologically, emotionally and physically affected by such actions to various degrees that may vary based on the contextual circumstances (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008).

It has also been observed that abuse makes the targets feel questioned about their own existence and identity. The targets when share their experiences, they constantly strive to justify that they don't identify with such behaviours. They constantly introspect and question their own actions in order to reaffirm if any of their actions oriented their supervisors or bosses to demonstrate such behaviours. They also insist that they don't deserve such interactions that traumatize them (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008)

Not only abusive supervision makes one question his/her own actions, it also leads towards job insecurity which may consequently result in turn-over. A study conducted in the University of Bergen Norway aimed at identifying the relationship between job-insecurity

and supervisory abuse. In this quantitative study, 1800 workers were surveyed to test the hypothesis. The study concluded that when individuals are abused, they feel that their reputation among their peers is damaged. They start feeling insecure and embarrassed. As a result, they demonstrate behaviours that highlight their loss of interest in socializing with co-workers. Eventually, they find it difficult to stay a part of organization and they may plan to leave the organization (Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland, & Einarsen, 2014).

In one of the qualitative studies, 114 students from India, Australia and Turkey were interviewed to comprehend the experiences of abuse of people belonging to different nationalities. Their responses suggested that failed and weak policies, inappropriate corporate culture and poor HR policies and execution contribute to workplace abuse and bullying. The study also reported how were the targets affected by being exposed to abusive behaviours. They commonly reported low-confidence, powerlessness, loss of meaning and fulfilment in work, sleep deprivation, low self-efficacy and decreased performance with more errors and redundancies (D'Cruz, Paull, Omari, & Guneri-Cangarli, 2016).

Similarly, the study of Purpora Blegen, & Stotts (2012) has emphasized that more than individual factors, organizational factors promote the instigation of the bullying behaviour in the firm. It studied the nursing discipline and showed that management practices of the organization lead to the oppression of the nurse. Another study of Yun, & Kang (2018) suggested that bullying emerges due to the critical antecedents integrated into the organization itself. This could be due to the practiced performance system or the competition that lies in the firm. Several studies had hinted that two major factors that led to the emergent of the bullying practices in the firm are organization culture as well as leadership.

Another research finding of Ariza-Montes et al. (2013) concerning the workplace bullying model in the healthcare sector showed that tolerance level of the organization and the reward, along with informal alliances serve as the critical antecedents of bullying, posing a direct impact on the firm culture as well as the atmosphere (Tepper, Simon, & Park, 2017; Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Contrary to this, the study findings of Pilch, & Turska (2015) showed that the firms that practice prosocial organizational culture, i.e., relationship-oriented culture, are less likely to experience workplace bullying. Studies have also found various leadership styles, which foster workplace bullying practice (Felfe, & Schyns, 2010; Hansbrough, Lord, & Schyns, 2015). For instance, autocratic, authoritarian as well as a laissez-faire leadership style is found to give rise to the bullying practices. In the same context, Qureshi, & Hassan (2019) reports that the authentic management style is likely to share a negative relationship with workplace bullying practices. It is because the use of the authentic management style promotes the development of the positive relationship between the firm ethical culture as well as practices.

Oh, Uhm, & Yoon (2016) advocates that workplace bullying is less likely to be experienced when the just practices and support are being provided by the supervisor. Korean research on the healthcare management showed the relationship between the incidence of workplace bullying on the culture of the organization. Qureshi, & Hassan (2019) research on the workplace victims showed that they constantly experience stress, anxiety, and depression. Tepper, Simon, & Park (2017) and Giorgi et al. (2016) adds that the bullying victims in the workplace often face difficulty in sleeping. Other factors identified in different researches include low self-esteem of the employee, lack of productivity, inadequate time management, as well as decision-making difficulties.

Empirical researches on different geographic region found different results of the workplace bullying though each presenting the adverse impact on the mental as well as physical health of the individual being victimized (Giorgi, Perminienè, Montani, Fiz-Perez, Mucci, & Arcangeli, 2016; Brees, Martinko, & Harvey, 2016). For instance, the results of

the study conducted in the United States showed that the employees that are mistreated at the workplace had a poor score in their self-evaluation task concerning their health status. Asfaw et al. (2014) research findings advocate that a mistreated employee is the one who is likely to report fewer days at work accounting for nearly 43 percent absenteeism.

Similarly, another study on the Turkish employees showed that job satisfaction among the bullied employee is substantially lower as compared to the rightly treated employees (Bilgel, Aytac, & Bayram, 2006; Brees, Martinko, & Harvey, 2016; Tepper, Simon, & Park, 2017; Giorgi et al., 2016). Other adverse outcomes associated with the ill treatment of the employee is that they experience more stress, anxiety, as well as depression (Giorgi et al., 2016). Dehue, Bolman, Völlink, & Pouwelse's (2012) study among the victims in the Netherlands reported that employees that are bullied are more likely to experience adverse health problems, frequent work absenteeism, as well as poor wellbeing. Similarly, Giorgi et al. (2016) cites the early research of Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir (2004), and showed that the workplace bullying in Australia is majorly reported for the students. This bullying outcomes often emerge in the form of physical symptoms, leave intention as well as the negative or low performance of the employee.

Several other researches highlight the impact of workplace bullying on the organization as a whole (Dehue, Bolman, Völlink, & Pouwelse's, 2012; Pradhan & Jena's, 2018). It is stated that adverse work practice such as bullying leads to increase in the organizations' cost (Giorgi, Leon-Perez, Cupelli, Mucci, & Arcangeli, 2013; Giorgi et al., 2016; Mucci et al., 2015). This is particularly true for the firms that are small in size (SMEs), have older as well as younger population, disabled workers, deal with a particular sector of the industry as well as practice poor work management (Giorgi et al., 2016; Brees, Martinko, & Harvey, 2016; Tepper, Simon, & Park, 2017).

Most studies endorse the relationship between workplace bullying as well as physical and psychological symptoms that it has on the victims (Hutchinson et al., 2010; Read, & Laschinger, 2015). It is because an individual cannot persistently cope with the changing environment, which poses a substantial impact on the health of the individual. Results of Pradhan & Jena's (2018) study showed that abusive management and supervision intention can lead to emotional exhaustion among the employees. Whereas, it also showed that the impact of this supervision is reduced as a result of the support provided by the co-workers, which eventually reduces the employee's intention to quit. The study also found that when a supervisor fails to demonstrate their constructive behaviour to the workers, they adopt a destructive leadership style promoting destructive leadership style and leading to adverse outcomes. The findings of the recent meta-analysis demonstrated that there prevails a substantial negative impact of the attitudes toward the supervisor, destructive leadership, job satisfaction, well-being, as well as job-related attitudes (such as job engagement) (Brees, Martinko, & Harvey, 2016; Tepper, Simon, & Park, 2017).

Schyns & Schilling (2013) and Mackey et al. (2017) findings of the study showed that the correlation between the destructive leadership, counterproductive work behavior, perceived organizational injustice, and negative affectivity is positive. It is generally observed that the blue-collar and white-collar employees experience more workplace bullying as compared to other units of the firm (Brees, Martinko, & Harvey, 2016; Tepper, Simon, & Park, 2017). Another cause identified in the literature includes the frustrated behaviour of the supervisor concerning the circumstances which are prevailing within the firm (Pradhan & Jena, 2018). These practices include the breaching of the psychological contract as well as interactional injustice.

Various reactions can emerge as a response to the conflicting situation such as emotional, behavioral as well as cognitive. Different strategies can also come into practice when an individual is exposed to a conflicting situation and abusive leadership (Vranjes et al., 2017). Beirne & Hunter (2013) analyze the anti-bullying initiatives at work using a qualitative

case approach. The practical standpoint concerning the qualitative case study finding showed that making policies, setting rules, as well as guiding the supervisors about their behavior and role can assist in culminating the impact of workplace bullying. Another study of Harrington, Warren, & Rayner (2015) argues that human resource managers play a substantial role in mitigating the workplace bullying across different disciplines. It states that the bullying behaviors of the managers substantially affect the management practices as well as employee performance. Most researches argue that the workplace bullying emerges when there is an intensified competition among the employees and organizational workforce (Brees, Martinko, & Harvey, 2016; Purpora Blegen, & Stotts, 2012; Giorgi, Leon-Perez, Cupelli, Mucci, & Arcangeli, 2013). In the same context, another study such as (Tepper, Simon, & Park, 2017; Rai & Agarwal, 2018) identified relational helplessness as well as organizational chaos.

A number of scholars have named bullying within the working environment because of the various disputes. (De Clercq & Belausteguigoitia 2017), and conceptually. bullying to "disputes" (Qureshi, & Hassan, 2019). On the other hand, a lot of other analysts of working environment bullying are not agreed with the defined criteria and the concept. According with them, associating and limiting the bullying in the working environment to a dispute weakens the immorality as well as the counterproductive categorization (Mumtaz, 2018; Einarsen et al., 2018). This concept depends on the five aspects. Firstly, bullying involves inequality among the people, teams, or the parties included. The victim or the sufferer of bully generally go through and experience hardships in order to defend himself/ herself against negative attitude Ikal & Sia, (2017) and it results in the pressure onto a person who is in the inferior position (Skuzińska, Plopa, & Plopa, 2020).

Secondly, dispute and bullying can be distinguished by the assessment of the time period and how frequently a person or a group has been bullied. In accordance with the Tepper, Simon, & Park (2017) and Rai & Agarwal (2018), bullying depends on long durations which results in a series of destructing actions that increase with the passage of time. While disputes are commonly short and they are constant. It involves a single happening (such as, to make a duty exact as soon as it is definite that there were some misinterpretations about that specific duty/ process) or a lot of happenings (for example, a consistent or long debate regarding the acceptance of accountability of a particular duty). Thirdly, bullying is the dishonor of an individual who is pressurized into a lesser post (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Zapf & Gross, 2001). The dispute does not have the objective to call the bad names or Mubarak & Mumtaz, Cogent Business & Management (2018), either to dishonour a particular person (Kline & Lewis, 2019). Fourthly, the major reason to bully anyone is to threaten the target, which is not linked with the disputes.

Also in the end, in comparison with bullying which gives a direction towards depression and other mental disorders (Olsen, Jensen, Bjaalid, & Mikkelsen, 2019; Hershcovis, Ogunfowora, Reich, & Christie, 2017), and it can be the reason behind the worse psychiatric and psychological results when compared to the dispute, such as, the stress disorder after any traumatic situation (Kline & Lewis, 2019). As per the different researches, the idea of bullying links with a specific condition where an individual or a person at a lower position or having less power is targeted and victimized to psychiatric or physical brutality and dangerous as well as harmful attitudes (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994; Leymann, 1996). Other researches show that this idea has an active impact on the wellbeing of targets/victims who suffer and undergoes constant destructive attitudes from their seniors/managers or the co-workers, while in other researches, it has been observed with organizational dedication and the rate of turnover (Ariza-Montes et al., 2017).

Although the prevalence of the workplace bullying is extensively observed, researchers fail to completely address it for reducing its impact (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). For instance, the workplace bullying leads to multiple outcomes. Numerous factors can lead to the rise of the workplace bullying which include individuals' financial interests, ego, aggression,

status cautiousness, violence, exploitation, pressures, clashes in personality, manipulation, masculine superiority, power play, gender politics, childhood patterns lay down in, liking and disliking. Even though different and enlarged endeavours have been established human rights organizations (Mumtaz, 2018) as well as general awareness programs on different social media platforms, the prevalence of the workplace abuses and its management. The prevalence of these factors and workplace bullying necessitates its further examination which may contribute to the reduction of the adverse outcomes observed. Thereby, this research aims to explore the responses of victims of abusive supervision. In addition, this research also aims to explore what weaknesses prevail in the management, as perceived by the victims.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to explore from the participants' point of view, how they perceive their experiences of being abused in their respective work places. The strategies and tactics used by individuals when they encounter abuse will be discovered. The study will also comprehend from the targets' lenses, how supportive and helpful they found their organizations in the instances of abusive behaviour.

### **3.2 Research Questions**

What have been the responses of the targets upon being abused?

How did the targets manage his/her emotions upon being abused?

What are the perspectives of the targets about management resolving the issue of abuse?

### **3.3 Research Approach**

In this study, qualitative approach was adopted based on the research questions, ontology and epistemology. The nature of this research was oriented towards exploring a phenomenon from participant's view point. Therefore, employing the naturalistic paradigm, a qualitative study will be most suited to the research questions.

### **3.4 Ontology**

The purpose of the study identifies with its philosophy. The stance of the researcher was pluralistic. It was assumed that there exist multiple realities. Abusive supervision may be regarded as subjective phenomenon. It is conceptualized uniquely by individuals. Therefore, pluralistic stance was well-suited to the context of this study.

### **3.5 Epistemology**

It was assumed in this study that reality is subjective. Epistemology advocates individual thinking relative to his/her context. Therefore, in this study, relativistic stance was taken. Individuals may have generated their out-view on abusive supervision based on their experiences and learning from society. Consequently, it was assumed in this study that knowledge can be generated by assuming that reality is subjective.

### **3.6 Research Design**

#### **3.6.1 Sample Population**

##### **3.6.1.1 No. of Respondents**

4 individuals who have ever experienced supervisory abuse in their professional, academic or work life.

### 3.6.1.2 Age

24-40 years

### 3.6.1.3 Employment Status

Respondents had been currently or previously employed in profit or not-for-profit organizations.

### 3.6.1.4 Reporting Status

Respondents had been working under and reporting to at least one senior manager or immediate supervisor.

## 3.6.2 Type of Qualitative Study

A phenomenological approach was adapted in order to tap into the experiences of people who have been a target of supervisory abuse. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted.

## 3.6.3 Setting

Human behavior is influenced by time, space and many other contextual intricacies. Therefore, it was ideal to conduct research in natural settings of the participants. Hence, the study was conducted in the setting whereby the participants were comfortable to play their part naturally and they tended not be influenced by controls that may modify their responses.

Therefore, the interview venue, time and modus operandi was mutually decided between the researcher and the respondent.

The interviews were audio-recorded with the consensus of the respondent. One respondent agreed upon having a face-to-face interview with the researcher. Therefore, after finalizing the venue, it was taken at the respondent's personal office. Two of the respondents agreed upon giving telephone interviews. Last of the respondents agreed to send written responses to the interview questions via email. All interviews were bi-lingual and the questions were responded both in English and Urdu. This was allowed to assure that the respondents express their feelings vividly. After the interviews and their recording, each of the interviews were transcribed and translated. Relevant literature was reviewed in order to have a command on the thematic analysis of the data collected. The transcribed interviews were then coded followed by the thematic analysis. The research was concluded after establishing themes from the analysis whereby the results were compared with the previous literature.

## 3.6.4 Interview Duration

The duration of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 45 minutes.

## 3.6.5 Role of The Researcher

The researcher acted under the capacity of the interviewer and reporter of the study. Since, it was a qualitative study conducted in natural settings, it was assumed that the reality is co-constructed. Hence, the researcher was involved in the study and acted under the capacity of an individual to generate empathetic understanding of the experience, phenomena and antecedents of abusive supervision. Thus, the researcher, after interviews analyzed the respective responses and conducted the abstraction of the data by developing various themes that emerged out of the responses.

## 3.6.6 Role of the Participants

The participants were acting under the capacity of interviewees and respondents to the semi-structured interviews that were conducted by the researcher. They explained, narrated and expressed their responses to the questions asked.

### **3.6.7 Ethical Considerations**

#### **3.6.7.1 Respect for Intellectual Property**

All the seminal works and previous researches as employed in this study have been appropriately cited based on the magnitude of literature reviewed by the researcher.

#### **3.6.7.2 Confidentiality**

The responses and information of the respondents have been kept confidential and they have been only used for the stated purpose. The information was not shared or exchanged for any other purposes.

#### **3.6.7.3 Respect and Dignity of Respondents**

The respect and dignity of the respondents was sustained. They were not dis-respected or harmed in any case.

## **Chapter 4: Thematic Analysis**

The thematic analysis of the responses of the victims revealed multiple findings. All of the respondents reported incidents that determined the actions taken by their respective supervisors to hurt and denounce victims in one or the other way. The findings matched with the findings of seminal work done by Ashforth in 1994 in which six behaviors of the abusers were stated. As one of the respondents stated his supervisor’s words as follows:

“You have come here and you are our servant, why should we prioritize servants?”

It can be deduced that abusive supervisors in one way or the other seek to dignify themselves and tend to decry the victims. The research done by Alison and Gina also reported abusive behavioral aspects. The findings of the current study also matched with their findings. For instance, one of the respondents stated:

“...We used to work more than (-) sometimes nine to eleven. Why? Because “Sethism” ...[nepotism].”

Since our study focused on how the victims their experiences in the light of their own views. They were asked questions that allowed them to express how they felt when while they unfolded the events. Following themes emerged out from their responses:

### **4.1 Initial Process of Realization**

The victims put a lot of thought and energy in establishing that they have been victimized. After being exposed to any abusive behavior (insult, humiliation, dis-regard etc.), the victims closely observe and reflect on the actions of their supervisors to validate if they are being abused. One of the respondents stated:

“...That is when I realized that she did almost nothing but despite my efforts she used to taunt and question me about trivial things. Like she used to criticize me (-) why is this not happening, why is that not happening, this is not up to mark...”

### **4.2 Introspection and Self-Questioning**

Having faced the abusive behavior multiple times, the victims start questioning themselves and they reconsider their actions in order to find out if something went wrong from their side. One study conducted by Sandvik in 2008 also reported that the abusive bosses make



victims question themselves and they start having doubts about themselves. One of the respondents while describing the events that she experienced stated :

“... I was just thinking in my head that what have I actually done to him...”

### **4.3 Depression and Anxiety (disturbed psychology)**

When the victims persistently get humiliated by their supervisors, they are affected psychologically. It is very common that anxious and depressing thoughts come in their minds having to deal with perceived injustice and breach of the psychological contract. Abuse makes them feel less happy or even sad having to work with their supervisor. One of the responses states:

“...So, I used to feel depressed, anxious, humiliated...”

A recent study conducted by Olsen, Jensen, Bjaalid, and Mikkelsen, in 2019 validates the findings of current study. It also reports various mental disorders that a victim has to deal with.

### **4.4 Work-related Insecurity**

The victims constantly feel insecure. They keep on tolerating the insults and adverse behaviours of their bosses because they perceive their job and work more important. At the same time, they have a fear if their task in hand may get stuck if their supervisors pull their hands out of the tasks or they may get fired. These findings match with the findings of a study conducted at University of Bergen Norway which also reported positive correlation between supervisory abuse and job insecurity. Following words of one of the respondents highlight this sense of insecurity in the victim's head:

“... Because (-) the problem is that you have a thing or two to be done with their help right and predominantly you are afraid because you don't want any obstacles in your matters and you don't want your matters to get stuck in the middle. So you tolerate by thinking that they are seniors and they may scold you and you have to bear with them...”

### **4.5 Peer Pressure and Loss of Motivation**

The same study that was conducted University of Bergen Norway as stated above also concluded that victims perceive their reputation and image to be distorted among their peers. This leads them to feel less motivated and less enthusiastic about their work. The findings of current study report the same. Following words of a respondent make this finding evident:

“...When you work day in and day out and you get such a treatment in return while you get to hear that you are a slave to your employer, it feels bad...”

### **4.6 Power Play**

Victims recognize and experience that their supervisors take the liberty of their power and bring that power and influence into use. It makes them feel powerless and helpless which gives rise to feelings of anger and rage. All the respondents mentioned that they had been victimized because the abusers were well-aware of their positions in the political fabric of their organizations. One of the respondents stated:

“...I did not try. I did not try [pauses\_00:17:14] I knew it was futile. It was futile...”

Above words highlight the level of helplessness and powerlessness that the victim might have experienced. They suggest that the abusers are certain that they won't be caught in the act. Moreover, the victims also know that reporting such incidents to the management is not helpful.

#### **4.7 Coping Strategy**

The findings disclose that coping strategies of victims are circumstantial and they also vary from person to person. They may try to confront their supervisor or they may try avoiding getting into toxic conversations with their supervisors. However, it is important to mention here that discrete management policies and procedures are reported to help victims to come out of such situation with relatively less harm. If the organizational culture is relationship-oriented, then victims find it easy to get advice and support from their managers to minimize abuse. One of the respondents stated:

“...For the time-being, I was not allowed to say anything because my senior manager was there and he said “Dude! Be patient. We will respond to this mishap.” For the time-being I did not say anything but (-) [paused for a while \_00:09:09] I will be honest with you. I was thinking that I will get a job somewhere else...”

A research evidence presented by Oh, Uhm, & Yoon in 2016 matches with the current study findings. It affirms that when managers empathise the victims, they are less likely to be abused. Consequently, there are less chances of turn-over.

#### **4.8 Weak Managerial Policies and Procedures**

All of the respondents admitted that they perceived loopholes, weaknesses and deficiencies to exist in the organizations in which they had been victimised. They perceive that in such cases, their environment becomes toxic and they are left with no option other than giving up on the organization and searching for a new work-place. D'Cruz, Paull, Omari and Guneri-Cangarli in the year 2016 conducted a research which concluded that victims attribute abuse occurrences to failed policies and procedures instilled in an organization.

#### **4.9 Detachment**

Abusive behaviours trigger many emotions in victims on one hand. While on the other, they may suppress many emotions. All of the respondents reported to become cold after being victimised. Victims may lose their passion for work and they detach themselves from people and organizations they were working for. This sort of behaviour highlights the under-lying human desire of establishing emotional connections with other people and work. This desire is perceived to be reasonable and justified. However, abuse compels them to retrieve and later they refrain from putting their emotional energy in work-related affairs.

Following words make such a behaviour of victims eminent:

“...We do it voluntarily in the best way possible. But this entire system has been infested with these ugly bugs who will never let these sort of institute flourish for improvement of humanity. So, I used to feel depressed, anxious, humiliated. My community knows that I had been one of the most dedicated volunteers. However, this broke me to my core and from then onwards, I had never come forward for any voluntary work...”

### **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

It is worth noticing that supervisory abuse comes in many forms. It exists as a bitter reality in organizations. However, findings suggest that the HR practices have not yet developed promising procedures that may minimize the exploitation of power and influence. People join organizations not only to earn livelihood and career advancement but their deeper desires call for socialization, human connection and emotional growth. However, unfortunate incidents like supervisory abuse not only affect victims at various levels, they also affect organizations and their cultures. It is of immense importance for organizations to identify weaknesses in their established procedures of personnel management and then they must work on strengthening those procedures. Success of organizations largely depend on their employees. Organizations may lose their potential heroes if supervisory abuse prevails in organizations.

### 5.1 Significance of The Study

The literature review suggests that qualitative data about the phenomenon of supervisory abuse is outnumbered by quantitative data. Also, supervisory abuse prevails in organizations where corporate culture does not allow the foundations and establishment of promising policies that may minimize this phenomenon profoundly. Hence, the study highlights the weaknesses of the Human Resource Management policies and procedures and their poor execution and ideologies as expressed by the victims. Hence, recommendations can be drawn out in order to strengthen the actions of Human Resource Management so as to deal with job turn-over that may be a consequence of abusive supervision.

The study also initiated to illustrate the role of Human Resource Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to deal with the up-surging problems that may sprout as a result of abusive supervision.

### 5.2 Limitations of The Study

The study does not incorporate the designation of respective respondents in the study. Individuals are considered if they have reporting relations with their supervisors. Therefore, the study can be fragmented and the population may be studied in fragments based on their designations in order to gauge the degree of abusive supervision that they encounter.

Since, abuse is a highly subjective phenomenon. It is difficult to operationalize its definition and it is challenging to identify its dimensions. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct grounded theory research with a view to develop dimensional model of abusive supervision as it will directly affect the Human Resource Policy Implications.

Face-to-face interviews could not be taken from all the respondents as the study was conducted in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic. To ensure social distance, it was agreed upon to take phone-interviews. Face-to-face interviews provide richer content for analysis to researchers as they may also incorporate body language of the respondents.

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