



# Destructive Leadership and Counterproductive Work Behavior with Mediation Mechanism of Justice Perception: Evidence from Tanner Sector of Pakistan

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship among the destructive leadership constructs and counterproductive work behavior (CWB) in tanners sector of Pakistan. Destructive leadership has composed of further two constructs that are Machiavellianism and abusive supervision. The study also investigated the mediating role of justice perception in these relationships. Data was collected from 353 respondents by using self-administered questionnaires from tanners sector of Pakistan. Data were analyzed through Structure equation modeling and test the hypothesized relationships. Results showed the existence of destructive leadership lead to CWB in tanners sector. Justice perception mediates the relationship among destructive leadership and CWB except the relationship of Machiavellianism with Information silence and CWB. Tanneries should conduct different training sessions to reduce the effect of destructive leadership behavior in workplace to reduce the counterproductive work behavior. Future studies may conduct on destructive leadership with horizontal violence and organizational politics.

**Keywords:** Destructive Leadership, Counterproductive Work Behavior, Justice Perception, Tanners Sector, Pakistan

**JEL Classifications:** L20, M12, M54

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational research has mainly focused on positive behavior of individual employees in the workplace such as motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and productivity. The negative or dark side of organizational behavior has not received much attentions as compared to positive side. Although, absenteeism has been studied. The researchers started to evaluate these critical behaviors of employees that have major impact on organization as well as on individual employee. There are many ways for employees through which they can contribute to the value of organization but there are also some actions that oppose the organizational values and system or sometimes cause serious harms for the organization. The term which was coined for such behavior is counterproductive work behavior (CWB), and it is

defined as an intentional behavior of organizational employees that looks contrary to the legitimate interests of organization. Workplace deviance is general construct which contained broad meanings and it is “purposeful behavior that violates organizational norms and is intended to harm the organization, its employees, or both” (Bennett and Robinson, 2003).

These types of behaviors are deliberate in nature, and threat to human moral values like honesty. There are different terms that are associated with CWB and have been used by different researchers in the world. These are: antisocial behavior (Greenburg and Dixon, 1997), deviance (Robinson and Bennett, 2003), counterproductive behavior (Fox and Spector, 1999), delinquency (Hogan and Hogan, 1989) and organizational misbehavior (Weitz et al., 2012). These different terms bounce

back various theoretical models and research approaches for this construct. As such behavior is for employees and leaders are also engaged in it. Nielsen and Einarsen (2012), postulated that different anti-social behaviors like workplace bullying can cause physical and psychological harm to individual employees as well as increased costs and profit loss to the organization. Consequently researchers have asserted that ensuring the mental health needs of employees has become a key issue in occupational health. In recent years, numerous scholars have found that workplace bullying has negative effects on employee mood or behavioral intentions, including work satisfaction organizational commitment, intention to leave. Over the past many years, organizational scholars have examined workplace deviance, employee behavior that is harmful to the interests of an organization and its members. Workplace deviance continues to be a pervasive issue and a serious and costly problem for organizations globally (Weitz et al., 2012). Machiavellianism is a trait of leaders based on how nasty one is and crucial to understand it. Machiavellian leaders are deceptive, manipulative and have disgusting state of mind which is exactly unlike the moral. Similarly, they are willing to break the rules and regulations that are harmful for others to get what they want in the situation. As Machiavellianism is a destructive leadership construct, abusive supervision is also a destructive form of leadership behavior which fall in workplace mistreatment (Kelloway et al., 2008). But more closely, it falls in destructive leadership due to the addition of abuse from supervisor.

Abusive supervision has been defined by the Tepper (2000) as “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (p. 178). This definition conveys three different views. First, subordinates develop a perception about their supervisors by making an evaluation of their behaviors. Secondly, abusive supervisors often demonstrate the non-physical aggressive behavior. Lastly, abusive supervisors demonstrate the deliberate behavior. This discloses that various indicators of abusive supervision associated with aggressive behavior. It is also defined by another way as representing the extensive psychological or emotional mistreatment of subordinates (Shaw et al., 2011). Although, previous studies primarily revealed the identity of abusive supervisors as a forerunner of their abusive behavior. Yet, how subordinate’s identities report is unclear in the relationship of abusive supervision and its outcomes being a vital construct (Tepper, 2000). Hence, it is tough to aware of how individual’s identity plays a specific role in abusive supervision and its outcomes. Therefore, it is quite interesting and need to study self-identity with abusive supervision and its outcomes (Yu et al., 2016).

Organizational justice is the concept utilized to explain the role of fairness in the workplace which relates to organizational employees. Basically, organizational justice is more linked with the ways that are determined by the employees, if they have been fairly treated in their jobs (Moorman, 1991). Organizational justice explained many other organizational behaviors of employees that lead towards the betterment of organization (Greenberg, 1990). Employees who are working in the organizations perceive four types of organizational justice which are: “distributive justice,

procedural justice, interactional justice and informational justice”. Distributive justice is the perception of fairness of employees at workplace. The outcomes of distributive justice can be the equality with comparison in relation to others (Alsaalem and Alhaiani, 2007).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1. Machiavellian Leadership

Machiavellian leadership is a destructive leadership concept which was originally argued by Niccolo Machiavelli in his famous book *The Prince*, and based upon manipulation to others. There are two perspectives of leadership concepts, such as positive (Ethical, Transformational, Authentic and Paternalistic etc.), and some areas of leadership contains destructive perspective like Machiavellian leadership (Lam, 2016). Machiavelli advocates that doing the necessary things in whatever way, which leads the concept of “the ends justify the means” (Deluga, 2001. p. 341). It means a leader can do anything he or she wants by getting their desire output. Machiavellianism is a purely practical or applied approach in the organizations. Furthermore, there are two levels of Machiavellianism, one is high Machs and another is low Machs (Christie and Geis, 1970). High Machs are more amoral and less interactive with social norms. Whereas, low Machs are mainly less manipulative and somehow involved in societal norms with interactive behavior.

Christie and Geis (1970), originally developed the scale on Machiavellian leadership which was based on four major characteristics or facets of a Machiavellian leader. These are mainly amoral, desire for control, desire for status and distrust to others (Dahling et al., 2009). Amoral is the first feature in which the leader wants to take the competitive edge from the situation over others along with some allied features like sabotage, cheat and unethical behaviors are associated with the leader. Desire for control and status contain ruling the situation, making the good status in environment and become the rich person etc. are the sub features that are attached with the Machiavellian leader. The final dimension is distrust of others which is mainly look on personal gains and less trust of Machiavellian leader to others (Dahling et al., 2009).

### 2.2. Abusive Supervision

Organizations are trying to seek well understanding of leadership construct that must take a closer look at both sides of leadership. This can enable the organizations to understand effectiveness and growth of leadership (Einarsen et al., 2007). During preceding years, it seems that a notable research increases for destructive leadership, thus, in this era researchers are interested to explore the dark behavior of leadership especially abusive supervision (Martinko et al., 2013).

In the recent era, research studies are focusing on to explore negative sides of supervision and its effects by using assorted outcomes (Tepper, 2007). Leaders can develop an attitude in their followers by professional interactions. Especially, abusive supervision is

an important factor of the dark side of leadership and it seeks many intentions of researchers due to its ample existence in the organizations. Tepper (2000) well-defined abusive supervision as supervisor's exhibit of antagonistic behavior towards subordinates in verbal and non-verbal form instead of physical behavior. According to Pradhan and Jena (2016), abusive supervision comprises four distinct views. First, abusive supervision means an evaluation of supervisor's behavior by subordinates. Secondly, it represents supervisor's hostile behavior with subordinates which is also described by Tepper (2007). Thirdly, abusive behavior should be deliberate and willful. Fourth and lastly, abusive behavior should not be physical behavior. Thus, outcomes of these types of supervisions will be aggression and humiliating attitude (Zellers et al., 2002) job dissatisfaction, psychological issues, and reduction in commitment. Abusive supervision is a serious growing problem in the organizations and due to this, 16% of the employees are affected (Tepper, 2007). Furthermore, it is creating heavy costs in the organizations approximately \$ 23.8 billion. It is well described in conservation of resource (COR) theory which was firstly proposed by Hobfoll (1988; 1989).

### 2.3. Counterproductive Work Behavior

Counterproductive work behaviors are defined as the voluntary organizational behaviors that reveal the performance of employees in jobs adversely weakening the organizational effectiveness (Lau et al., 2003). Fox and Spector (1999) commented that willful behavior by employees which cause harmful consequences in the organization is counterproductive work behavior and organizations are bearing billions of dollars cost from this behavior of employees (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). There are many dimensions that lead counterproductive work behavior such as sabotage (physically damage of organizational property), abuse against others (ignoring to someone at workplace), theft, production deviance (intentionally work slowly or incorrectly) and withdrawal (taking longer breaks other than routine) (Spector et al, 2010). There are two groups of CWB in which one was property deviance and second was production deviance. Property deviance can be defined as the misuse of employer's assets whereas, production deviance includes laziness and the behavior of absenteeism of employees from the organization. There are two major streams of counterproductive work behavior. It can be caused by personal factors or by organizational factors.

Personal factors that can cause the counterproductive work behavior are mainly habits of employees along with some demographics of employees. It also includes stress over the employees in the organization. These factors are commonly in workplace that under the category of personal factors of CWB (Boye and Jones, 1997). Organizational factors contain the shared perception of employees that attached some characteristics of work settings such as group influence, supervisor behavior, organizational policies etc (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1993). There are also some contextual factors that can cause counterproductive work behavior which involve environmental issues that lead to make the choice of employees work as antisocial in the organization.

H<sub>1</sub>: Machiavellian leadership is positively associated with counterproductive work behavior.

H<sub>2</sub>: Abusive supervision is positively correlated with counterproductive work behavior.

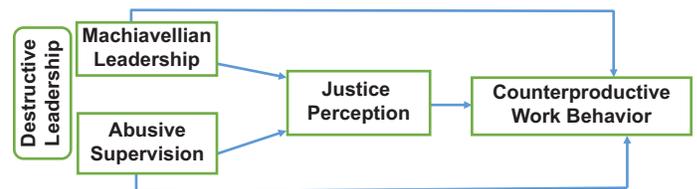
### 2.4. Justice Perception

Behaviorally, silence and voice are opposite in nature and related with expressing the ideas (voice) and withholding the ideas (silence) in the organizations (Jones and Nisbett, 1972). There are three types of silence, the first is acquiescent silence in which employees withhold the relevant ideas or information based upon resignation which further leads disengage behavior of employees (Kahn, 1990). It generates the passive behavior in the employees. Defensive silence is proactive and intentional behavior of employees that are intended to protect the self from external threats (Schlenker and Weigold, 1989). Defensive silence could include the hiding of ideas or information or personal mistakes for the purpose of self-protection. Pro social silence is the third type of information silence which relates the concept of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Pro social silence concerned with the holding of work related ideas, information and opinions that are beneficial for the organization and it is also proactive behavior in nature. Pro social silent people are aware of the alternatives and other different considerations but they consciously hold the information and ideas (Organ, 1997).

H<sub>3</sub>: Machiavellian leadership is negatively associated with Justice Perception.

H<sub>4</sub>: Abusive supervision is negatively associated with Justice Perception.

H<sub>5</sub>: Justice Perception mediates the effect of Destructive leadership constructs and Counterproductive work behavior.



## 3. METHODOLOGY

The current study utilized simple random sampling method via self-administered survey questionnaire from employees of Tanner sector of Pakistan. Tanner (Leather manufacturing and Leather related products) sector of Pakistan due to growing importance of this sector and lack of studies over this sector. Currently it contributed 5.4% of GDP of the country (PBS, 2017). The leather industry has mainly six sub sectors namely, tanning, leather footwear, leather garments, leather gloves, leather shoe uppers and leather goods.

Employees that were working in managerial staff (top, middle and frontline managers) had been selected for data collection. The sample contained 398 questionnaires and out of which 353 were usable questionnaires for data analysis, thus comprising of 88% usable responses. In measuring variables, Machiavellian leadership is doing the necessary things in whatever way, which

leads the concept of “the ends justify the means” (Deluga, 2001, p. 341). A sixteen item scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) was used which was developed by Dahling et al. (2009). Abusive supervision is based on subordinate’s relation in the organization including psychological stress and a specific workplace mistreatment (Tepper, 2000) and was measured through five item scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) developed by Tepper (2007). Justice perception is the perception of employees that they have been treated fairly and promptly in the organization and it was measured through twenty item scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (disagree) developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993). Counterproductive work behavior is the voluntary organizational behaviors that reveal the performance of employees in jobs adversely weakening the organizational effectiveness (Lau et al., 2003) and it was measured through ten points scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) developed by Spector (2010).

#### 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Demographic showed that age of the respondents which is <20 or 20 are minimum value of 13 and maximum value of 145. Further, male respondents show majority with 297 respondents and minority of 56 respondents. Single respondents show majority of 212 respondents and minority of 141 respondents. So, establishment size shows that majority of employees with the value of 38.2 and minimum value of 2.5%. And job tenure of employees show majority of <1 year with value of 27.8% and minority of more than 10 years with the value of 5.1. Position of the employees show majority of non-manager with the value of 54.4% while manager with the value of 45.6 show minority.

Table 1 shows the relationship among variables. It shows that all variables have significant relationship with each other at the level of 0.01 and 0.05. The lowest correlation was 0.61 in information silence with abusive supervision and the highest correlation was 0.89 in between Machiavellianism and abusive supervision. Mean values are also shown in above table with the ranging from 3.15 to 3.63. And the value of standard deviation with the ranging from 0.684 to 0.857. Reliability of each variable are also shown diagonally in Table 1.

Table 2 demonstrated fitness summary of all variables. It contained values that show all the constructs are fit for analysis. All the variables have above threshold values which denotes its fitness for validate all the constructs. Standardized regression weights have more than 0.3 estimate values which is acceptable to retain the items of variables. Table 3 shows the P values through which hypotheses are accepted or rejected. According to the results of P values, last relationship of CWB with Mach has not been accepted. All others hypothetical relationships have been accepted shown in Table 3.

For examine the mediation, bootstrapping technique is used. It is also used to test the both direct effects and indirect effect of the model. It is shown in Table 4 and according to it there is partial mediations in first path. First path is abusive supervision with information silence and counterproductive work behavior. Second path contained only indirect effect of relationship

**Table 1: Correlation matrix**

	Mean	St. deviation	1	2	3	4
CWB	3.6306	0.85783	0.927			
Mach	3.1730	0.72212	0.641**	0.923		
As	3.1598	0.90822	0.639**	0.896**	0.876	
JP	3.6036	0.68442	0.705**	0.662**	0.617**	0.900

Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Table 2: Fitness summary**

Variables	CMIN/DF	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA
Counterproductive behavior	2.060	0.991	0.979	0.950	0.055
Justice perception	2.518	0.979	0.965	0.931	0.066
Abusive supervision	0.371	1.00	0.999	0.995	0.000
Machiavellian leadership	2.330	0.973	0.957	0.927	0.061

**Table 3: Regression weights (Group number 1 - default model)**

		Estimate	P
JP	<---	AS	0.151
JP	<---	Mach	0.487
CWB	<---	Info	0.923
CWB	<---	AS	0.205
CWB	<---	Mach	0.041

(Machiavellianism with information silence and counterproductive work behavior).

#### 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to investigate the mediating role of information silence between the relationship of destructive leadership and counterproductive work behavior in tanners sector of Pakistan. Machiavellianism and abusive supervision were the independent variables and counterproductive work behavior was the dependent variable. Justice perception was the mediating variable in this study. Five hypotheses were developed to examine the relationship between the variables. Data were collected from 398 employees of tanners sector specifically managerial and supervisor level and out of which 353 were usable respondent. Most of the respondents were male (n = 297) which was 84% of total respondents. Mostly respondents were <30 years age and unmarried. Mean value of CWB was highest (M = 3.6306, SD = 0.8577). CFA indicated that the data were collected fit for hypothesized measurement model along with sufficient factor loadings after some required modification. In correlation matrix, all the variables were positively correlated with one another and fitness summary showed that all variables were fit for analysis and standardized regression weights were above the threshold value (>0.3).

In testing the hypotheses, first hypothesis was relationship of Machiavellianism and CWB. It showed estimate 0.041 which was insignificant P = 0.271 and it showed that there is no positive association between Machiavellian personality trait leader with

**Table 4: Bootstrapping strategy**

Paths	Direct beta without mediation	Direct beta with mediation	Indirect beta	Results
Abusive→JP→Counterproductive	0.097***	0.116***	0.471***	Partial
Machiavellian→JP→Counterproductive	0.041(NS)	0.033(NS)	0.523***	Indirect effect

CWB. Second hypothesis was positive association between abusive supervision and CWB which denoted estimate 0.205 and significant relationship between them. Those leaders that are involved in abusive supervision lead the CWB in the organization. Furthermore, third hypothesis was the positive relationship of Machiavellian leadership with information silence it has significant effect that lead to accept the hypothesis. Four hypothesis was abusive supervision with justice perception and accepted due to its existence in significant region. In mediation analysis, Machiavellianism showed only indirect effect and there was no mediation in Machiavellianism with information silence and CWB relationships. Information silence has the partial mediating effect in two relationships of abusive supervision with CWB.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study provides new insights for the practitioners. Organizations are moving from individual work to team work. Thus, it is vital to pay attention to team leader's behavior. Organizations must identify abusive supervision by aiming to reduce abusiveness at the workplace. One best approach is to conduct leadership/supervision training program which includes exchanging leadership role, group discussion and classroom lectures that can highlight the consequences of abusive supervision. Identified abusive leaders must have to participate in these types of training sessions. To gain fruitful results, organizations have to get pre-session and post-session feedback. Leaders/supervisors must understand those employees working as their subordinates may consider leaders/supervisors behavior different according to different events and times. Although, one leadership style may not be effective at all times and in all events, leaders must have to understand their nature and communications style with subordinates. Accordingly, subordinates expect ethical behavior from their leader/supervisor, it is important for leaders to play key role in this way. Thus, leaders should practice ethical behavior so that employees can perform better at the workplace.

No doubt, in organizational culture counterproductive work behavior (CWB) exist and they want to reduce them. Top management can deal it when they are involving in making rules, procedures and policies. Organizations dealing in tannery should conduct different training sessions to reduce the effect of destructive leadership behavior in workplace which ultimately reduce the counterproductive work behavior in tanner industry.

Although, this study has its own limitations. Firstly, this study measured destructive leadership on basis of 1-time subordinate's experience, although, there is enough scope to measure it on several times and events. The second thing that limits that scope of the study is the population which is Tanner organizations. It

also can link with other sectors and different cultural perspective as in high power distance countries like Pakistan, Mexico, and India etc. Lastly, this study has been cross-sectional in nature because of time constraint as there are enough patterns to explore destructive leadership which can be possible through a longitudinal study. Future studies may conducted on destructive leadership with horizontal violence and organizational politics.

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