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***Abusive Supervision and Its Consequences for Employees in the
Hong Kong Hotel Industry***

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Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed *Frances Wang* (candidate)

Date 28th October 2024

Statement 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Abstract

This research examines abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry. Abusive supervision is defined as sustained hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours and actions perceived by subordinates, excluding physical contact (Tepper 2000, p178). By focusing on employee experiences, this study addresses a significant gap in leadership research, which often highlights positive leadership qualities while overlooking the negative impacts of destructive leadership behaviours. Although some argue that abusive leadership can paradoxically enhance performance, a comprehensive understanding of leadership requires examining its darker aspects. This study aims to investigate abusive leadership in Hong Kong's hospitality industry due to its unique cultural setting and hierarchy structures. Multi-layers of management, seniority of service and high turnovers are common in this business and contributors to abusive supervision in the workplace, providing a pertinent context for this investigation.

This study employs a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design to investigate the prevalence of abusive supervision in Hong Kong hotels against the independent variables of job satisfaction and trust. Quantitative data was gathered from 120 hotel employees using established scales and a binary trust measure. Followed by qualitative interviews with 20 respondents to gain deeper insights and explore factors influencing employee tolerance of abusive behaviours and potential positive outcomes. Thematic analysis and a barriers model were used to recognise the harmful effects of abusive supervision. The research also highlights the unexpected potential for these experiences to foster positive individual growth, resilience, resourcefulness, and organisational policies in certain circumstances among hotel employees.

Keywords: abusive supervision, destructive leadership, leadership, mixed-method approach, explanatory sequential methodology, hospitality employee, Hong Kong Hotel industry,

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Introduction

This chapter briefly overviews a research study examining abusive supervision in Hong Kong's hotel industry. It delves into the background of the study, highlighting the distinct challenges faced by the hospitality sector in this dynamic city. The research problem statement is addressed through the aims and objectives of this study. The chapter will list research questions that guide the inquiry, emphasising how this investigation could improve industry practices and enhance workplace environments in Hong Kong's hotels while also contributing to an in-depth understanding of abusive supervision.

1.1 Background of Study

The majority of meta-analytic reviews highlight that extensive research in the field of leadership consistently demonstrates that leadership exerts a significant influence on various outcomes (Avolio et al., 2009; Bedi et al., 2016; Zhang and Liao, 2015). Typically, discussions around leadership effects focus on the positive impacts that effective leadership can have on organisations and individuals. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that leadership can also result in negative consequences. This notion is supported by the comprehensive work of Tepper (2000) and colleagues, who have thoroughly explored the darker side of leadership and its implications.

The literature on abusive supervision, which has been expanding steadily since Tepper's seminal work in 2000, delves deeply into the negative aspects of leadership. Abusive supervision is specifically defined as subordinates' perceptions of ongoing hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours exhibited by supervisors, excluding any physical contact (Tepper 2000, p. 178). Given the substantial growth in research on abusive supervision and the profound impact that leadership can have on employees, it is imperative to investigate the consequences of abusive leadership. Understanding why abusive leadership occurs and how it affects employees is essential for developing effective strategies to mitigate its detrimental effects and promote healthier workplace environments.

Most of the current research focuses on the effects of leadership on employees and concerns how positive leadership can affect them. However, leadership is a multifaceted construct, and attention has chiefly focused on how differing forms of constructive leadership – such as transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, or servant-leader approaches – can have varying effects on employees. Despite the growing interest in investigating the effects of different forms of leadership, inadequate studies have investigated how a negative form of leadership, specifically abusive leadership, can act upon the employees and impact their overall well-being.

This research is going to investigate the relationship between abusive leadership, job satisfaction, and trust in the workplace. Furthermore, this study will delve into the subjective perception of abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000; Martinko, 2013), aiming to gather insights from employees who have experience with this phenomenon. The results of this study will enhance our comprehension of the influential factors behind abusive supervision, as perceived by employees. The findings of this study will explore this theme, providing recommendations for organisations in terms of promoting a supportive work environment and addressing related issues.

Over the years, experts have thoroughly investigated the reasons behind talent leaving a workplace. A study conducted by Facebook revealed that employees tend to be dissatisfied with their work, which ultimately drives them to leave the company (Goler et al., 2018). Various factors can contribute to an employee's discontent (Cahyono et al., 2020; Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2000) and cause-and-effect (Tepper and Duffy, 2006); the most common factor relates to their supervisors and managers. Leaders play a crucial role in job design, maximising employee talents and providing supervision and support in day-to-day operations, without which there may be dissatisfaction in the workplace. Herzberg's two-factor theory describes motivating and hygiene factors as impacts on job satisfaction, where motivators are considered factors of satisfaction, and the absence of hygiene factors is considered a factor of dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 2017). Supervision, classified as a hygiene factor by Herzberg, directly contributes to and can negatively influence job satisfaction. When individuals encounter undesirable managerial practices in the workplace, they will most likely terminate their employment. Despite most people believing that others

leave their jobs because of their bosses, research has shown that job satisfaction (Judge and Klinger, 2008; Wang et al., 2020; Ulrich et al., 2007), job engagement (Wang et al., 2020), and leadership (Goler et al., 2018; Tepper, 2000) contribute to people's intentions to stay or leave a workplace. Most of the research shows that employee retention is directly related to employee satisfaction. On the other hand, where the data are insufficient, the intention to leave a workplace due to bad managers is not explained or commonly reported for various reasons. Despite some arguing that abusive leadership is acceptable in different cultural settings and industries, abusive leadership is a subjective and unrecognised practice, possibly related to negative outcomes.

1.2 Hong Kong Hotel Industry

The hospitality and tourism industries in Hong Kong and around the world are facing the greatest challenge since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The hotel occupancy rate in Hong Kong fell from 91% annually in 2018, 79% in 2019, 46% in 2020, 63–66% in 2021–22, and 82% in 2023 (see Table 1.1). The industry has historically experienced fluctuating revenue performance, characterised by periods of both substantial growth and significant decline. The Hong Kong hotel industry is known for facing frequent lay-offs, high turnover rates among employees, and persistent challenges in finding suitable replacements. There has been an average turnover of 35.53% in 2023 (see Table 1.2), and medium tariff hotels are experiencing as serious as a 47.19% turnover rate. Despite the industry's difficulty in generating revenue due to macro-environmental factors, operating costs are high, and turnover represents a hidden cost that cannot be ignored. The unemployment rate in Hong Kong declined to 2.9% in early 2024 (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)). The hospitality industry is currently encountering difficulties in attracting skilled workers. The most recent social media report suggests that Hong Kong is a city known for unfriendliness, unwelcoming attitudes, and unsatisfactory service providers, especially when compared to other cities, such as Shenzhen. There is a shortage of workers in current business conditions, particularly in frontline positions, with a majority of roles being occupied by part-time staff. Part-time employees often have limited training and may not possess the essential skills and knowledge needed to

effectively fulfil their job duties, resulting in reduced levels of guest satisfaction. Most hotels and restaurants are still unable to recruit casual workers, even after offering a 50% increase in hourly wages, as reported by industry news. Despite the potential for talented individuals to move to other sectors such as property management, healthcare, finance, and beyond, there has been a significant migration rate to other countries from Hong Kong in recent years, which is also a contributing factor to the need to fill vacancies. Some suggest that lacking specific research or support on employment figures, there is an increasing trend of skilled hospitality workers taking up part-time positions in the Hong Kong hospitality industry nowadays. Further investigation into the choice of switch is necessary, and organisations must retain their employees to avoid the high costs associated with turnover and service productivity losses. Additionally, businesses need to adjust and develop new approaches to effectively retain their skilled employees. Hong Kong's hotel industry maintains a distinguished status within the region's bustling service sector, attracting global tourists for both business and leisure. It is crucial to understand the complex dynamics between leaders and members, as leadership styles have a direct influence on the workforce. Industry practitioners face challenges in recruiting and maintaining a stable workforce. Yet, the potential impact of abusive supervision introduces further challenges, necessitating a close investigation into its effects on the industry's workforce.

Table 1.1

Hong Kong Hotel Occupancy Rate, Average Rate, and RevPar¹ for 10 Years

Overall Hotels	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Occupancy (%)	89	90	92	95	86	91	79	46	63	66	82
Average Rate	\$1,122	\$1,136	\$1,132	\$1,226	\$1,226	\$1,237	\$1,206	\$887	\$860	\$1,065	\$1,392
RevPar	\$993	\$1,024	\$1,037	\$1,161	\$1,055	\$1,129	\$953	\$408	\$542	\$703	\$1,141
High Tariff A Hotels	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Occupancy	85%	88%	88%	92%	82%	82%	74%	24%	45%	56%	76%
Average Rate	\$1,928	\$1,897	\$1,848	\$1,955	\$2,079	\$2,079	\$1,982	\$1,617	\$1,455	\$1,707	\$2,347
RevPar	\$1,636	\$1,665	\$1,630	\$1,789	\$1,705	\$1,705	\$1,467	\$388	\$655	\$956	\$1,784
High Tariff B Hotels	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Occupancy	89%	90%	92%	95%	86%	86%	79%	45%	65%	72%	84%
Average Rate	\$979	\$1,001	\$1,007	\$1,100	\$1,084	\$1,084	\$992	\$608	\$641	\$824	\$1,098
RevPar	\$875	\$905	\$922	\$1,041	\$934	\$934	\$784	\$274	\$417	\$593	\$922
Medium Tariff Hotels	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Occupancy	91%	92%	95%	98%	90%	90%	82%	62%	73%	66%	84%
Average Rate	\$614	\$643	\$680	\$759	\$690	\$690	\$644	\$436	\$483	\$664	\$730
RevPar	\$557	\$591	\$646	\$744	\$621	\$621	\$528	\$270	\$353	\$438	\$613

Source: HKTB https://partnernet.hktb.com/en/research_statistics/latest_statistics/index.html

¹ RevPar: Revenue per available room

Table 1.2

Hong Kong Hotels' Employee Turnover 2023

Year: 2023 Month: December	No. of Hotel Responded	1st of Month	No. of Left		End of Month	For the Month (%)	YTD (%)
			This Month	YTD			
High Tariff – A Hotels	26	12,759	163	3,938	12,780	1.28	32.48
High Tariff – B Hotels	35	5,355	69	1,956	5,360	1.29	38.95
Medium Tariff Hotels	15	1,617	28	642	1,635	1.69	47.19
TOTAL	76	19,731	260	6,536	19,775	1.31	35.53

Source: HKHA Annual Report, Hong Kong Hotels Association

1.3 Problem Statement

Abusive supervision, defined as subordinates' perception of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact, has become a significant concern. Such behaviours may include public criticism, unjust blame, and consistent disregard for employees' contributions (Tepper 2000, p.178). The phenomenon has seldom been examined or explored in earlier literature. Recent years have seen an increase in scholarly interest in abusive supervision and its consequences (Hameed et al., 2021). As the hospitality industry relies heavily on customer service, the implications of such negative management practices manifest not only in reduced job satisfaction and trust within the workforce but also potentially diminish the quality of service provided to customers.

Abusive supervision can lead to a wide range of negative consequences. Job satisfaction, for example, has a direct link to the intention to quit and service quality and has significant implications for companies, particularly in terms of costs and profitability (Yip, 2018). The University of Texas at Dallas found that 13% of U.S. workers have experienced abusive supervision, resulting in an estimated annual cost of \$23.8 billion (Tepper and Duffy, 2006). Hogan

Hinkin and Tracey from Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration examine how employee turnover affects finances in the hospitality industry. Employee turnover has always been a major concern in the hospitality industry, prompting researchers to measure its financial implications. Earlier research revealed that some hospitality departments experienced turnover rates as high as 60% (Hinkin and Tracey, 2014). The primary reasons for leaving were dissatisfaction with the current job and poor quality of supervision. Factors such as job complexity, property characteristics, room rates, property size, occupancy levels, cost of living index, and unemployment rate all play a role in determining turnover costs (Hinkin and Tracey, 2014). While exact figures may vary depending on specific circumstances or locations, the recognition of the impact on employee job satisfaction can reduce turnover rates and improve financial outcomes.

Recent research by Samain (2020) has focused on the role of trust in the context of abusive supervision, examining how trust can influence the impact of abusive supervision and how employees endorse such behaviour. Trust, as described by Heyns and Rothmann (2015), is the willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on confidence in their benevolent intentions, competence, and integrity. Literature provides evidence that abusive supervision erodes trust and leads employees to be less willing to be vulnerable to their supervisors' actions. When supervisors sustain hostile and disrespectful acts, employees lose faith in their supervisors' fairness, integrity, and ability to support their well-being. The breakdown in trust damages leader-member relationships, workplace dynamics, and overall team effectiveness.

The impact of poor working relationships with supervisors extends beyond job satisfaction and turnover costs (Martinko, 2013). It can also have detrimental effects on employee mental health and well-being (Schyns and Schilling, 2013; Tepper, 2000). Tepper (2000) revealed in his early publications that workers who experience abusive supervision are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression. Another meta-analysis study by Zhang and Liao presented further consequences of abusive supervision across 119 sample studies, establishing significant links between abusive supervision and various factors affecting subordinates (Zhang and Liao, 2015). Tepper (2000) has shown that employees who experience abusive supervision are at a higher risk of developing stress-related health issues such as anxiety and depression.

The majority of the literature findings indicate a strong link between abusive supervision and various aspects of employee attitudes, well-being, organisational justice perceptions, workplace behaviours, performance, and family-related outcomes. The problem statement addresses the prevalence of abusive supervision in this setting concerning job satisfaction and trust. An in-depth exploration is vital to understanding the nuances of this issue, which is largely unnoticed and rarely examined. The phenomenon has potentially negative consequences that could undermine the operational efficiency and sustainability of Hong Kong's hospitality sector.

1.4 Purpose, Aims, and Objectives of Studies

The effect of abusive supervision should be more profound on trust in leadership, which can be considered a state of acceptance of vulnerability based on a positive expectation of the leader's intentions or behaviour. In cases of doubt, abusive supervision signals to employees that their supervisors are not sincere, benevolent, or reliable. The hostile work circumstances created by abusive supervision cause employees to feel uncomfortable and withdraw from the leader and the relationship. Nevertheless, employee trust in the leader is a primary issue with important implications for leader-staff relations and productivity; therefore, it is important to understand the impact of abusive supervision on this criterion. Although most literature suggests that abusive supervision will have deleterious effects on job satisfaction and trust in leadership, this research attempts to provide a qualitative lens for examining this phenomenon. Nowadays, when work is accomplished largely through employee interaction with the leader, these results have clear and far-reaching practical implications for organisations.

This research will examine the effects of abusive leadership on two dimensions of employee attitudes: job satisfaction and trust in leadership. The purpose of the study is to explore whether abusive leadership predicts unique variance in these criteria among employees in the hotel sector of Hong Kong. This study aims at the following:

- To determine how prevalent these abusive behaviours are in the context of the Hong Kong hotel industry.
- To evaluate their connection to the levels of job satisfaction and trust in the current workplace.
- To uncover insights into behaviours exhibited by supervisors that employees perceive as abusive.

The core primary target of this study is to examine the negative aspects associated with poor leadership practices, specifically abusive supervision categorised as a form of destructive leadership, within the hotel industry. Unlike previous research, which often focuses on the attributes of successful leaders, this investigation seeks to provide a clearer understanding of the less favourable dimensions of leadership that have not been extensively studied. By exploring the dark side of leadership and its

implications for job satisfaction, the research intends to bring forth insights that can pave the way for improvements, particularly when trust is considered a potential moderator in cases of abusive supervision.

While abusive supervision has been a central subject in Western research, with influential work by Tepper (2000) and ongoing studies, for instance, those by Martinko et al. (2011 and 2013), it remains relatively under-researched in the context of Hong Kong. Apart from an isolated study by Leung in 2003, the topic has not been vigorously explored in the region. Therefore, this study embarks on filling this gap through a purposeful examination of abusive supervisory practices within Hong Kong's hotel industry. The scarcity of local research underscores the significance of this endeavour, highlighting the urgent need for more focused investigations to understand the unique cultural and organisational dynamics at play.

The hotel industry, infamous for its labour-intensive nature and strict hierarchy, often becomes a breeding ground for potentially abusive behaviours such as managers publicly humiliating staff members, engaging in belittling conduct, or employing silent treatment as a subtle strategy to manage employees. Behaviours that are either aggressive or non-aggressive can also be toxic in a workplace, leading to negative outcomes for the team and organisation. Conducts of such are recognised as indicative of abusive supervision. Using a mixed-methods research approach that combines quantitative surveys with qualitative in-depth interviews, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of abusive supervision as experienced by hotel employees in Hong Kong. This approach ensures a nuanced analysis, capturing both statistical trends and personal experiences to provide a holistic view of the issue.

This study also considers the unique organisational behaviour and structure of the hotel industry, which may facilitate the occurrence of abusive supervision. To understand the hotel industry, the study investigates the influence of destructive leadership behaviours and their possible impact on employees and their perceptions of the phenomenon. The challenges faced by the Hong Kong hotel industry are multidimensional. The necessity to maintain high levels of service under intense competition, coupled with serious shortages of quality human resources, is a stressor

that can intensify the prevalence of abusive supervision. Rapid expansion and the pursuit of excellence in customer service create a high-pressure environment that may catalyse negative supervisory behaviour. Consequently, the industry struggles to foster a positive work culture, which is vital to its economic survival, making this study meaningful.

This study attempts to examine the complex issue of abusive supervision through an academic framework, allowing findings to be generalised across different contexts. Although leadership has been extensively reviewed in current literature, it lacks cohesive frameworks and models (Dinibutun et al., 2020). This study will explore and dissect multiple interrelated factors to provide a comprehensive understanding of abusive supervision from a subjective perspective. By addressing these gaps, the research aims to contribute to a more holistic view of leadership dynamics and their impact on organisational behaviour, ultimately enhancing both theoretical and practical insights into effective leadership practices. This comprehensive approach will help bridge the existing gaps in the literature and provide a more nuanced understanding of the subject.

Finally, this study believes it is common to experience poor leadership, and this research is embedded in the current challenges affecting the hospitality industry in Hong Kong, including high turnover rates, increasing expenses, and diminishing profits. Investigating toxic leadership practices is crucial for addressing these issues and for the betterment of both organisational efficiency and employee well-being. This study aims to contribute valuable perspectives to the existing literature on leadership, focusing on identifying and understanding the acceptance and effects of negative leadership behaviours within the Hong Kong hotel sector. By doing so, it seeks to offer practical solutions and strategies to mitigate these negative impacts and promote a healthier work environment.

1.5 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions, systematically exploring various consequences of abusive supervision within the Hong Kong hotel industry and its implications:

[What is the prevalence of perceived abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry?](#) This investigation will utilise established scales available, specifically Tepper's comprehensive 15-point scale, to measure the frequency and nature of abusive behaviours encountered by hotel employees. This scale is widely recognised for its thoroughness and reliability in capturing various dimensions of abusive supervision. The aim is to fill the gap identified in the current literature regarding the geographical and cultural nuances influencing abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000; Martinko et al., 2013). By employing this scale, the research will gather detailed data to examine whether the patterns of abusive behaviour observed in Western contexts are mirrored or differ within the Hong Kong hotel sector, potentially revealing cultural or regional distinctions. This approach will not only validate the applicability of Tepper's scale in a new context but also provide insights into how cultural factors may shape supervisory practices and employee experiences in Hong Kong.

[How does abusive supervision relate to employee satisfaction and trust?](#) Current research on abusive supervision examines the role of job satisfaction, exploring its influence as a moderator or mediator of the negative consequences associated with toxic leadership behaviour. Scholars, including Tepper (2000), Heimerl et al. (2020), and Ampofo (2021), have investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and abusive supervision. These studies explore how trust can moderate the negative effects of abusive supervision on employee job satisfaction. Abusive supervision, as defined by Tepper (2000, p. 178), is the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact. This leadership practice has been shown to have a direct impact on both employee and organisational performance (Bhattacharjee and Sarkar, 2024; Hight et al., 2019; Tepper, 2000).

Job satisfaction is often dramatically reduced by abusive supervision. Tepper (2000; 2017) and colleagues provide extensive studies demonstrating a negative correlation between abusive supervision and job satisfaction. Brief (1998, p.86) defined job satisfaction as an individual's positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of their job or job experiences (Schömann, 2014). Employees subjected to abusive supervision experience significantly lower levels of satisfaction with their work, their supervisors, and the organisation as a whole. The consequences of job dissatisfaction are far-reaching, leading to decreased motivation, reduced performance, and increased intentions to leave the organisation. This toxic dynamic not only affects individual employees but also undermines the overall morale and productivity of the workplace, creating a challenging environment for both employees and management.

Samian's research focuses on the role of trust as both a mediator and moderator in the dynamics between employees and abusive leaders (Saiman, 2020). Trust functions as both a mediator and a moderator, significantly shaping how employees react to abusive supervision and their propensity to endorse such leaders. Cognitive trust tends to amplify the negative impacts of abusive supervision on leader endorsement, whereas affective trust can mitigate these harmful effects, providing a buffer for employees. Furthermore, trust serves as a crucial link between abusive supervision and employee behaviours such as their willingness to share knowledge. The influence of trust is also moderated by the cultural context and the depth of the leader-subordinate relationship. Therefore, fostering a culture rooted in trust and ethical practices is vital for reducing the acceptance of abusive leadership.

This is the first research to examine the prevalence of abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry using a purposive sample of hotel employees. By analysing these independent variables, researchers aim to gain a deeper understanding of the frequency of abusive supervision in the hospitality industry from the perspective of employees, with a particular focus on the complex relational dynamics within the Hong Kong hotel sector.

[How do employees feel when they experience abusive supervision?](#) This research will examine hotel employees' feelings and attitudes when experiencing abusive supervision. The research question seeks to understand how subjective feelings

directly influence the supervision they receive from leaders. Abusive supervision is inherently subjective, with perceptions of such behaviour varying widely among individuals (Tepper, 2017). These perceptions are shaped by personal assessments of supervisors' actions, influenced by factors such as personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, individual traits, and contextual elements (Martinko, 2013). What one person perceives as abusive, another might see as supportive, leading to significant variability in how abusive supervision is viewed across different contexts. Employing a qualitative approach and conducting interviews with hotel employees will offer deeper insights into abusive behaviours that may not be captured by Tepper's scale.

What factors affect employees' acceptance or tolerance of abusive supervision? This research will investigate the factors influencing employees' acceptance and tolerance of abusive supervision, which the Tepper scale does not fully capture. Data will be collected through one-on-one interviews, allowing respondents to share their experiences in detail. Qualitative data highlight the subjective nature of abusive supervision, emphasising that individuals' feelings and personal experiences are highly significant. This exploration will extend into both quantitative and qualitative phases of the research, with particular attention given to the role of trust in leadership effectiveness (Heyns, 2015). It will also seek to identify whether trust can serve as a moderating factor against the negative effects of abusive supervision. The hypothesis for this study suggests that trust significantly influences how individuals perceive and endure abusive supervision while recognising that other factors, such as organisational culture and individual resilience, also contribute to this dynamic. By integrating these elements, the research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding abusive supervision.

Are there any positive consequences resulting from abusive supervision? This study investigates instances where employees may report a positive impact when faced with abusive supervision. Specifically, through detailed interviews and the sharing of personal experiences, this study seeks to understand why some employees might endorse or tolerate such behaviour from their supervisors. Employing a qualitative research approach, we will delve deeply into the personal experiences and perceptions of abusive supervision among hotel workers in Hong Kong. By doing so,

this research aims to reveal subtle insights that quantitative data alone might not capture. The hypothesis for this study argues that despite the negative aspects of abusive supervision, there exists a possibility that under such conditions, positive impacts may emerge. These positive effects could manifest as improved employee performance, increased adaptability, or enhanced resilience, challenging the conventional assumption that abusive supervision is entirely detrimental.

1.6 Theoretical and Managerial Contributions

This study investigates the prevalence of abusive supervision within the distinct socio-cultural business context of Hong Kong's hotel industry. By analysing this negative dimension of leadership, the research aims to offer valuable insights for managerial practice. The focus on the hotel industry, within the dynamic culture of Hong Kong, allows for a deeper understanding of abusive supervision and its impact, contributing to more effective leadership development and intervention strategies within the Hong Kong hospitality sector.

This research makes several theoretical contributions. First, it highlights the importance of examining detrimental leadership practices, offering indirect insights into effective leadership by illustrating behaviours to avoid. Second, the study advances the theoretical understanding of abusive supervision within the specific context of the hotel industry through a systematic review of existing literature, identifying key themes and areas requiring further investigation. Third, by documenting the frequency of abusive supervision within the Hong Kong hotel industry, the research establishes a benchmark against existing norms, contributing to a more comprehensive and realistic understanding of leadership practices in this sector. Furthermore, by exploring the prevalence and impact of abusive supervision, the study aims to inform future research and refine existing theoretical frameworks related to this phenomenon. The focused investigation of the Hong Kong hotel industry, an area with limited existing research, provides valuable empirical data that addresses a critical gap in the literature and offers stakeholders unique insights for improvement. Moreover, the findings may prompt a reassessment of current leadership styles, potentially encouraging a shift towards more positive and supportive management

practices, particularly in regions where cultural norms surrounding power dynamics influence perceptions of acceptable workplace conduct. Finally, by situating the issue within the context of the Hong Kong hotel industry, a significant economic driver, the study underscores the economic imperative of addressing harmful workplace dynamics to ensure the industry's continued growth and prosperity.

This research offers several managerial contributions. By investigating the dynamics of abusive supervision within the hotel industry, the study provides actionable strategies to mitigate these harmful practices and their negative impact on employee well-being and retention. Furthermore, it offers evidence-based recommendations to decision-makers and industry practitioners, enabling them to challenge and improve unspoken norms within the hospitality sector. The examination of abusive supervision practices contributes to the development of informed approaches for enhancing leadership skills and fostering supportive management within Hong Kong's hotel industry. Addressing critical gaps in current knowledge, the research aims to refine leadership approaches and strategies from a managerial perspective, extending its impact beyond academia to the operational core of hospitality businesses. The study's findings can contribute to positive financial outcomes by providing recommendations for reducing employee turnover and increasing job satisfaction. These findings will also serve as a valuable resource for hotel executives and human resources professionals in developing leadership training programs, crafting policies that promote respectful workplaces, and mitigating turnover by addressing leadership-related causes of employee dissatisfaction. Equipping managers and leaders with a deeper understanding of abusive supervision, the study facilitates the development of clear policies and procedures to address such behaviour, encourages reporting mechanisms, and fosters supportive environments for employees. The research may also propose a framework specifically tailored to address abusive supervision in the hospitality industry, emphasising policy reforms and leadership development programs that prioritise healthy, respectful, and supportive work environments. Finally, the study underscores the importance of awareness among managers regarding the prevalence and impact of abusive supervision, enabling early recognition of warning signs and preventive action to protect both employees and the organisation.

This study offers extensive theoretical and managerial implications by establishing a more dynamic and nuanced understanding of leadership, especially within the diverse and globalised environment of Hong Kong. The findings aim not only to enhance academic discourse but also to promote constructive developments in leadership approaches that are sensitive to cultural variability and committed to fostering a positive and inclusive work culture. By addressing these aspects, the research seeks to contribute to more effective and empathetic leadership practices that can adapt to the unique challenges of a globalised workforce.

1.7 Thesis Organisation

This study is divided into six distinct chapters, each constructed with a specific focus to facilitate a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of the topic at hand. Chapter 1 serves as the introductory chapter, laying the essential groundwork for the entire research. It begins by examining the background of the study, providing a detailed and insightful overview of the Hong Kong hotel industry. This chapter then moves on to explain the study's problem statement, clearly defining the issues and challenges that the research aims to address. It also outlines the study's aim and objectives, providing a clear and structured roadmap of what the research intends to achieve. Furthermore, this chapter will explain four research questions that guide the investigation, emphasising the study's intended contributions to both theoretical knowledge and practical managerial applications.

Chapter 2 explores a comprehensive literature review on leadership, with a particular emphasis on destructive leadership theories and abusive leadership theories within the context of the hospitality industry in Hong Kong. This chapter introduces a theoretical model designed to examine the tolerance of abusive supervision in the industry. It also identifies knowledge gaps in the existing literature, highlighting areas that require further investigation and providing a solid foundation for the research.

Chapter 3 outlines the research background and methodology in detail. This chapter describes the procedures followed in the study, including data collection methods, sample selection criteria, and analysis techniques. It also addresses ethical considerations and discusses the limitations of the study, ensuring transparency and

rigour in the research process. This chapter is crucial for understanding the methodological framework and the systematic approach adopted in the research.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings, articulating both quantitative and qualitative data coherently and effectively. This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the data collected, presenting the results in a clear and understandable format. It highlights key findings and patterns observed during the research, providing valuable insights into the topic. The presentation of findings is designed to be comprehensive and accessible, ensuring that the data are interpreted correctly.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to discussing the research findings, linking them back to the initial research questions and the theoretical framework established earlier in the study. This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the results, interpreting the data in the context of the existing literature and theoretical models. It also discusses the implications of the findings for theory and practice, offering recommendations for industry practitioners and policymakers. This discussion is critical for understanding the broader impact of the research.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the study by summarising its contributions to the field. This chapter reflects on the limitations of the research, acknowledging any constraints and suggesting directions for future research. It culminates the thesis with a comprehensive analysis, providing a clear and concise summary of the study's key findings and contributions. This final chapter ensures that the research is contextualised within the broader academic and practical landscape (see Table 6.1).

Conclusion

This chapter served as a comprehensive framework, providing a structured approach for the entire study. It put forward the core research problem, clearly outlining the specific issue being analysed. The scope of the study was identified, encompassing the research goals and the formulation of key questions. The goals of the research were clearly defined, guiding the direction and focus of the study. The formulation of research questions was included, providing a basis for the investigation. The aims of the study were outlined, detailing the intended outcomes and objectives. Specific objectives were set, highlighting the purpose and direction of the research. The

chapter discussed the significance, emphasising the importance and relevance of the topic. The relevance of the study within the field was underlined, showcasing its contribution to existing knowledge. A predictive statement was made, indicating the anticipated results of the research. The expected outcome of the study was examined, providing a basis for future analysis. The chapter responded to the theoretical and managerial contributions intended for this study, adding to the academic discourse. Managerial contributions were discussed, highlighting the practical implications of the research. Finally, the chapter laid the foundation for the entire study, setting the stage for subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter presents an exploration of the evolution of leadership theories, from the origins of the great man theory to contemporary analysis of negative leadership contexts. It provides a critical overview of how the understanding of leadership has changed over time, transitioning from a focus on the inherent qualities of distinguished leaders to the recognition of learned skills and behaviours, and eventually to a reverse study, from principal leadership theories to destructive leadership. Furthermore, this chapter discusses abusive supervision as it is defined and its significance to leadership, the hospitality industry, and the region of Hong Kong. It also examines variables such as job satisfaction and trust in relation to abusive supervision. By exploring the prevalence of abusive supervision in the workplace, this study presents a theoretical framework to explain the barriers and reasons for the persistence of abusive relationships in the workplace. Lastly, gaps in the existing literature are explored.

2.1 Definition and Background of Leadership Theories

Leadership has long been a subject of extensive study and is considered a cornerstone of organisational success. Defined simply as "the act of leading" or holding a "position of leadership" by the *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries*, leadership remains one of the most popular research topics, as evidenced by over 3.69 million citations on Google Scholar. Yet the academic community has not reached a consensus regarding its exact definition (Maslanka, 2004). There is a lack of clarity and uniformity on what distributed leadership means, resulting in confusion and ambiguity. The definition and background of leadership theories have evolved significantly over time, reflecting the changing nature of organisations and the challenges they face. The complexity of leadership has increased in tandem with the intricacy of modern organisations, as leaders' roles and capabilities have adapted to meet new demands (Syamsuddin et al., 2020; 2022). This section delves deeper into the historical perspectives on leadership, highlighting how leadership practices and the traits attributed to leaders have undergone significant transformations across different cultures and eras.

In the broader context of leadership, there are common themes among definitions that emphasise the ability to influence a group towards achieving goals (Burns, 2012). Some believe that leadership is the art of driving collective action towards a common goal (Nandasinghae, 2020). Others perceive leaders as visionaries who inspire and compel others to follow by setting inspiring objectives (Winston and Patterson, 2006). Conversely, there is a school of thought that asserts leaders primarily drive their subordinates to meet organisational expectations, managing their actions as directed by the hierarchy. The capacity to establish direction, influence others, and align them is also highlighted as a key aspect of leadership (Stewart, 2006). Leadership is not limited to a specific gender or background, as highlighted by discussions on whether certain definitions of leadership exclude women of colour (Ayman and Korabik, 2010). There are various definitions and perspectives regarding leadership, a concept that continues to shape research and discussions across various fields. To advance our understanding of leadership and its implications in different contexts, researchers and practitioners need to engage in discussions that are theoretically grounded and connected to practical problems.

The complexity of leadership, as proposed, seems to be ever-increasing, with leaders' roles and capabilities evolving in tandem with the intricacies of modern organisations (Syamsuddin et al., 2020; 2022). In ancient times, leadership was subject to variation, highly dependent on specific situational demands and the competencies of those who were leading (Eerkens, 2010). Historical perspectives on leadership reveal that leadership practices and the traits attributed to leaders have undergone significant transformations over time. In ancient Greek civilisation, leaders were expected to possess physical and moral integrity, which contrasts with contemporary views (Osgood, 2020). This reflects how these ideals defined the expectations of leaders during that period. In ancient China, the emperor was considered a divine figure with celestial rights and was often worshipped as a deity, giving leadership a distinct aspect. This exemplifies the stark contrasts in leadership across different cultures and eras. By examining these varying interpretations and applications of leadership throughout history, this section lays the groundwork for understanding the richness of the concept and its progression to the multifaceted paradigm it is today.

Great Man Theory

In the 19th century, the great man theory, articulated by Thomas Carlyle in 1874, postulated that leaders were innately distinguished and not products of their environment, possessing unique attributes that differentiated them from non-leaders (Carlyle, 1874; Organ, 1996). Historical accounts provide numerous examples that embody this concept, particularly in the political sphere. Gandhi and Mandela exemplify the great man theory. Both leaders had the remarkable ability to unite people and mobilise them towards a common purpose. By convincing the majority through nonviolent resistance, Gandhi revolutionised societies and paved the way for national histories. His approach to leadership was transformative, inspiring millions to follow his vision of independence and social reform. Similarly, Mandela's unwavering stand for a united South Africa, free from racial divides, spurred the struggle that brought down apartheid. His resilience and dedication to justice made him a symbol of hope and change. Both are iconic figures in history who possessed the criterion of natural-born leaders. This suggests that the inherent quality of leadership within them was not a matter of coincidence. Their ability to lead was an innate characteristic, indicating that they were naturally endowed with leadership skills from birth. Their legacies continue to influence and inspire future generations, underscoring the timeless relevance of the great man theory.

Traits and Situational Leadership Theory

Scholars have argued that the great man theory neglects and overlooks situational and environmental influences on leadership effectiveness (Horner, 2003). Scholars in the 19th to early 20th century analysed leadership traits and behaviours, offering a different outlook on effective organisational leadership by identifying actions that enhance effectiveness (Nawaz and Khan, 2016). According to trait leadership theory, leadership traits are classified into five distinct groups under the "Big Five Model" (Hassan et al., 2016). According to the model, five major personality traits fall into specific group types. These traits are surgency, conscientiousness, agreeableness, adjustment, and intelligence. Surgency is a trait referring to being energetic and assertive, while conscientiousness is the trait of being dependable and focused on

achieving one's goals. Agreeableness is a trait that includes optimism and helpfulness, which make someone easy to get along with. Adjustment pertains to leaders with emotional stability, self-esteem, and self-control, while intelligence is characterised by traits such as inquisitiveness and a focus on learning (Greogire et al., 2004).

In situational theory, the concept presents a holistic framework for understanding leadership by considering the forces in the manager, subordinates, and the situation. It suggests that leadership effectiveness is influenced by three variables (Thompson and Vecchio, 2009). The variables are leader-member relationships, task structure, and position power (Greogire et al., 2004). Under the context of leader-member relationships, the quality of the interactions and the level of trust and rapport between the manager and their subordinates are crucial. Positive relationships can lead to better communication, cooperation, and overall team dynamics. In another context, focus on task structure refers to the nature of the tasks and is examined to determine how well defined and structured the assignment is. Leadership can be more effective when tasks are clear and well organised, as expectations and outcomes are understood. When the focus is on positional power, it reflects the leader's formal authority and power within the organisation. This includes the ability to reward, the capacity to punish, and the overall influence the leader holds over team members. The situational theory suggests that by analysing and adjusting to these variables, a manager can determine the most appropriate leadership style for each individual situation, leading to improved performance and outcomes.

Within situational leadership theory, it is argued that leadership effectiveness results from the match between the leader's style and the setting in which they perform. When Hersey and Brown established this theory, they emphasised that this model suggests there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership. Effective leaders adapt their style to suit the needs of their followers and the specific circumstances they face. This theory posits that leadership is not static but rather a dynamic process that requires flexibility and responsiveness. Leaders must be able to assess the situation and modify their approach accordingly to achieve the best outcomes.

Contrary to common belief, leaders should adjust their style according to the level of development of the individuals or a group they lead or the task they are assigned. This approach suggests that a leader's behaviour should be dynamic and flexible based on the situation, ranging from directive to supportive. For instance, a leader might need to be more directive with a new team that requires clear guidance and instructions, while a more experienced team might benefit from a supportive and participative leadership style. This adaptability is crucial for addressing the varying needs and capabilities of followers, ensuring that the leader can effectively guide them towards achieving their goals.

Critically, situational theory is a more dynamic view that considers the context and includes other factors, while traits theory is more restricted as it focuses mainly on individual leaders' innate qualities. According to situational theory, effective leadership involves adapting to specific problems and possibilities rather than relying solely on a leader's innate traits. This perspective acknowledges that the context in which leadership occurs is vital and that successful leaders must be able to navigate and respond to changing circumstances. By incorporating situational factors, this theory provides a more comprehensive understanding of what makes leadership effective in diverse environments.

Leadership Styles

The study of leadership continues to evolve, with traits and situational theories being the foundational concepts that have shaped our understanding of effective leadership. Over the years, these foundational theories have further expanded to include a diverse range of leadership styles that have been examined and refined over decades. The leadership styles that are often discussed and well-articulated in the literature include transactional, transformational, laissez-faire, and servant leadership. Each of these styles offers unique perspectives and approaches to leadership, highlighting different aspects of how leaders can influence and guide their followers. Transactional leadership focuses on structured tasks and rewards, transformational leadership emphasises inspiring and motivating change, laissez-faire leadership allows for autonomy and independence, and servant leadership prioritises the well-being and

development of followers. These styles collectively contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of leadership, demonstrating that effective leadership can take many forms depending on the context and the needs of the followers.

These leadership models, emerging theories from different eras, have been introduced, comprising different approaches:

Transactional leadership was introduced by German sociologist Max Weber in 1947 (Thien 2018, p.39), and the concept has been developed further since then. Transactional leadership theory is based on the idea that rewards and punishments form a major part of the style. This method involves strict implementation with numerous rules and rewards based on compliance (Lai, 2011; Tavanti, 2008). Bass, in 1985, further characterised transactional leaders as individuals who know how to maintain the quality and quantity of performance, how to prioritise goals and overcome resistance to specific actions, and how to implement decisions effectively (Thien 2018, p.40). Notably, this management style is more oriented towards role clarification, goal setting, and performance rewards to attain task efficiency.

Transformational leadership was introduced by James Downton in 1973 and further expanded by Burns in 1978 (Hay, 2006). The theory emerged from highly motivated and inspiring leaders with visionary and charismatic qualities who emphasise the performance of a collective purpose, innovation, and progress within an organisation (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Stewart, 2006). Leaders focus on engaging with their followers, meeting intrinsic needs, and raising awareness of new ways to achieve specific outcomes (Hay, 2006). Remarkably, these leaders drive and push the bounds to encourage their followers to surpass their own perceived limitations and enhance innovation.

Laissez-faire leadership was introduced by Kurt Lewin in 1939 (Cherry, 2006). This theory is characterised by a hands-off approach. The style can be attributed to situations where the leaders provide minimal guidance, leading to diminished accountability, confusion, and decreased productivity within the organisation (Bass and Avolio, 1994). Arguably, this leadership style, where leaders withdraw or tend to

retreat, makes employees more confused, and the productivity level of these employees is lowered.

Servant leadership was introduced by Robert Greenleaf in 1997 (Greenleaf, 1997). The proposed theory suggests that service should be the primary characteristic that distinguishes a leader. Leaders who prioritise putting the needs of others first build strong relationships, foster community, and promote follower well-being. Servant leaders demonstrate qualities such as humility, empathy, ethical dedication, and a focus on attributes like active listening, promoting healing, persuasive communication, anticipating future needs, and responsible stewardship (Spears and Lawrence, 2002). Their primary responsibility is to create and promote the empowerment and well-being of team members, with the leader serving as a tool for transforming every individual into a better version of themselves (Cable, 2019).

Leadership theories, from the great man theory to the trait and situational approaches, explore the complex interaction of individual attributes, context, and follower dynamics. While the great man theory emphasises innate qualities, both trait and situational theories acknowledge the importance of learned skills and adaptability. A key element unifying various leadership theories is the acknowledgement of a leader's significant impact on group dynamics and the achievement of collective goals. However, these theories offer distinct perspectives on the development of leadership itself. While the great man theory focuses on individuals who are born with the innate capacity to lead, presenting leadership as an inherent quality, Trait theory suggests that leadership can be developed through the cultivation of specific traits, proposing that leadership abilities can be learned. Furthermore, situational theory emphasises the importance of adapting one's leadership style to specific circumstances, highlighting the dynamic and flexible nature of effective leadership. Despite differing viewpoints throughout the studies and development of leadership, these theories collectively contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of what constitutes effective leadership across a range of situations and organisational contexts.

Leadership remains a prominent and extensively researched topic. Numerous studies continue to explore and identify practices that contribute to effective leadership. Many empirical studies strongly support the idea that specific leadership models focus on promoting positive organisational change. This has led to an increased focus on the positive and ethical dimensions of leadership (Leithwood et al., 2008). Each leadership approach has its own unique style, which affects the relationship between the leader and their team, as well as their contributions to the success of the organisation. The development of leadership theories and models has been instrumental in explaining and predicting effective leadership practices, while research has focused on training individuals to become better leaders. Future leadership research will continue to build on this existing body of work by refining theories, identifying new theoretical directions, and gaining a better understanding of the nature of effective leadership practices and how to improve them. Leadership is crucial for group dynamics and decision-making systems. We can expect more diverse leadership categories to be explored and analysed in the future.

2.2 Definition of Abusive Supervision and Studies

Abusive supervision was introduced by Tepper in his publication, "Consequences of Abusive Supervision" (Tepper, 2000). In his study, abusive leadership is defined as subordinates' perceptions of how frequently their supervisors exhibit hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours over an extended period, deliberately avoiding physical aggression (Tepper 2000, p.178). The concept further encompasses supervisors' specific actions, which are assessed by how often employees witness various hostile acts. An example of this could be a situation where a boss abuses his or her subordinates by making fun of their new ideas, humiliating them in open meetings, or unfairly shifting responsibility onto them to expedite decisions and avoid discomfort (Tepper et al., 2017). These behaviours exemplify a cultural pattern of abusive supervision that discourages respect. Research on abusive supervision has garnered significant attention, with over 140 articles published in leading journals in the last five years alone (Bhattacharjee and Sarkar, 2024). Scholars have delved into various aspects of this phenomenon, including definitional issues, measurement scales, research designs, underlying theories, and their impact on individuals and

organisations. Despite its negative implications, abusive supervision remains a relevant topic in leadership research.

Unethical leadership is a prevalent problem and is often under-reported (Tepper et al., 2017). A healthy workplace requires managers to refrain from displaying any form of disrespect or aggression, whether verbal or non-verbal, towards their subordinates. Behaviours such as shouting, making demeaning remarks in public, publicly criticising others, and withholding crucial information or resources from subordinates may be common in the workplace but are seldom addressed (Martinko, 2013). These actions can create a toxic work environment and have serious negative effects on employees. Tepper conducted a comprehensive research study that delved deeply into the impact of abusive supervision on employees' intentions to quit and overall well-being, especially within the fields of organisational psychology and organisational behaviour (Tepper, 2017). This thorough exploration provided valuable insights into the effects of abusive supervision in the workplace.

The nature of abusive supervision is subjective, and various opinions on perceived abusive behaviour differ among people (Tepper, 2017). It is built on the assessments that individuals make about their supervisors' behaviour alone, and these assessments can be influenced by factors such as personal experiences, cultural background, individual traits, and contextual factors (Martinko, 2013). What might feel abusive to one person could certainly be viewed as supportive by another, and perceptions of abusive supervision can vary significantly across different contexts. When addressing abusive supervision, it is critical to acknowledge its subjective aspect, which underlines the need to understand how the targeted employees perceive it and its consequent effects on their welfare and job performance (Martinko, 2013; Tepper, 2017). Knowledge of the outcomes, antecedents, and moderating factors of this phenomenon is extensively discussed in the study of the issue and covered by various pieces of literature.

The Consequences of Abusive Supervision

Research consistently demonstrates the detrimental consequences of abusive supervision across various individual and organisational outcomes. These negative

effects include its impact on employee well-being, job satisfaction, turnover intention, and service performance (Yu et al., 2020). Abusive supervision negatively affects employee attitudes such as decreased job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as increased turnover intentions (Judge and Klinger, 2008; Tepper, 2009; Ulrich et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2020). Abusive supervision also resulted in a negative relationship between employees' well-being, leading to increased psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout (Tepper, 2000). In addition, abusive supervision undermines subordinates' perceptions of organisational justice, leading to decreased perceptions of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Park et al., 2017). Furthermore, abusive supervision fosters a negative connection to workplace behaviours such as increased counterproductive work behaviours and sabotage (Schyns and Schilling, 2013; Zellars et al., 2002). Studies have proven that abusive supervision has a negative impact on subordinates' performance, including task performance and overall job performance (Li et al., 2022). Additionally, the consequences of abusive supervision can spill over into subordinates' family lives, leading to negative effects on family relationships and well-being (Schyns and Schilling, 2013). In summary, the consequences of abusive supervision can be grouped into six major outcomes, including attitudes, well-being, organisational justice perceptions, workplace behaviour, performance, and family-related outcomes (Tepper, 2007; Martinko et al., 2013). The specific behaviours exhibited by employees can vary depending on the theoretical framework used to understand the relationship between abusive supervision and employee behaviour (Bhattacharjee and Sarkar, 2024).

The Antecedents of Abusive Supervision

Knowing the negative impact of abusive supervision, such as low morale, intentions to quit, and underperformance, is undeniable. It is essential to explore and address the antecedents of abusive supervision for organisations to establish a supportive, respectful, and productive working environment. Tepper studies show that abusive supervision is caused by various factors, such as supervisor-related activities, which demonstrate hostile behaviour or indifference to an employee's welfare. Abuse can be perceived through actions that are cold and calculating or that reflect a disregard

for the employees' well-being (Tepper, 2017). In addition, high levels of stress at work are a factor that may also drive abusive supervision. Supervisors may display aggressive behaviour towards subordinates when they are under stress and may exhibit abusive conduct due to heavy workloads and overwhelming responsibilities (Yu et al., 2020). Scholars contend that traits-related actions, such as employees who perceive their supervisors as abusive, are more likely to have a hostile attribution style, feel entitled, or be less agreeable, emotionally stable, and extroverted (Tepper, 2001; Yu et al., 2020). Furthermore, contextual-related phenomena such as the culture of the company, societal norms, outstanding team performance, or high-pressure scenarios can play a role in the prevalence of abusive supervision. Within certain environments, such behaviour might be seen as either more permissible or not as damaging (Tepper, 2017; Yu et al., 2020).

Zhang and Bednall (2016) provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the antecedents of abusive supervision, categorising them into four primary groups. Supervisor-related factors include the supervisor's personal experiences with negative affect, stress, and prior exposure to negative behaviours. Organisational factors highlight the role of a climate lacking procedural and interactional justice, suggesting that unfair organisational practices can contribute to abusive supervisory behaviour. Subordinate-related factors include specific subordinate characteristics and behaviours that may inadvertently cause abusive responses from supervisors. Finally, the demographic characteristics of both supervisors and subordinates are also identified as potential sources of abuse.

The antecedents of abusive supervision are well examined in the present study, providing valuable insights into the factors that precipitate such behaviour. Understanding these can guide efforts to mitigate the issue, but it is equally important to explore the moderating influences that can amplify or reduce the impact of abusive supervision. Recognising these moderators can help tailor more effective interventions and inform the development of supportive structures within organisations to buffer the negative effects of abusive leadership on employees. Moving forward, such knowledge will be instrumental in fostering a work environment that encourages respect and constructive leadership.

The Moderator of Abusive Supervision

Abusive supervision has been a significant topic of interest in various academic studies, exploring its profound impact on different aspects of employee behaviour and attitudes. These studies have examined how abusive supervision can lead to negative outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction, increased stress, and higher turnover rates among employees. However, research should also investigate the underlying mechanisms behind abusive supervision, including the moderating factors that influence its outcomes (Yu et al., 2020). These factors might include individual differences among employees, organisational culture, and the presence of support systems within the workplace.

Tepper and colleagues examined the alteration of perceived co-worker organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) on the relationship between abusive supervision and employee outcomes (Tepper et al., 2004). Their research revealed that perceptions of co-worker OCB as selfless can reduce the negative impact of abusive supervision on job satisfaction, effectively diminishing the negative effects of such behaviour. Conversely, when co-worker OCB is perceived as self-serving or motivated by personal gain, it not only diminishes the positive impact on job satisfaction but can also exacerbate the negative consequences of abusive supervision. These findings highlight the critical importance of perceptions in shaping the impact of abusive supervision on both job satisfaction and organisational commitment. By fostering a workplace culture characterised by genuine and altruistic OCB, organisations can potentially mitigate the adverse effects of abusive supervision and promote a more positive and supportive work environment.

Harris and colleagues (2005; 2007) investigate how the meaning employees find in their work reflects the relationship between abusive supervision and job performance. Their research suggests that when employees perceive high significance in their work, the negative effects of abusive supervision on job performance are intensified. The studies suggest that employees who are deeply invested in their work are more negatively impacted by negative supervisory behaviour. Conversely, when employees find a negative impact on their job performance, the impact of abusive supervision on job performance is minimal or even negligible, indicating that these employees may

be less sensitive to abusive behaviour from supervisors. Overall, abusive supervision is negatively related to job performance, but the extent of this negative impact is moderated by the level of meaning employees derive from their work. This highlights the importance of understanding how the perceived meaning of work can influence the effects of supervisory behaviour on employee performance.

In addition, Wang and colleagues (2015) explore the role of silence in abusive supervision. The effect of abusive supervision on employees' silence, with organisational attribution acting as a moderator, is examined. The study shows that employees choose to be silent after experiencing abusive supervision, using it as a means of self-protection. The research highlights that employees often choose silence as a self-protective response to abusive supervision. The perception of fairness in how individuals are treated serves as a mediator in the relationship between abusive supervision and the choice to remain silent. Additionally, the study underscores the significant role of power imbalances between supervisors and employees, which directly affect employees' reluctance to voice concerns. The hierarchical dynamics within organisations make it difficult for employees to confront abusive behaviour, leading them to opt for silence instead.

The extensive studies on abusive supervision emphasise that unethical leadership in the workplace has a negative impact on employees and organisations. The types of consequences include less job satisfaction, high stress levels, and less commitment to the organisation, which influence the employee to leave or underperform. This highlights the significance of addressing abusive supervision, as it affects not only the wellness of employees but also the corporation's success. Current studies have greatly enhanced our comprehension of this critical workplace concern and have set the stage for further investigation and action in this domain.

2.3 Destructive Leadership Theories

Destructive leadership is an emerging theme among academic scholars investigating leadership. Various researchers have contributed to building the theory and concept. Tepper is one of the significant contributors to this theory. The idea of destructive leadership remains dynamic as more studies and insights are brought into the

leadership research field. Ultimately, good leadership involves inspiring and guiding the followers towards successful outcomes, but unethical behaviour is a deviation from these standards and can have a negative impact on individuals and organisations. While both positive and negative leadership theories are important, exploring Baumeister's (2001) concept that "bad is stronger than good," and examining destructive leadership offers a comprehensive and intricate perspective on the subject.

Destructive leadership refers to harmful outcomes resulting from a combination of destructive leaders, vulnerable followers, and favourable environments (Padilla et al., 2007). Destructive leadership is characterised by a negative impact on individuals, teams, and organisations through abusive, manipulative, and toxic behaviours that compromise the well-being and productivity of employees (Mackey et al., 2021). This behaviour also involves negatively influencing followers over an extended period (Schyns and Schilling, 2013). Destructive leadership can take various forms, including abusive supervision, micromanagement, and authoritarian or laissez-faire leadership styles (Mackey et al., 2021). It also includes behaviours such as setting unreasonable expectations, mocking subordinates, and creating a hostile work environment (Schyns and Schilling, 2013). The consequence of destructive leadership results in decreased job satisfaction, increased intent to quit, weakened organisational commitment, and lower job performance. This leads to negative attitudes towards the leader and resistance to their directives (Mackey et al., 2021). Addressing destructive leadership is thus imperative for the health and efficacy of the workplace climate.

Schyns and Schilling (2013) discuss the intricate relationship between positive and negative leadership behaviours, noting that the same action can be perceived as either constructive or destructive depending on the context. Constructive leadership generally involves actions that positively influence and guide followers towards achieving goals through supportive and empowering means. In contrast, destructive leadership is behaviour that goes against established norms and is harmful to stakeholders. Interestingly, certain actions, such as assertiveness, can embody both positive and negative traits; while assertiveness can be beneficial, it can become

harmful if it is abused. The perception of these actions can vary based on subjective viewpoints, highlighting the importance of considering the perspectives of those in leadership positions. Leadership actions can lead to different outcomes, with positive actions often resulting in higher job satisfaction and performance, while negative actions can lead to job dissatisfaction and increased turnover.

Many scholars have examined destructive leadership from various perspectives. Einarsen et al. (2007) proposed a definition and model of destructive leadership behaviour, stating that such behaviours could also include constructive elements. Skogstad et al. (2007) noted that laissez-faire leadership was a form of destructive leadership linked to workplace stressors, bullying, and psychological distress. Hauge et al. (2007) found that bullying is more likely to occur in stressful work environments characterised by interpersonal friction and destructive leadership styles. Ferris et al. (2007) introduced the concept of strategic bullying, exploring the potential consequences of leader-bullying behaviour. This body of research underscores the complexity of leadership behaviours and their varied impacts on organisational outcomes.

Einarsen et al. (2007) argue that destructive leadership has significant implications in the workplace. Research shows that many employees face bullying from their superiors, and leaders themselves may exhibit harmful behaviour towards subordinates. Einarsen and his colleagues proposed a model of destructive leadership that recognises both constructive and destructive elements. Leaders can display behaviours that are both supportive and harmful simultaneously. Additionally, the model includes a category for constructive leadership, where leaders act in alignment with the organisation's interests, enhancing motivation, well-being, and job satisfaction among subordinates.

Einarsen and his colleagues (2007) discuss the positive aspects of destructive leadership, highlighting four major focuses. Firstly, despite their negative traits, destructive leaders can be supportive and provide assistance to their subordinates by listening to their concerns, offering guidance, and fostering a positive work environment. Secondly, these leaders can be highly task-oriented and goal-driven,

contributing to organisational efficiency by establishing clear objectives and making strategic decisions. Thirdly, destructive leaders often excel in their job duties, leveraging their expertise to benefit the organisation. Lastly, they are effective in managing stakeholder relationships and maintaining positive interactions with customers, business partners, and upper management through effective communication and collaboration. It is important to note that these constructive elements do not excuse destructive behaviours in leaders. Instead, the purpose is to explain that leadership behaviour is complex, with both positive and negative qualities coexisting.

Constructive Leaders versus Destructive Leaders

Abusive supervision is a reverse study of leadership theories and offers a unique perspective that flips the script on traditional leadership theories. Instead of focusing solely on positive traits, it examines destructive or abusive supervision, as seen with some famous leaders like Steve Jobs, Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, and Lee Kuan Yew. The approaches of these leaders are debatable and can cause stress or harm to their teams, ultimately leading to the great success of the organisation. Despite the innovation and forward-thinking, literature studies have examined their toxic behaviours. For instance, Steve Jobs led Apple to its remarkable success through his intense pursuit of perfection. However, this drive for excellence came with a downside; employees reported instances where Jobs publicly berated and swore at them (Bengtsson et al., 2016). Jeff Bezos, like Steve Jobs, is often cited by scholars as a transformational leader who guided Amazon to revolutionary success. However, his leadership also fostered an extremely intense work culture. Such unyielding demands and the fast pace at Amazon have led to reports of employees experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder as they struggle to cope with the pressures of the environment (Adigwe, 2024). Elon Musk drives Tesla through significant technological advancements and ambitious projects, yet his outspoken management approach has sometimes resulted in the swift departure of employees who challenge his decisions (Muwara and Uddin, 2020). Similarly, Lee Kuan Yew is credited with transforming Singapore (Adarsh, 2018) into a thriving, modern nation, but his authoritative leadership style came at the cost of limiting political dissent and personal

freedoms. All these leaders have employed leadership approaches that sparked controversy. In the earlier part of this chapter, we discussed the subjective nature of leadership theories. Generally, leadership cannot be simply categorised as either good or bad. Instead, leadership behaviour is complex and often exhibits both positive and negative traits simultaneously. Moreover, the impact of a leader's actions can vary greatly depending on the context and the perspectives of those affected. What one group may view as a bold and necessary move, another may perceive as reckless and damaging. This duality underscores the intricate nature of leadership, where actions are rarely universally praised or condemned.

In essence, the study of leadership requires a nuanced understanding that goes beyond binary classifications. It involves recognising the multifaceted nature of human behaviour and the diverse outcomes that can arise from a leader's decisions and actions. By appreciating this complexity, we can better analyse and understand the diverse approaches to leadership and their varied impacts on organisations and society as a whole.

Key Issues and Controversies

The discussion continually evolves around the question of whether leadership characterised by abusiveness or destructiveness can improve performance outcomes or promote satisfaction. Steve Jobs, the renowned co-founder of Apple, was undeniably a leader with a vision. However, his leadership approach was abusive in the treatment of his colleagues (Bengtsson et al., 2016). Leadership perception can vary, as discussed earlier in this study; whereas one individual may perceive certain leadership approaches as destructive, another might consider the same approach as beneficial. Tepper conducted a study that found MBA students often saw tough leaders as heroes (Woolston, 2018). This observation is relevant when considering Jobs and Apple, suggesting that if leaders manage business operations effectively, they may not be seen as abusive. In various sectors, such as sports, entertainment, and the military, a stringent management style is often linked to higher performance. For instance, renowned actor Jackie Chan attributes his accomplishments and resilience to the stringent Kung Fu training he received during his formative years, which he regards as instrumental to his development rather than abusive (Tateishi,

1998). In the context of football games, it is common to observe coaches employing vocal and forceful directives towards team members; such rigorous methodologies are frequently interpreted as motivational tools aimed at enhancing performance (Woolston, 2018). Certain industries embrace abusive leadership practices and hold the belief that a hostile approach can lead to positive outcomes, which contrast with conventional standards and norms. Nonetheless, the debate over the impact of forceful leadership continues, given its potentially harmful effects.

Leadership necessitates navigating the fine line between approaches, leading to legacies that are nuanced and challenging to distinguish. Determining the precise effects of assertive leadership practices is a complex task. Tepper (2000) observes that such conduct frequently goes unrecognised, further complicating the issue. Hogan and Hogan (2001) advise that effective leadership involves the identification and mitigation of behaviours that might detract from managerial efficacy. The theory of leadership effectiveness has been explored by Hogan (Hogan and Hogan, 2001), with an emphasis on potentially negative traits and factors that could deter managers from performing effectively. It highlights the prevalence of managerial incompetence within organisations and stresses the significance of identifying and addressing dysfunctional tendencies linked to managerial failure. An in-depth examination is provided of the main characteristics of individuals who exhibit high scores on specific scales through observed correlations. Managers labelled as excitable often anticipate disappointment in their relationships, expecting to be rejected, criticised, or treated unfairly. On the other hand, managers categorised as hyper-vigilant are constantly on the lookout for signs of mistreatment from others and tend to react with emotional outbursts when they feel they have been wronged. This heightened sensitivity causes managers to perceive threats in various situations, even when others do not notice them. In their finest moments, these individuals display strong empathy and offer genuine support to others in their struggles. Hyper-vigilant managers approach new challenges with eagerness and commitment. Despite this, during their lowest points, they seek substantial support and reassurance, making it difficult to satisfy them. This often results in frequent job changes and failed relationships due to their vulnerability to disappointment, which leads them to withdraw when faced with setbacks. Conversely, individuals who score high on the argumentative scale anticipate betrayal,

deception, or wrongdoing, viewing the world as a dangerous place and often subscribing to conspiracy theories. Consequently, these individuals are highly alert for signs of mistreatment and respond directly and openly to perceived injustices. Methods of retaliation may involve physical aggression, making accusations, or taking legal actions, demonstrating their readiness to defend themselves. The sensitivity lens leads to the emotion of betrayal, even when others do not notice due to a swift response. These individuals typically possess intelligence, thoughtfulness, and perceptiveness, constructing intricate and well-thought-out perspectives that showcase their analytical and critical thinking abilities (Hogan and Hogan, 2001). It appears that negative, unconventional managerial traits can also contribute to positive job outcomes.

Instead of focusing on the constructive qualities of leaders, it delves into the destructive elements and the mistreatment of employees by their leaders. By examining the negative impact of destructive behaviours, this field of study sheds light on the effects of abusive supervision. It reveals consequences for both individuals and organisations, emphasising the need for scholarly attention. In a recent study, 50% of employees in the United States reported experiencing abuse, and an estimated 65–75% view their supervisor as the most challenging aspect of their job (Gallegos et al., 2022). These figures highlight the prevalence of abusive supervision in the workplace. There is a distinct difference between bad supervision and abusive supervision. The consequences of bad supervision led to ineffectiveness without causing harm to employees. In contrast, abusive supervision goes beyond ineffectiveness, inflicting emotional distress and impacting both the professional and personal aspects of employees' lives. (Nelson and Friedlander, 2001). Examining and addressing abusive supervision is crucial for fostering healthier work environments and supporting supervisees' overall development. These principles and areas collectively contribute to fostering a culture of good supervision, benefiting both supervisors and supervisees.

Most studies confirm the negative effects of abusive supervision, but some explore the buffering effects of certain variables (Zhang and Liu, 2018). Mitchell and Ambrose (2012) found that organisations could lessen destructive reactions and enhance

constructive responses by carefully selecting their employees and encouraging constructive ways for them to respond to abusive leaders. In a research conducted by Lee and colleagues (2013) in South Korea, it was found that workers showed lower levels of creativity when abusive supervision was extremely low, compared to when it was at a moderate level. Huh and Lee (2021) investigated that when employees view abusive supervision as a means to enhance their job performance and have supportive workplace friendships, such supervision can lead to heightened work engagement. Furthermore, most scholars are aware that Asian culture, particularly Confucian values, influences responses to abusive supervision. Hierarchical structures and acceptance of hostility from higher authorities create a greater tolerance for unfair treatment. This cultural context leads to different perceptions and reactions compared to Western cultures, which are shaped by values like high power distance and tolerance for mistreatment (Zhang and Liu, 2018). Some research has demonstrated that abusive supervision may not always have negative consequences (Oh and Farh, 2017), inspiring more extensive studies.

The investigation of the phenomenon of negative leadership often carries negative implications. While this research does not aim to contest the practices of successful leaders, it will explore the phenomenon and seek to dispel the unfavourable associations linked to abusive leadership, while delving into diverse viewpoints within leadership theoretical frameworks.

2.5 Abusive Supervision Studies in the Hospitality Industry

Recent studies have explored the effects of abusive supervision within the hospitality industry. Hon and colleagues (2016) examined how abusive supervisory behaviour trickles down and negatively impacts service performance in hospitality industry teams. Additionally, other researchers have investigated similar patterns of abusive supervision in this specific sector. Lyu and colleagues (2016) focused on how abusive supervision influences proactive customer service performance among service employees in the hotel industry, highlighting the role of employees' collectivistic values in exacerbating the relationship between abusive supervision and organisational identification. Xu and colleagues (2017) investigated the connection

between employee moral efficacy, co-worker support, and voicing concerns about abusive supervision in the hospitality industry, particularly in cultures with high power distance, such as Ecuador. Pan et al. (2018) delved into how abusive supervision affects job-oriented constructive deviance in the hospitality industry, warning against the acceptance of abusive behaviour even at moderate levels. Wang (2019) explored the influence of organisational support, employee mistreatment, emotional labour, and customer trust on hotel operations, finding that managerial abuse exacerbates the detrimental impact of surface-level emotional displays on service quality. Furthermore, Yu (2020) reviewed a total of 36 articles on abusive supervision in the hospitality industry and identified four key areas: antecedents, consequences, mechanisms, and research designs for the topic of study. Wang et al. (2022) examined the effects of abusive supervision on job satisfaction, mental health, affective organisational commitment, and the overall health of employees within the industry. Yu and colleagues explore bystanders' emotional and behavioural reactions to abusive supervision (Yu et al., 2022) and the role of employees' mindfulness in relation to abusive supervision and daily emotional labour (Yu et al., 2023). Finally, Shi et al. (2023) focused on managers' emotional reactions and impression management strategies in response to their abusive supervisory behaviour, shedding light on how managers handle their abusive actions.

Hight and colleagues (2019) conducted a study examining how abusive managers in the hospitality industry are characterised by employees using a qualitative approach. The study provides a comprehensive examination of the negative impact that bad managers can have in the hospitality industry. It further explores the perspectives of hospitality employees on bad managers and their behaviours. Through this, we take a glance at different ways of how bad managers go unnoticed and the impact that, in turn, negatively affects employees and organisational performance. The purpose of the study was to identify negative managerial traits and analyse their impact. The research revealed that ineffectual managers in the industry exhibit six main themes: unprofessional conduct, autocratic management style, poor leadership skills, unethical behaviour, inadequate operational and technical abilities, and poor decision-making and delegation skills. It was found that these deficiencies stem from

four key attributes: company culture and structure, the personal attributes of the managers themselves, a lack of qualifications, and tenure and complacency within the role. The paper sought to conduct preliminary research using a qualitative approach. The concluding section recommends that communication skills be given more serious attention by human resources managers, researchers, and educators in the field of hospitality management to enhance employee commitment to the organisation.

2.6 Abusive Supervision Studies in Hong Kong

Interest in the study of abusive supervision is subject to regional and sectoral variation, with growing concern identified in places such as Hong Kong. Lian (2014) research conducted by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology identifies the effect of abusive supervision on the performance of workers and highlights the profound implications of such supervision. Therefore, it is essential to tackle it in the workplace. Besides that, Lian (2012) studied the mediating effects of staying in power on the level of abusive supervision in Hong Kong, and cultural factors could influence the perception and outcomes of such behaviour. Kim (2019) researched at the City University of Hong Kong, uncovering motivations behind abusive supervision and positing that a deeper understanding of these reasons could help alleviate the harmful outcomes experienced by subordinates. This investigation contributes to the body of knowledge on abusive supervision by providing a detailed exploration of the causative factors and their extensive effects on the work environment. In general, research on abusive supervision in Hong Kong underscores the harmful impact of this behaviour on subordinates and the significance of considering cultural factors like power distance. By understanding the motives driving abusive supervision, organisations can strive to create a more positive and productive work environment for their employees (Lian, 2012; Lian, 2014; Kim, 2019).

The prevalence of abusive supervision in any given area typically requires dedicated studies to establish its extent. Leung (2003) conducted a study to examine the correlation between abusive supervision and six outcome variables: job satisfaction, loyalty to the supervisor, affective organisational commitment, intention to quit,

subordinate resistance, and OCBs compliance. This study focuses on the treatment of organisational justice as a mediator and co-worker social support as a moderator. Results and findings are thoroughly and comprehensively explained under the theory of social exchange, providing a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The results indicated that distributive, procedural, and interactional justice mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and five outcome variables: job satisfaction, loyalty to the supervisor, affective commitment, intention to quit, and compliance, with resistance being the exception. Leung (2003) hypothesised that co-worker social support would alleviate the adverse effects of abusive supervision, but results showed opposite trends, where higher levels were associated with a stronger adverse impact on outcomes like job satisfaction rather than mitigating them, indicating a reverse buffering effect.

2.7 Abusive Supervision and Job Satisfaction

Abusive supervision has been a topic of interest, particularly in its relationship with job satisfaction among employees. Rodwell et al. (2014) explored the various predictors of abusive supervision, including personal attacks, undermining of tasks, and social isolation, and assessed their implications for professional outcomes for nurses, particularly in the area of job satisfaction. The study found a negative correlation between abusive supervision and job satisfaction among the research subjects. Similarly, Mathieu et al. (2016) examined the link between traits of corporate psychopathy and abusive supervision, as well as their effects on employees' job satisfaction and propensity to resign. Furthermore, Azeem and Humayon (2017) inspected the determinants of turnover intention among banking employees, focusing on aspects such as satisfaction with compensation, job-induced stress, and the presence of abusive supervision. Findings confirmed a positive correlation between abusive supervision and employees' intention to leave, illuminating its adverse influence on job satisfaction. Wang et al. (2020) investigated the processes by which abusive supervision impacts employee dedication to work and overall job satisfaction. The research suggested that employee silence acts as an intermediary factor that connects abusive supervision with reduced job satisfaction. Furthermore, Miao, Komilugli Fayzullaev, and Dedahanov (2020) investigated how supervisor humility and

abusive supervision influence employee creativity through the mediating role of job satisfaction. The data indicated a positive relationship between supervisor humility and job satisfaction, while abusive supervision was negatively related to job satisfaction. Overall, research across several disciplines consistently provides evidence for a predictably negative relationship between abusive leader behaviour and employee job satisfaction levels. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Abusive supervision is negatively associated with job satisfaction in the Hong Kong hotel industry.

2.8 Abusive Supervision and Trust

Trust is a core component of leadership, and leaders who demonstrate trustworthiness are more able to inspire their followers than those destructive leaders (Heyns and Rothmann, 2015). Heyns and Rothmann's examination of trust in leadership highlights several key aspects. They found that individuals are more likely to trust leaders who are perceived as having high levels of integrity and benevolence. Furthermore, people who are more inclined to trust others usually see a specific person as capable, kind, and honest. This perception helps build trust because people believe in the person's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness, which encompasses competence, benevolence, and integrity, is identified as a strong predictor of trust. Leaders are a crucial component of the trust formation process, as those who are considered trustworthy can more easily inspire trust in their followers. This underscores the importance for leaders to establish their integrity, benevolence, and capabilities to be perceived as trustworthy. Conversely, destructive leadership actions, such as dishonesty, a lack of concern for followers, and incompetence, can significantly diminish trust.

Destructive leadership is expected to have a detrimental impact on trust (Schyns and Schilling, 2013). The assumption is that followers will change their attitudes and behaviours when they encounter a leader exhibiting destructive behaviours such as abusive supervision. This behaviour correlates positively with resistance from followers and diminishes trust in the supervisor. Duffy and Ferrier (2003) conducted

a study that provided empirical support for the hypothesis that abusive supervision decreases trust in the supervisor. Hence, it is evident that destructive leadership has a negative impact on trust.

A recent study explores why employees might endorse leaders who exhibit abusive behaviour, focusing on the role of trust (Samian, 2020). It examines how cognitive and affective trust can influence the relationship between abusive supervision and leader endorsement. The research found that cognitive trust can worsen the negative impact of abusive supervision, while affective trust can mitigate it. The results suggest that building affective trust can be crucial in leader-follower relationships, even when leaders are abusive. The study highlights the importance of trust in moderating the effects of abusive leadership on employee endorsement.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Martin et al. (2016) found a positive relationship between leader-member exchange (LMX) and trust. Trust is fundamental in high-quality LMX relationships, acting as a key mediator linking LMX to both job and citizenship performance. Trust also ties into the psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which are satisfied within strong leader-member relationships. High-quality LMX relationships are built on trust, which plays a crucial role in the relationship between LMX and performance (Xiaqi et al., 2012). Abusive supervision, in turn, critically erodes subordinates' trust in their leaders regarding both the emotional (affective trust) and rational (cognitive trust) dimensions (Xiaqi et al., 2012). Abusive supervision lowers subordinates' trust, which, on the other hand, LMX enhances. Trust serves to moderate or mediate the interaction between the variables that are performance (Peng et al., 2014). Abusive behaviours, like ridicule, discrimination, or anger, rust employees' faith in leadership. The resulting erosion of trust may manifest as negative organisational attitudes, diminished job satisfaction and performance, and lowered commitment levels (Xiaqi et al., 2012). Therefore, to maintain and strengthen trust, leaders must avoid abusive practices and instead cultivate a supportive work atmosphere.

Social Exchange Theory

In social exchange theory (SET), trust is essential. Trust underpins social interactions, accumulates through consistent positive exchanges, and influences outcomes. Trust enables smoother interactions by mitigating uncertainty and risk, and it is vital for predicting behaviour and determining the quality of relationships within SET (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

SET sheds light on the connection between trust and interactions in the workplace. SET suggests that in social interactions, individuals aim to optimise benefits and minimise drawbacks. Trust is a crucial element of these interactions, fostering cooperative behaviour, the sharing of resources, and reliance on each other's commitment. In a work environment, trust is essential for forming constructive relationships among employees, supervisors, and the organisation. Trust facilitates effective communication and teamwork and grows stronger work relationships. With trust, employees are more likely to embrace risk, contribute ideas, and provide mutual support. Building trust can be achieved through consistent and dependable actions, clear and honest communication, equitable decision-making, and demonstrating competence. Conversely, distrust breeds suspicion and conflict and hampers collaboration. Trust is a complex concept that plays a crucial role in the workplace and can be influenced by various factors. It has significant implications for employee attitudes and behaviours.

Social exchange theories focus on reciprocity, the idea that people respond in kind to the behaviour they receive from others (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Positive actions often lead to positive reactions, and the same applies to negative behaviours. These theories explain that the nature of social interactions varies depending on the relationship between the person initiating an action and the person on the receiving end. In economic exchanges, which are transactional and based on a quid pro quo principle, there is a stronger emphasis on monitoring and less on trust. In contrast, social exchanges are more open-ended and characterised by higher levels of trust and adaptability.

This framework helps interpret social behaviour across various situations. When comparing trust in the two theories, the LMX theory and the SET, we see distinct

differences. In the LMX theory, trust is a central element in both in-group and out-group relationships. Trust within the in-group is higher due to deeper connections and shared experiences. On the other hand, in the SET, trust results from the reciprocation of benefits. This theory emphasises the practical aspects of trust, such as reliability and fairness.

In summary, both theories recognise the importance of trust but provide different focuses and contexts. The LMX theory focuses on trust within relationships, while the SET highlights the transactional nature of trust within exchanges. Different forms of trust impact the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction. Therefore, this study proposes the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Trust moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction.

2.9 Why Does Abusive Supervision Endure in Workplaces?

Abusive supervision is a complex phenomenon that occurs in the workplace. In the previous section, this literature review explored various aspects related to this issue, including the factors that contribute to its causes, the mediators, and the examined outcomes. However, a critical question remains: Why does abusive supervision endure in workplaces?

Mackey and colleagues (2017) believe abusive supervision occurs due to a combination of factors, including power dynamics, personal characteristics of supervisors, organisational culture, stress and pressure, and a lack of awareness or training. Abusive behaviour is employed by supervisors to control, offset insecurities, handle stress, and assert dominance (Fischer et al., 2021). Moreover, organisations and cultures that tolerate or reward aggressive behaviour can contribute to abusive supervision (Fischer et al., 2021). As discussed in earlier chapters, abusive leaders are managing the world's largest companies with thousands of employees. Fischer and Mackey both agree that leadership traits such as Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy may increase the likelihood of supervisors displaying abusive behaviour. When supervisors face high levels of stress and pressure, they might respond with anger towards their subordinates. A lack of consequences and a lack of

awareness or training on effective leadership can also contribute to abusive supervision (Ju et al., 2019). Understanding the underlying mechanisms and antecedents of abusive supervision is crucial for creating a more positive and ethical work environment. Preventing and addressing abusive supervision is essential for both individuals and organisations and can be achieved through leadership training, organisational policies, and a positive work environment (Tepper 2017, p.145).

Despite extensive discussions and examinations by scholars over the past decades, abusive supervision persists because individuals often find themselves unable to escape these relationships. Breevaart, Wisse, and Schyns (2021) assert that abusive followers are receiving mistreatment; however, leaving the toxic relationship poses significant challenges for the followers. The barriers model of abusive supervision was introduced to address gaps in the literature on the sustained nature of abusive supervision in the workplace. Understanding the barriers that hinder followers from terminating such detrimental supervision is essential due to its profound impact. An onion-shaped theoretical framework is introduced: the barriers model of abusive supervision, which explains that abusive behaviour is prevalent or that followers endorse the abusive treatment due to the obstacles that restrict them from terminating an abusive supervisory relationship (see Figure 2.1). The framework explains why followers may find it challenging to escape an abusive supervisory relationship. The barriers model of abusive supervision is an adaptation of the original barriers model of domestic abuse developed by Grigsby and Hartman in 1997 (Grigsby and Hartman, 1997). The original model was created to help therapists understand the various obstacles that victims of domestic violence face, preventing them from escaping abusive relationships. It employs an onion-shaped framework with the victim at the centre, surrounded by layers of barriers ranging from external to internal. Breevaart, Wisse, and Schyns (2021) adapted the original barriers model to examine the context of abusive supervision, aiming to explain the lack of focus on why such relationships have endured over long periods.

The barriers model of abusive supervision aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the sustained nature of abusive supervision, encouraging future research and practical interventions to help victims escape such toxic relationships.

By offering a detailed and structured framework, this model seeks to illuminate the complex dynamics at play, including the interplay of various external and internal factors. It also aims to foster more effective strategies for addressing and mitigating abusive supervision in various organisational settings, ultimately contributing to healthier workplace environments and improved employee well-being.

Since the introduction of abusive supervision, scholars have examined the topic, focusing on the outcomes, factors, and variables that influence the strength or direction of the relationship between antecedents and consequences. The various dimensions are often viewed in a fragmented manner. Most studies have highlighted the detrimental effects of abusive supervision on employee well-being (Tepper, 2000; 2017), job satisfaction (Ulrich et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2020), and organisational commitment (Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, research has explored how traditional culture (Hon and Lu, 2016) and leadership styles (Goler et al., 2018) can either sustain or mitigate abusive behaviours, offering a broader understanding of the issue, though not a completely holistic view. The barriers model allows researchers to integrate multidimensional research, combining insights from studies focusing on societal, organisational, relational, and personal perspectives to create a comprehensive understanding of abusive supervision.

The model can currently find the appropriate framework for examining the topic, as it incorporates multiple layers of barriers. It provides a more comprehensive view that includes societal, organisational, relational, and individual factors. The model suggests that followers must overcome four distinct layers of barriers to end an abusive relationship. The first layer, barriers in a larger social context, focuses on external societal barriers that prevent victims from accessing necessary resources and overcoming obstacles. These barriers include an unsupportive societal culture, limited job opportunities, and absent or unenforced legislation. In the societal context, cultural norms and values significantly influence perceptions and responses to abusive supervision. The second layer, barriers in the organisational context, addresses obstacles within the organisation that restrict followers from ending the abuse. This includes organisational norms and values that may tolerate or even encourage abusive behaviour and corporate social responsibility practices that may

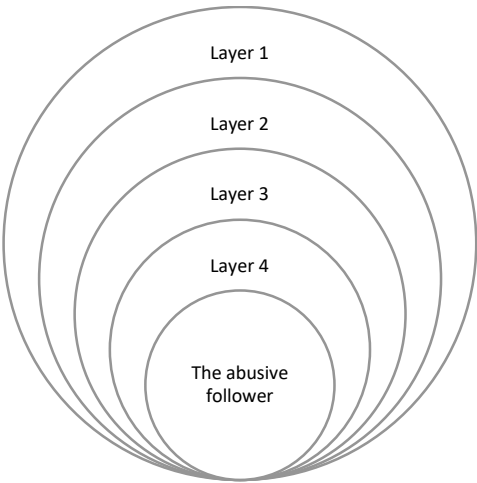
make employees more willing to tolerate abuse, unclear or unsupportive organisational policies and practices, and strong team solidarity and support that may make it harder for individuals to leave the abusive supervisor. The third layer, barriers due to the abusive supervisor, focuses on barriers arising from the actions and behaviours of the abusive supervisor. This includes tactics used by the supervisor to prevent employees from leaving, such as withholding references or speaking negatively about the victim to potential employers. It also includes social isolation imposed by the supervisor, the negative impact of abusive behaviour on followers' psychological and emotional resources, and coping mechanisms employed by followers that may hinder their ability to escape the abuse. The fourth layer, barriers within the abused follower, addresses barriers arising from the values, beliefs, and expectations of the abused follower. This includes factors such as social identification with the organisation or workgroup that may make followers reluctant to leave, conservation values that prioritise conformity and security and may prevent followers from challenging the abusive relationship, implicit leadership theories that normalise abusive behaviour and discourage followers from seeking change, and personality traits such as agreeableness and conscientiousness that may make followers more likely to conform to social norms and remain in the abusive relationship.

The framework is a powerful tool that researchers use to examine complex phenomena within a hierarchical structure and organise data clearly. The barriers model of abusive supervision outlines how different layers of obstacles intertwine and impact one another, complicating subordinates' ability to exit an abusive supervisory dynamic. This model is designed to direct studies, enhance understanding, and shape intervention strategies and policies that could effectively prevent and tackle the issue of abusive supervision. Studies focusing solely on one aspect may miss the interplay between other barriers, such as cultural or societal barriers, which have an impact on organisational and individual barriers. Identifying the aspects of the barriers model and integrating the factors within a broader framework allow for a more nuanced understanding of how context interacts with other barriers to influence abusive supervision. Understanding the possible barriers that restrict employees from

terminating abusive relationships may explain why the prevalence of the phenomenon exists.

Figure 2.1

Theoretical Framework – The Barriers Model of Abusive Supervision



Layer 1 Barriers in the larger societal context • Societal culture • The economy and the job market • The law	Layer 2 Barriers in the organisational context • Organisational norms and values • Corporate social responsibility • Organisational policies and practices • Team solidarity and support
Layer 3 Barriers due to the abusive relationship • Preventing employees from leaving • Social isolation • Impact of an abusive supervisor • Coping with an abusive supervisor is challenging	Layer 4 Barriers within the abused follower • Social identification • Conservation values • Implicit leadership theories • Personality

Source: Breevaart, Wisse, and Schyns (2021)

2.10 Gaps in Existing Knowledge

Today, much of the existing research on leadership focuses on the positive outcomes and qualities of leadership, with far less attention given to the examination of destructive leadership. The prevailing focus in leadership studies has historically been on effective leadership styles, often suggesting that the lack of effectiveness in leadership is simply due to the absence of these positive attributes (Einarsen, 2007).

There is no comprehensive model or framework to explain leadership (Bush and Glover, 2014). A literature gap exists in reviewing the existing literature on destructive leadership models and frameworks. A comprehensive model, incorporating various factors and perspectives, can offer a more complete understanding and stronger findings. Such a model avoids oversimplification and captures the complexity of destructive leadership. There is a clear indication of the need to expand our understanding of the more detrimental aspects of leadership. Furthermore, under the concept of “Bad is stronger than good” (Baumeister, 2001), the notion that negative impacts may outweigh positive ones underscores the need for a more comprehensive approach to leadership research that includes both constructive and destructive fields. There is a critical gap in theories that specifically explore destructive leadership practices and their effects on employees and organisations.

At a recent academic symposium, scholars gathered to discuss whether leadership traits and behaviours can negatively impact followers, teams, and organisations (Deen et al., 2020). They identified several gaps in understanding why leaders engage in harmful behaviours despite the negative consequences for themselves. One area that has not received enough attention in previous studies is the influence of organisational-level factors. Are there certain factors that are more significant than others in predicting these harmful behaviours? Additionally, can positive leadership qualities sometimes result in harm or hinder followers’ progress? Conversely, can negative or destructive leadership traits sometimes benefit followers? The scholars also questioned whether there are other types of detrimental leadership that have not been comprehensively addressed by current research. This symposium highlighted the need for further investigation into these complex dynamics to better understand the full impact of leadership on organisations (Deen et al. 2020). Scholars strive to address the deficiencies in the existing literature and encourage fresh perspectives on investigating the negative aspects of leadership from both theoretical and practical standpoints. However, there are still unresolved limitations that need to be addressed. The limitations include the impact of gender (Ouyang et al., 2015), the impact of personality (Wu and Hu, 2009), the impact of industry (Martinko et al., 2013), and the

impact of front-of-the-house versus back-of-the-house departments (Hight et al., 2019).

Tepper mentioned that the existing research indicates there is a critical need for a more in-depth and expansive investigation into the consequences of abusive supervision (Bhattacharjee and Sarkar, 2024; Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2017). While extensive studies have uncovered various aspects of abusive supervision, there are still unexplored gaps that need to be addressed in the existing knowledge. Tepper (2017) called attention to the need to delve into employees' coping strategies for abusive supervision. Studies should investigate how subordinates cope with abuse, the links between abusive behaviour and its broader effects, and how abusive supervision fits within the wider spectrum of leader behaviour.

Furthermore, Tepper (2017) suggests that examining co-worker-focused leadership's influence on abused subordinates' responses is essential for a comprehensive understanding. The analysis should include the underlying mechanisms of abusive supervision, the significance of leadership competence in preventing abuse, and how these dynamics operate across different cultural contexts. Through the lens of employees, these inquiries could significantly enrich the existing comprehension of the consequences of such destructive supervision, providing deeper insights into the multifaceted impacts and potential mitigation strategies.

Though some may argue that abusive leadership leads to better performance (Woolston, 2018), there is a tradition or culture of obedience that is more prevalent in certain industries or countries with cultural differences from the West. Globalisation increases workforce diversity in companies with international operations, leading to a blend of employee values, beliefs, and behaviours that impact organisational culture. Preferred leadership styles can range from hierarchical to democratic. Organisations must adopt different leadership styles to fit the cultural expectations of diversity to maintain employee effectiveness. Current literature indicates that abusive approaches, often unnoticed by those in positions of power, contribute to lower job satisfaction, decreased productivity, and higher turnover among employees. It is important to note that different cultures may react differently. Tepper (2017) asserts

that while the issue remains under-researched, its significance is escalating in the context of increasing cultural diversity. To address this gap in the literature, research could explore more about conducting cross-cultural studies that examine the impact of abusive supervision in different cultural and industry contexts (Martinko, 2013).

Yu and colleagues (2020) suggest that future research in the hospitality industry can explore performance in greater depth, such as focusing on unique aspects of service delivery specific to this industry. Additionally, further investigation is needed to understand abusive supervision and mitigate its detrimental impact. Hight and colleagues (2018) examine the role of employees in mitigating the negative effects of abusive managers. Gather more data from employees at different levels within the organisation to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of abusive managers on various employee groups. This could include the views of employees from different levels in an organisation, for example, frontline employees, middle managers, and senior executives. Investigate different organisational outcomes, namely employee turnover, job satisfaction, employee engagement, and performance, that result from the role of abusive managers. This will help quantify the negative effects of abusive managers and highlight the importance of addressing this issue.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to explore the controversial beliefs surrounding behaviours categorised as “negative” in leadership. While some perspectives suggest that negative actions may sometimes be necessary for maintaining discipline or efficiency, there is often an indistinct difference between abuse and firm leadership, due to the subjective nature of the issue, which requires further exploration and scholarly examination. This chapter provides a comprehensive literature review, exploring the definition and background of leadership theories and detailing their evolution from the great man theory to more dynamic models such as situational and transformational leadership. The complexity of effective leadership is highlighted through this progression. However, contemporary theories remind us that effective leadership often requires a blend of inherent traits and situational awareness. This

holistic understanding underscores that leadership is not an all-purpose concept but a multifaceted skill that evolves with changing circumstances and diverse challenges.

Additionally, this chapter delves into the definition of abusive supervision, examining its consequences, antecedents, and moderators. It reviews current literature on destructive leadership, contrasting it with constructive leadership. The chapter also focuses on existing studies of abusive supervision within the hospitality industry, particularly in Hong Kong. The relationship between abusive supervision and factors such as job satisfaction and trust is thoroughly reviewed. Furthermore, the chapter explores why abusive supervision persists in the workplace from a scholarly perspective, utilising a barriers model to examine the topic.

By incorporating a variety of elements, this chapter offers a comprehensive understanding of leadership and supervision. It highlights the progression of leadership theories over time and underscores the continued importance of both inherent characteristics and contextual influences in successful leadership. Additionally, it tackles the significant problem of abusive supervision, providing an in-depth examination of its mechanisms and effects within organisational environments.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter lays out the foundational framework of the research design, incorporating a comprehensive description of the methodological approach and its execution to investigate the phenomenon of abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry. Components of the research methodology are systematically addressed, which include the researcher's background, research paradigm, research activities and time frame, methodology and data collection, study population and sampling method, data collection and processing methods, data analysis techniques and procedures, data validity and reliability, research ethics and risk management. Limitations and considerations are also explained.

Each of these components plays a vital role in explaining the research process, substantiating the methodological choices made, and outlining the path this study had undertaken to uncover the complicated interactions between supervisors and employees within the context of the Hong Kong hotel industry.

3.1 Researchers' Background and Personal Context

To establish the credibility and relevance of this study, a description of the researcher's background is included, sharing qualifications and experiences that are relevant to conducting this study. The researcher of this study obtained a bachelor's degree from the United States of America in the mid-90s majoring in travel industry management and earned a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Birmingham in 2012. The researcher has been passionate about the hotel industry since graduating and has worked in various roles, from front-line to senior management positions, primarily in Hong Kong but also with colleagues and partners worldwide. The researcher is always eager to learn about new trends and best practices in hospitality. During the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) period, the researcher decided to pursue a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree with plans for further development. With a strong background in the hotel industry, the researcher gained extensive first-hand experience in the day-to-day operations and management of hospitality establishments. The journey took the researcher from

front-line roles to senior management positions, allowing the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of the industry's complexities and challenges. Having worked primarily in Hong Kong, the researcher had the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and partners from diverse cultural backgrounds, gaining a global perspective on the industry. The decision to pursue a DBA during the COVID-19 period reflected a commitment to continuous learning and professional development. The DBA program presented an exciting opportunity for the researcher to delve deeper into the theoretical underpinnings of business and further refine their strategic skills in the context of the ever-changing hospitality landscape.

3.2 Research Paradigm and Researcher's Role

The research methodology was a crucial aspect of any research study as it provided a systematic approach for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data (Cooper and Schindler 2014, p.29). Researchers were influenced not only by the technical aspects but also by how the findings were perceived and interpreted (Ravitch and Carl, 2016). Understanding research paradigms was essential for all researchers to better comprehend research methodologies, as they form the foundational framework through which inquiries are conducted. These paradigms encompassed deeply rooted assumptions about the nature of reality, the construction of knowledge, and what held significance in terms of learning (Creswell and Poth 2018, p.58). To conduct successful research, it was imperative for this study to critically assess the researcher's beliefs and assumptions, as these played an integral role in shaping the entire process from inception to conclusion. This critical self-assessment allowed the researcher of this study not only to recognise potential biases but also ensured that this study was comprehensive in addressing diverse perspectives (Bloomfield and Fisher, 2019). In general, through a thorough grasp of research design methodology and the various paradigms that could influence it, researchers were more capable of choosing the most suitable methods and techniques to tackle their research inquiries and accomplish their research goals (Abutabenjeh and Jaradat, 2018). This research aims to examine abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry by using a sequential explanatory design. The research paradigm associated with the explanatory sequential method often aligns with a mixed-methods approach

(Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick, 2006). This was because an explanatory sequential design was characterised by first conducting a quantitative phase of research, followed by a qualitative phase to explain or build upon the initial results. The pragmatic paradigm was appropriate for this study because it was not committed to any one theory of philosophy or reality; instead, it focused on the research question and used appropriate methods that helped to gain answers. In this study, the researcher was open to combining qualitative and quantitative methods in a mix aimed at gaining insights through a qualitative lens to explain the quantitative results. In general, the explanatory sequential method is valued in both sets of findings and understands that they should complement each other to provide a more complete understanding of the research problem (Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick, 2006). Therefore, adopting this mixed-method approach allowed for richer insights into complex phenomena stemming from multiple data sources and diverse perspectives (Abdulai and Owusu-Ansah, 2014).

Research quality is influenced by a researcher's worldview and paradigm (Ravitch and Carl, 2016). This study was built upon constructivism, according to which researchers gained insights into the experience by interpreting practitioners' shared narratives. The constructivist approach emphasised the subjective nature of knowledge and the importance of interpretation and context in understanding the lived experiences of practitioners. By acknowledging the influence of the researcher's worldview and paradigm, this study aimed to uncover the complex layers of meaning embedded within practitioners' narratives. By using this approach, the researcher was able to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, showing how the researcher's perspective was intertwined with the participants' lived experiences. Through a constructivist lens, the study delved deeper into the rich tapestry of Hong Kong hotel practitioners' shared experiences, aiming to capture the subtle issues and complexities that might be overlooked in traditional research paradigms (Millis et al., 2006, Carrera-Fernandez et al., 2012). The researcher remained objective throughout the process, remained open to different perspectives, asserted different values and beliefs, and upheld ethical standards. To look for an explanation based on emerging data, this study took all aspects of the analysis with a

holistic view from an equal position. Additionally, the study focused thoroughly on all issues relevant to the research topic.

3.3 The Flow of Research Activities

This study followed the research methods discussed by Cooper and Shindler (2014, p.29) in their publications; please refer to Figure 3.1 for details. A structured timeline specifies the sequence and duration of all research-related activities, underscoring the systematic nature of the study from its onset to completion. In the initial stage of any research, it is essential to clarify the research questions and take various steps to establish a solid and actionable foundation for the study (Jones, 2003). This includes identifying the practical dilemma, formulating the research question, and refining the research question (McNabb, 2017). The study was initiated in the autumn of 2021 when the researcher was asked to investigate an academic area for coursework. Subsequently, the study continued to refine the research questions through further discussions, confirming the feasibility of the research in winter 2021. Since then, the researcher has undertaken an extensive review of existing literature to locate studies and theories relevant to the research topic. A clearly defined research question was essential for guiding the study and ensuring a meaningful contribution. The research questions were identified in early 2022, and the study process was framed. The research approach, structured method, and process were then submitted to the university for approval in early 2022. A five-page proposal detailing the aims and objectives, research questions, research design, research methods, and contributions was written, submitted, and approved. Following this, an ethical approval request was presented to the university in mid-2022 and was returned for resubmission due to the need for more careful consideration of certain aspects related to sampling, risk assessment, and data protection. After making the necessary amendments, approval was finally granted by the end of 2022.

To start the data collection phase, the researcher spent two months in mid-2022 creating the survey and testing various software options for this study. Qualtrics, software that provides online surveys, was chosen. Additionally, Jamovi, a statistical software, and Delve, a thematic analysis software, were selected for the quantitative and qualitative analyses, respectively. Having decided to utilise these software

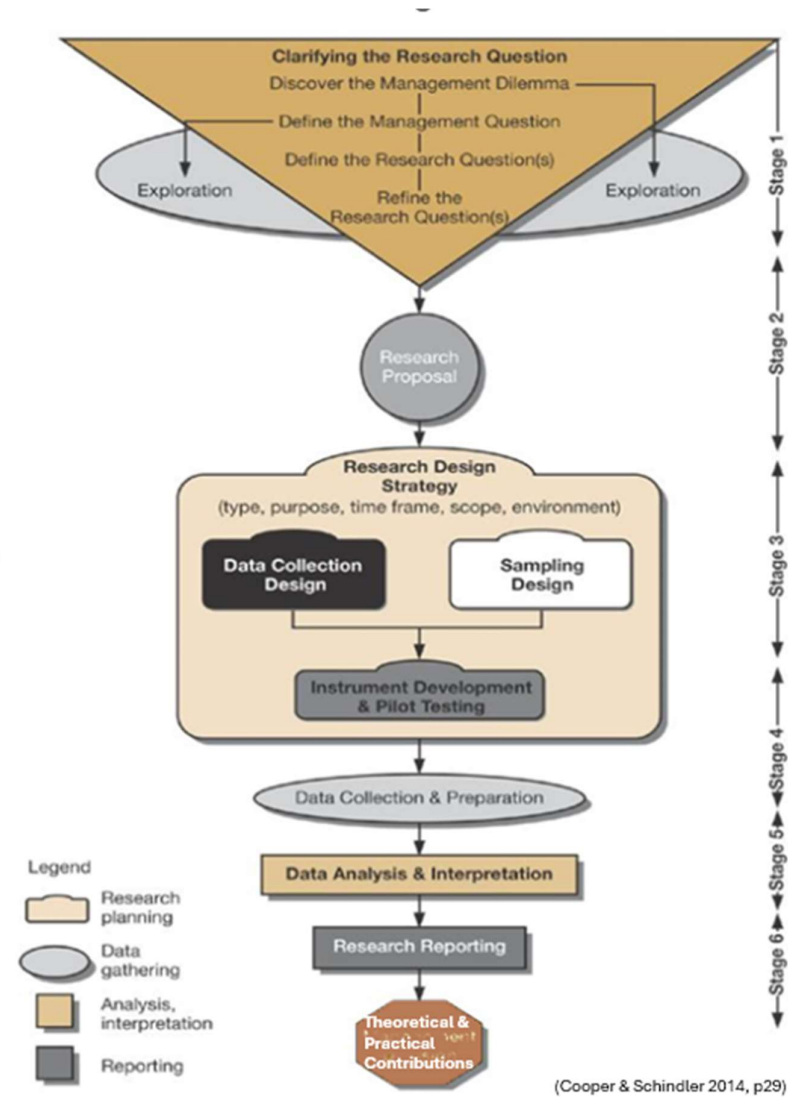
programs, the researcher employed a university student as a technician, voluntarily, to run Qualtrics. The decision was based on the fact that university-provided software was accessible while open-source software was not available to the researcher. Data collection, data cleansing, sampling, data analysis, and interpretation were performed by the researcher.

Data collection started in April 2023. However, a pre-stage of pilot testing occurred in the winter of 2021 for a coursework assignment in quantitative research methods. The pilot testing used only five questions from Tepper 2000's checklist, with a modification to the measurement scale attempting to examine a similar research question. The result was a failure, with an insignificant reading on the scale. As such, the current study was refined based on experience, and pilot testing was conducted in the summer of 2023. Test results on the quantitative stage were tested, and further collection occurred in the fourth quarter of 2023. The data collection process involved distributing the 36-item structured questionnaires to hotel industry employees. The participants were selected using a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods. The process engaged in this research project was longer than initially expected. It required additional time and effort to ensure that a sufficient sample size was achieved. At the same time, the data collected were massive and required considerable time for cleaning and organisation. The researcher commenced the second phase of the research project in the latter part of 2023, marking a significant progression in the study's timeline. Due to the failure to reach voluntary participants for phase two from those who opted to participate in phase one, the process was unexpectedly difficult. The researcher switched to obtaining participants who were not currently engaged or in working relationships with the researcher, from acquaintances in the hotel industry. Due to the difficulty of reaching voluntary participants for phase two from those who opted to participate in phase one, the process unexpectedly failed. The researcher ensured that all necessary ethical considerations were addressed throughout the data collection process. The compilation and write-up of the report started in the first quarter of 2024 and continued until mid-2024. The process involved thorough research, data analysis, and multiple rounds of revisions to ensure accuracy and completeness. The researcher

followed a systematic and rigorous approach, starting with identifying research questions and framing the study (Cooper and Schindler, 2014, p.29).

Figure 3.1

The Flow of Research Activities and Methods



Stage 1 Fall 2021	Stage 4 April 2023
Stage 2 Early 2022	Stage 5 Early 2024
Stage 3 Late 2022	Stage 6 Mid-2024

3.4 Research Methodology and Data Collection

Research Design

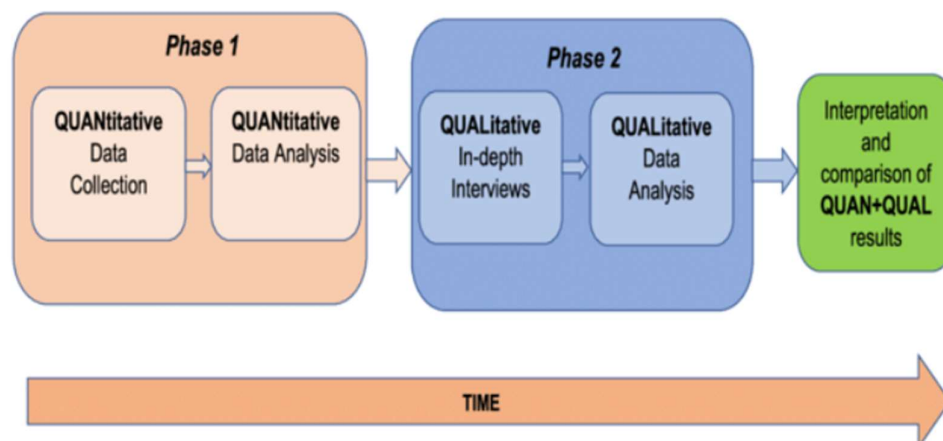
The research approach for this study involved investigating the phenomenon of abusive supervision within the Hong Kong hotel industry from the perspective of employees in these hotels. The importance of the research began with a thorough examination and review of existing literature, identifying any gaps in the literature and defining the information needed for the study. All literature and documentation studied in this dissertation were from the public domain, including materials sourced from Google Scholar, academic journals, and reputable research databases. These sources were publicly available for reference and review. A thorough analysis of the available literature revealed that most studies opted for quantitative research methods. In understanding the literature, abusive supervision had limitations in existing studies that did not cover industry impact, personality impact, or departmental impact (Martinko, 2013). Using only quantitative research was not sufficient to fully explain the current phenomenon. An explanatory sequential method was chosen for this study to provide a more comprehensive approach that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods, which might have provided deeper insights into this issue. The design set a framework for this study in the aspects of information needs, purpose, time frame, scope, and sample (Cooper and Schindler, 2014, p.124). In this study, the research questions were defined as part of identifying this industry dilemma and addressing practical industry issues. Local hotel practitioners argued that abusive supervision within the hotel industry was a result of increased stress and pressure on managers to meet demanding targets and maintain high standards of customer service. An industry study conducted by the Hong Kong Hotels Association found that hotels in Hong Kong experienced a turnover rate of 34.99% in 2023 (HKHA, 2023), with some establishments reporting turnover as high as 100%. The impact of a fast-paced and high-pressure environment led to detrimental supervisory behaviour being used as a means of maintaining control and achieving desired outcomes, while also contributing to intentions to quit and a high turnover rate. Additionally, the hierarchical nature of the industry, with its emphasis on strict chains of command, creates an environment where abusive behaviour is

more likely to occur (Hussain et al., 2020). It is essential to analyse the occurrence of abusive supervision within the hotel industry in Hong Kong to create effective interventions and enhance industry standards, particularly during challenging times for recruitment.

Data Collection

This study adopts an explanatory sequential research design (see Figure 3.2), which involves a methodological approach that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis sequentially. The explanatory sequential design was employed to use qualitative data to offer interpretations or explanations for quantitative findings (Creswell et al., 2003). The quantitative research design was more linear and sequential than the qualitative (Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick, 2006). Each step determined the next, with each one depending on what had come before. This process followed a deductive logic by requiring researchers to start with a theory and then gather data to describe and test the theory (Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick, 2006). This study followed the critical step of developing a clear and testable hypothesis, which should be based on existing theories and thoroughly reviewed literature (Burns, 2000, p.42). Additionally, the integration of both data types allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

Figure 3.2 - Process of Explanatory Sequential Research Design



Source: Wariri et al. (2020). 20, 1–13

Questionnaire Development

For this study, Tepper 2000's literature served as the primary foundation for the theoretical framework. The initial stage of this study involved using a structured questionnaire consisting of 36 items centred on three primary themes: abusive supervision, employee job satisfaction, and trust. The research aimed to examine the impact of abusive supervision, as an independent variable, on job satisfaction and trust, as dependent variables. Moreover, other independent variables included gender, age, education, tenure of service to an organisation, job status, and organisational position. The survey contained 15 questions about abusive leadership behaviour, drawing from Tepper's research (2000), and 20 questions about job satisfaction based on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) by Judge and Klinger (2008). Professor Tepper's 15-point checklist served as the framework aimed at identifying the most appropriate model for abusive leadership (Tepper, 2000). Initially, a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 was utilised by Professor Tepper to evaluate abusive leadership. The scale assessed the frequency of the supervisory behaviour, ranging from 1 (He/she never uses this behaviour with me), 2 (He/she very seldom uses this behaviour with me), 3 (He/she occasionally uses this behaviour with me), 4 (He/she uses this behaviour moderately often with me), and 5 (He/she uses this behaviour very often with me). The main construct of abusive leadership was then tested against the dependent variables, including job satisfaction. This research adopted a 20-item version of the MSQ measurement tool to assess job satisfaction (Judge and Klinger, 2008). The short-form MSQ aligns with the long-form version, measures satisfaction in identical directions, and consists of three factors: intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, and overall satisfaction (Eyupoglu and Saner, 2009; Weiss, 1967, p.2). It was derived from the MSQ and covered a set of practical questions regarding job satisfaction. Using a five-point Likert scale to measure this construct, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to (5 strongly agree), there was also a binary question with Yes or No options meant to assess whether respondents trusted their immediate supervisors. This included the use of a structured survey to collect data from a group of participants in the Hong Kong hotel industry. Following this, the researcher analysed the data using Jamovi 2.3.28 as a platform to provide descriptive

and inferential studies. This analytical procedure aimed at drawing inferences and forming hypotheses about the correlation between dependent variable and independent variable outcomes before moving to the qualitative research stage. Please refer to Table 4.3 for the survey sample.

Pilot Test

To initiate the first phase of data collection, a pilot study was meticulously carried out in both stages. This crucial step was important to identify and address any weaknesses, ambiguities, and confusions within the questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions. During the pilot stage, the researcher was able to spot and carefully mitigate errors to ensure that the results were reliable and valid. The translation of the questionnaire from a Western context into a Chinese version and the transcription of Chinese transcripts into English were particularly challenging tasks. To ensure the research process was accurate and effective, testing initiatives during the pilot study stage were essential for success and reliability.

In the quantitative stage, the research questionnaire was initially distributed to eight industry acquaintances, who were then requested to share it with at least five of their connections to gather additional responses. The initial goal was to collect approximately 30 completed surveys during the pilot stage to ensure a robust and representative sample. The preliminary investigation indicated that no significant problems were detected, confirming that the questionnaire met all necessary criteria and standards. This validation was crucial for the subsequent stages of the research process, ensuring that the data collected would be both accurate and meaningful.

The second phase of research, the qualitative research stage, included conducting in-depth interviews with participants from the survey sample who had voluntarily agreed to take part in the research. During these interviews, the research subjects shared their experiences related to the theory being studied. In the qualitative research phase, researchers adhered to the procedures and principles suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018). The focus of the research questions utilised established scales from current academic literature. Tepper's 15-item checklist explored abusive

behaviour, and the 20-item MSQ assessed job satisfaction. This qualitative phase aimed to gather in-depth personal accounts and detailed narratives from participants about their vision of the abusive leadership phenomenon and the variables structured within the Hong Kong hotel industry. The researcher used a semi-structured interview style, providing flexibility and allowing for a deeper exploration of participants' viewpoints and narratives.

3.5 Study Population and Sampling Method

Sample Populations

This research aimed to examine abusive leadership in the hospitality industry in Hong Kong through the lens of industry players. The sample group consisted of employees in the hotel industry employed either on a full-time or part-time basis. A good sample size accurately reflects the population and allows for reliable analysis. Larger sample sizes are generally better at reducing errors and providing a more accurate picture of the population. The study encompassed hotel industry employees, with a sample size ranging between 100 and 200 subjects, ultimately gathering data from 120 individuals for analysis purposes (Lani, 2009; Statistics Solution, 2013) and collecting data from 120 individuals for analysis. Sadler et al. (2010) stated that for hard-to-reach populations, a sample size of 120 might be sufficient if it allows for meaningful analysis, and a sample size of 120 is deemed acceptable.

In qualitative research, it is essential to establish a suitable sample size. In interview-based research with specific research questions, it is typical to discover that little new information emerges after interviewing about 20 relevant individuals related to the analytical focus (Vasileiou et al., 2018). This emphasises that in qualitative studies, the saturation point (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p.318; Hight et al., 2019) is often reached with a small number of participants when further interviews no longer provide significant new insights. Additional participants will be included until no new insights are found and little new information is gained. Once saturation is reached, the data will be analysed to answer the research questions.

Sampling Method

Participant data involved selecting a purposive sample of employees from the hotel industry. The unique characteristics and traditional practices of this field made it suitable for this study. Drawing from existing knowledge from Western scholars, this study examined whether these findings applied to Eastern contexts. The geographic and industry-specific factors in this study were often considered untapped areas for investigation. The theoretical framework aimed to uncover unique aspects concerning people's perceptions and reactions to abusive leadership in Hong Kong.

In the first stage of research, recruitment of research participants was conducted through snowball sampling, where practitioners approached voluntarily through referrals. Snowball sampling is a commonly used non-probability sampling technique in research studies, particularly when the population of interest is difficult to access or hidden (Cooper and Schindler, 2014, p.666). While snowball sampling has its shortcomings, it helps build trust between the researcher and participants and gives them confidence in taking part in the study (Sadler et al., 2010). The method began by selecting a small group of familiar individuals, with the researcher requesting 10 industry contacts to help send out invitations to at least five of their hotel contacts while purposefully excluding known acquaintances from direct participation. Then, the sample was expanded by leveraging the known acquaintance networks for further recruitment. This method was selected due to the lack of a clear sampling frame or when members of the population were reluctant to come forward and were not easily accessible in large numbers at any single location (Hofstedt, 2023). Participants were encouraged to actively involve industry acquaintances and associates in the research process. The primary method required leveraging WhatsApp as a major platform to request industry contacts to disseminate study information among hotel employees. Recruitment efforts were carefully designed to avoid bias and sensitivity by intentionally excluding the staff of the researcher's service hotel, ensuring fairness in the selection process. The aim was to collect a minimum of 120 datasets for analysis.

In the second stage of the research, interviews were carried out with individuals who volunteered to join this phase. Out of the 120 responses received, around 10% of

participants expressed their readiness to share their insights and participate in the qualitative investigation. However, the researcher was unable to reach them for the second phase of the research with the provided contact information. Attempts to contact them via the phone number were unsuccessful, and emails either bounced back without any response or went unanswered despite multiple attempts. Therefore, alternative methods of communication were explored to gather the necessary information for the study. The researcher switched to selecting samples from acquaintances with experience in the hotel industry. The researcher employed a purposive sampling technique to select individuals who had relevant experiences and perspectives related to the research topic (Pope et al., 2002). This purposive sampling technique allowed the researcher to select informants who provided valuable insights and perspectives on the research topic. This method is used in qualitative research with the aim of gaining deep insight into a particular theme or theory (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The participants in this phase of the study were iterative, which allowed for the development and refinement of themes over the research period of two months. Purposive sampling was particularly suitable in this study when researchers intended to explore a theme that did not require generalisation to a larger population (Purposive sampling, 2013).

3.6 Data Collection and Processing Methods

Data Collection Method

The data collection method in this study involved two phases: quantitative and qualitative. Different approaches were utilised to gather data from participants. For the quantitative research phase, a structured survey was used to collect data on variables such as abusive supervision, job satisfaction, and trust. Consistent information was collected from all respondents through a structured survey (see Appendix 1). Respondents had the option to opt out of answering any questions during the survey, making this data collection method ethically sound. Furthermore, the qualitative phase involved interviews with voluntary participants. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix 2). This allowed for a deeper exploration of the participants' experiences and perspectives

related to abusive supervision. Before obtaining verbal consent, research participants were provided with a clear definition and specific examples of abusive supervision based on the 15-item checklist. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in probing further into specific areas of interest. This study utilised the critical incident interview technique (CIIT), as developed by Flanagan in 1954. This method involved asking respondents to recall specific incidents from their experiences within a given context and situation (Masood, 2021). Through these interviews, this study aimed to gain deeper insights into their encounters related to the research question. Respondents were free to choose, at this stage, to describe or give examples of their experiences. Each interview lasts approximately 45 minutes to over an hour. In this phase, respondents provided a narrative, creating an opportunity to gather data that complemented and enriched the quantitative data.

The combination of these two data collection methods offered a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions, contributing to a more thorough analysis of the research questions and objectives. This study believed that choosing the right data collection method was important to acquire accurate and reliable information that aligns with the research questions and objectives.

Data Processing Method

The collected data from both phases were processed systematically. In the quantitative stage, several steps were taken, which included data cleansing to check accuracy, consistency, and completeness; addressing errors and missing values; and discarding unsatisfied respondents (Cooper and Schindler, p.85–87). A thorough validation check was conducted to ensure the quality of the data before proceeding further. In the qualitative phase, the transcripts were translated from Chinese to English. A copy of the transcripts was sent to participants for validation. The data were cleansed, read repeatedly, and coded by converting survey or interview responses into a format suitable for statistical analysis in quantitative studies. The transcripts were uploaded to Delve, a qualitative research software, in preparation for analysis. The next phase included generating the codes into databases. A series of codes was then studied repeatedly, and themes emerged that expressed the story of

the data. The choice of using a software program aided in efficiently handling large volumes of complex datasets and systematically presenting the data. Throughout these stages, ethical standards were maintained to ensure confidentiality and the proper handling of participant information.

The focus of this research was the employees working in hotels in Hong Kong. In phase one, to gather data from research subjects, a structured questionnaire comprising 36 items was utilised as the main tool during the initial stage of the study. Surveys containing closed-ended questions were frequently used in quantitative research to systematically collect data. This method of data collection enabled a structured analysis and understanding of the gathered information, allowing for comprehensive findings to be obtained (Niraula, 2019). In the second phase of the research, qualitative data were collected through interviews using semi-structured questions. This approach in the second phase aimed to facilitate a thorough exploration of the topics identified in the initial quantitative phase. This approach enabled the collection of rich data that provided a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of hotel employees in Hong Kong. Conducting interviews based on semi-structured questions allowed for flexibility in exploring emergent themes and issues that were not explained by the quantitative stage (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This choice of a sequential explanatory method provided a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the research topic, enriching the overall findings to answer the research questions.

The data collected in both stages of research were thoroughly and systematically examined using the required tools and techniques to ensure comprehensive analysis. The purpose of using the software was to ensure reliable and valid results without human error. In the quantitative stage, Jamovi 2.3.28 was utilised. Jamovi is a user-friendly statistical software package that is free and available as open source. The program provides a range of features for data analysis and performing statistical tests based on a programming language, making it a versatile tool for the study's needs. In the qualitative stage, the thematic analysis approach was utilised, and Delve was used to process the data. Data were collected through interviews and then transcribed. All of the interviews were conducted in Cantonese, requiring translation to prepare the

data for analysis. Google Translate served as the primary tool for translating the transcripts. To avoid misinterpretation and data loss during translation, the transcripts were kept in simple English for ease of understanding. A transcript copy was created and acknowledged by the research subject. The text data were thoroughly reviewed, and codes were assigned to segments that represented various themes or feelings. Coding was used as a tool to deepen understanding and make discoveries of the research topic (Charmaz and Gribbs, 2015).

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

In the quantitative research stage, data collection focused on numerical data and statistical analysis to quantify relationships, test hypotheses, and make predictions (Kentowski, 2024). Key techniques included descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Cooper and Schindler, 2014, p.656, 658). Descriptive statistics reported included the mean and standard deviation (SD) of the three constructs – abusive supervision, job satisfaction, and trust – as well as other demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, tenure of service, organisational department, and employment status. Data were tested using Jamovi and presented in tables. Inferential studies involve analysis of the statistical data. The data underwent reliability tests, assumption checks, and hierarchical regression. The data analysis procedure aimed to predict the reliability of the scale and items, the significance of the data, and the correlations between constructs (Cooper and Schindler 2014, p.438–498). To conduct a reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used as a tool (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Cronbach's alpha is a statistical method commonly used to measure the reliability of a scale or questionnaire by assessing internal consistency. This metric helps determine how well a group of items within a scale are related and how effectively they measure a specific underlying concept. The Cronbach's Alpha value can range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating stronger reliability. In research settings, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or above is generally deemed acceptable (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). For the 36-item analysis in this study, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of items measuring each construct, and item-rest correlations were employed to identify items with low correlations to the rest of the scale. An item-rest correlation was presented for each

subscale of the questionnaire to assess reliability. All constructs and items were included.

In the qualitative research stage, thematic analysis was adopted to analyse data collected from interviews (Ravitch and Carl, 2016). Thematic analysis was a valuable tool for identifying and exploring key themes, issues, problems, similarities, and differences within the realm of communication (Bryne, 2022). This method allowed for a deeper understanding of the underlying concepts and patterns that emerge in various forms of communication (Braun and Clarke, 2006). By applying thematic analysis, insights were uncovered, and perspectives that contributed to the subject were researched but not explained in stage one (Muthanna, 2020). This study uploaded the data to the software program Delve after interviewing 10 voluntary respondents from phase one of the research. All transcripts, comprising the dataset, were carefully examined for a comprehensive understanding. The raw data were read multiple times to define clear and descriptive meanings before proceeding with coding. Codes and sub-codes were repeatedly studied, examined, and tested against each other to identify emerging themes. The names for each theme were carefully reviewed and constructed to ensure that they accurately represented the respondents' stories. A report was produced by selecting the seven most compelling themes from the analysis.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

In every research study, ensuring the validity and reliability of the results is crucial for producing accurate and trustworthy findings (Vafadar et al., 2021). This is achieved by assessing validity, which refers to the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study, and reliability, which refers to the consistency and stability of the results obtained from a research instrument (Ahmed and Ishitaq, 2021). Validity and reliability are important concepts in research, relating to the quality of the study's measurements and findings.

In the quantitative stage, it was crucial to verify that all the components of the psychometric scale consistently measured the same variable. Cronbach's Alpha, as

the primary tool, was utilised to evaluate internal reliability and consistency for the survey (Yu et al., 2020). The results, with a Cronbach's alpha value of $\alpha \geq 0.7$ in all stages of the research, indicated reliability. Assumption checks will be employed to ensure the data meets the criteria for valid statistical analysis (Shartz, 2024). The normality tests, including the Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and Anderson-Darling tests, checked whether the residuals were normally distributed (Khatun, 2021). Heteroskedasticity tests, including the Breusch-Pagan, Goldfeld-Quandt, and Harrison-McCabe tests, indicated the significance of heteroskedasticity (Uyanto, 2019). The Durbin-Watson test indicated the significance of autocorrelation (Bartels, 1992). In addition, the multicollinearity statistics confirmed that the predictors were significantly correlated. These results confirmed that the regression model is appropriate for the data, ensuring accurate, unbiased, and reliable results. A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between assumption models. In this phase, quantitative data were further assessed with p -values. The p -value is a statistical measure that offers insight into the probability of obtaining a result as unusual or more so than the observed one if the null hypothesis is assumed to be true. This confirms the raw dataset to reject the null hypothesis. When a p -value lower than 0.05 is considered statistically significant, it indicates a likelihood of 5% or less that the results are due to random chance, suggesting an actual effect or difference (Cooper and Schindler, p.438).

In the qualitative stage, this study is based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework to validate the collective data. Braun and Clarke introduced a qualitative research method called thematic analysis, which is used to recognise, examine, and convey patterns found in the gathered data through a systematic approach. In this setting, data validation involved the complex task of guaranteeing the accuracy, credibility, and dependability of the patterns identified during the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The framework of validation included a thorough and systematic approach to becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, and defining and naming the themes. Based on the identified themes, the story that emerged from the data collected in the subject area spoke for itself. Unlike other qualitative research methods, thematic analysis does not involve

the development of new theories and does not require the use of any templates before or after data collection (D O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015, p144). The validation of this report relied on systematically identifying, analysing, and reporting themes within the collected data.

3.9 Research Ethics and Risk Management

Research ethics in this study refer to the moral principles that guide the conduct of research. These principles include key aspects regarding the research subjects, the integrity of the process, and the responsible use of research results. Research ethics also encompass the responsible conduct of research activities, the mitigation of potential conflicts of interest, the protection of the privacy and confidentiality of research data, and adherence to applicable laws and regulations (Cooper and Schindler, p.26–47).

The population studied for this research consisted of employees working in the Hong Kong hotel industry. According to the Employment Ordinance (Cap 57) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the general minimum working age is 15 years old. However, there are specific regulations and restrictions for different industries and types of work. In general, the minimum working age is set at 18 years old for industries such as catering, construction, and manufacturing. Participants in this survey were 18 years of age or older, as structured in the survey design. This ensured compliance with the requirements of the university under the laws of the United Kingdom. Participants were required to understand and give consent freely without being placed in a vulnerable position. In addition, research subjects were treated fairly and with respect and dignity. The welfare of the research subjects was prioritised throughout the study. No observation or personal access to participants, whether informed or not, was conducted. Any behaviours that might lead to embarrassment or harm the self-confidence of respondents were carefully considered and avoided. Before starting the quantitative section, a consent message was displayed on the first page of the online survey (see Appendix 3). The consent form outlined the purpose of the study and explained how the results would be used to meet the requirements for a doctoral dissertation in business administration. Participants were instructed to carefully read and acknowledge the information before

proceeding with the survey by answering “Yes.” All data collected were kept confidential and secured, with no access granted to others. All question items and personal details, such as name, email address, workplace, and phone number, were optional unless participants wished to take part in the second phase of the study.

In the qualitative phase, verbal consent was obtained from research participants, emphasising that participation was voluntary and that individuals could withdraw at any time without facing any consequences. Participants in both phases of the study were given the freedom to skip any questions if they were uncomfortable or unwilling to share their experiences or to opt out at any time to avoid distress. In both phases of the research, none of the respondents expressed emotional distress before or after the interview. The researcher encouraged participants to discuss any emotional distress during interviews through open communication and strategies to minimise negative impacts. In two stages of the study, the research subjects were informed of the research objectives. The researcher adhered to procedures to ensure ethical guidelines were followed. Respondents were asked to prioritise both their physical and psychological comfort when discussing the subject.

The university committee officially approved the dissertation following a detailed evaluation of ethical and risk factors. The researcher conducted a thorough risk assessment to adhere to the university's ethical guidelines, focusing on potential risks to all parties involved in the research. Participants were informed that all collected data would be securely stored and deleted once the research was concluded. All data collected were used solely for the research study, and any identifying information was excluded from the presentation of results. To safeguard participant data, passwords were assigned to files and records, paper documents were locked in secure cabinets, and data were encrypted. The researcher made efforts to respect participant autonomy, maintain confidentiality, and uphold ethical standards throughout the study.

In summary, ethical considerations played a crucial role in this explanatory sequential design, emphasising the importance of securing informed consent, safeguarding participant confidentiality, reducing potential harm, addressing power dynamics, and maintaining transparency and fairness throughout the research process. These ethical measures ensured that participants felt respected and valued, fostering a

trustworthy environment. Additionally, adherence to ethical standards helped enhance the credibility and integrity of the research findings, ultimately contributing to the overall quality and reliability of the study.

3.10 Limitations and Considerations

Considerations for this study included time limitations, as the study was restricted to a one- to two-year time frame. The biggest challenge of this study was processing and gathering a significant amount of research data due to the scope and complexity of the project. Another factor to consider was language. The study was conducted in Hong Kong, where English is not the first language, leading to a potential translation bias when transcribing the survey and transcripts. This possibility leads to interpreting data from a biased perspective and considering researcher bias (Cooper and Schindler, 2014, p.39). In the quantitative stage, this study used a questionnaire as the main instrument to collect data, and the questions were developed by Western scholars. The challenge of translating and condensing this study into a simple English or Chinese version required a lot of time and effort. To address the issue of translating transcripts into two languages and ensuring the meaning was correct, the researcher followed an established methodology outlined by Leung in 2003. This involved using Chinese translations vetted and approved by a professional translator in Leung's study. Despite leveraging technology such as Google Translate to overcome language barriers, there remained a risk of bias in translation and interpretation. To mitigate translation bias, repeated reading and testing by the researcher and a professional acquaintance were conducted. Human resource professionals were involved in translating and modifying words to ensure the survey was understandable. In the qualitative part, interviews were mainly conducted in Cantonese. To comprehend the data analysis and report, the transcripts were translated into English. To mitigate translation bias, the translation was kept simple and easy to read and was approved by the interviewee.

In the examination process, the ontology and epistemology of the researcher played an important role in shaping perspectives, as demonstrated by the theoretical framework underpinning this study (Ravitch and Carl, p.6). A qualitative approach's rigour included the absence of hypotheses, randomisation, standardised data

collection protocols, incoherent results, and generalisability issues (Ravitch and Carl, p.191, 193). The researcher actively engaged in reflexivity, acknowledging and critically reflecting on the biases and assumptions throughout the research process. To address such limitations, the constructivist and explanatory nature of this study was crucial in guiding the semi-structured interview process. By using thematic analysis, data could be explored without any preconceived notions. The data were analysed methodically with similar themes (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p.181). This approach increased the accuracy of the study, and themes evolved from the collected data.

In this study, Hong Kong's hotel industry employees were studied as a purposive sample so that conclusions about a phenomenon could be overgeneralised. To avoid generalisation and researcher bias, a statistically approved number of samples was collected in this study to support the study conclusions. The use of probability samples ensured the possibility of reflecting the population, and a statistically approved sample size reduced the likelihood of bias. By employing a rigorous sampling method, the study aimed to enhance the representativeness of the sample, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the findings. Additionally, careful attention was given to the selection process to ensure that the sample accurately mirrored the diverse characteristics of the broader population within the hotel industry in Hong Kong. This methodological rigour was crucial in minimising potential biases and ensuring that the study's conclusions were both credible and generalisable to a larger context.

Conclusion

This chapter details the research methodology employed in the thesis. It begins by outlining the researcher's paradigm and role, followed by a comprehensive flow of research activities. A mixed-method approach, specifically a sequential explanatory design, is adopted and elaborated upon. This design involves an initial phase of quantitative data collection and analysis, succeeded by a qualitative phase aimed at further exploring and explaining the initial results. This two-phase approach is particularly advantageous for the current study, as it not only measures the

frequencies of abusive supervision but also develops a richer understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of hotel industry employees.

The chapter further explains the data collection procedures, discussing the study population and sampling methods in detail. The methods of data collection and processing are also elaborated upon, ensuring clarity and transparency in the research process. Numeric and thematic data analyses are discussed, highlighting how they are used to interpret the qualitative data and uncover deeper insights. Issues of validity and reliability are explored, ensuring the robustness and credibility of the findings.

Research ethics are rigorously checked, ensuring that the study adheres to ethical standards and guidelines while protecting participants' rights and well-being. This included obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and minimising any potential harm to participants. The limitations of the thesis are also considered in detail, providing a balanced view of the research and acknowledging areas for future improvement and further investigation. By transparently discussing these limitations, the study aims to highlight the scope and boundaries of the findings while also suggesting directions for future research to build upon the current work. This comprehensive approach not only strengthens the credibility of the research but also demonstrates a commitment to ethical and responsible scholarship.

Chapter 4 Findings

Introduction

This chapter focused on the findings after investigating the relationship between abusive leadership and various factors, including employees' job satisfaction, trust, and demographic variables. In the quantitative stage, reliability analysis and hierarchical regression were conducted to examine the predictors of abusive supervision. In the qualitative stage, the process of thematic analysis unfolded the data in phases. Codes were generated, capturing the essence of what each portion of the data represented. Then, codes were sorted into seven potential themes.

Method

The quantitative analysis was performed using Jamovi, with abusive supervision as the dependent variable and job satisfaction, trust, gender, age, education level, tenure of service, working department, employment situation, and position as independent variables. The missing values were treated as missing, and the analysis was based on cases with no missing values for any of the variables used. The entire method was used for variable entry. While the defined population broadly reflects the characteristics of industry practitioners in Hong Kong, the findings cannot be generalised to the larger population due to the use of convenience sampling and self-selection bias. This population involved both men and women, aged from 18 to over 50, ranging from secondary school graduates to postgraduate education, with organisational positions from general staff to senior executives, and tenure of service from less than a year to over 10 years. Organisational departments included front office, purchasing, sales and marketing, food and beverage, security, engineering, catering sales, housekeeping, finance, human resources, and others.

The qualitative stage employed thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data. This approach allowed for a detailed examination of the data, facilitating the discovery of underlying meanings and insights. Delve was employed in identifying patterns, creating codes, and generating themes from the codes, which helped to systematically organise and interpret the data. By using Delve, the researcher could efficiently manage large

volumes of qualitative data, ensuring that the analysis was thorough and robust. This method not only provided a structured way to handle the data but also enhanced the reliability and validity of the qualitative findings. The thematic analysis process involved multiple stages, including familiarisation with the data, coding, theme development, and refinement, which collectively contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

4.1 Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results

As part of the data collection process, 300 surveys were distributed, and 122 responses were collected. After excluding two responses due to missing data, the response rate was 40%. A structured questionnaire with 36 items was used to collect quantitative data. Table 4.1 shows that 120 respondents completed the survey, with 24.17% (29 respondents) choosing the English version and 75.83% (91 respondents) choosing the Chinese version.

Table 4.1
Language Preference

English	29	24.17%
Chinese	91	75.83%
Total	120	100%

Table 4.2 illustrates that a total of 120 respondents completed the "Gender" question: 41.66% (50) were males, 54.17% (65) were females, while 2 chose "unknown," and 3 were undeclared.

Table 4.2
Gender

Male	50	41.66%
Female	65	54.17%
Unknown	2	2.0%
Undeclared	3	2.5%
Total	120	100%

Table 4.3 illustrates that a total of 120 respondents provided their age, with only 0.01% or one person falling into the age group of 20 and below, as well as those aged 61 and above. The largest participation was from the age group of 31–40, comprising

approximately 34.16%, equivalent to around 41 people. In addition, the age group of 21–30 constituted approximately 12.5%, or around 15 individuals, while the age group of 41–50 accounted for roughly 24.17%, which is about 29 people; individuals aged between 51 and 60 made up about 27.5 %, approximately 33 people.

Table 4.3

Age Group		
20 years old or below	1	0.83%
21–30 years old	15	12.50%
31–40 years old	41	34.16%
41–50 years old	29	24.17%
51–60 years old	33	27.5%
61 years old or older	1	0.83%
Total	120	100%

Table 4.4 illustrates the educational attainment of the survey participants. The largest participation, at 60.83% or 73 individuals, was among university graduates. Additionally, 10% or 12 respondents completed secondary education, while another 20.83% or 25 people obtained their qualifications from a vocational institute. Postgraduate degree holders accounted for 8.4%, representing a total of 10 individuals in the survey sample. There were no respondents receiving primary school education.

Table 4.4

Education		
Primary or below	0	0.00%
Secondary	12	10.00%
Vocational institute	25	20.83%
University	73	60.83%
Postgraduate	10	8.40%
Total	120	100%

Table 4.5 illustrates the length of employment at the respondents' organisation, with a majority serving for 10 years or more, accounting for 31.67% or 38 individuals.

Those serving less than one year make up 21.67% or 26 people, while those with a tenure of 1 to 3 years represent about 20.83% or 25 survey participants. Additionally, approximately 9.17% or 11 individuals have been in their role for between 3 and 5 years, and 16.67% or 20 individuals have served for 5 to 10 years, respectively.

Table 4.5 - Tenure of Service (Organisation)

Less than 1 year	26	21.67%
1 to 3 years	25	20.83%
3 to 5 years	11	9.17%
5 to 10 years	20	16.67%
10 years or more	38	31.67%
Total	120	100%

Table 4.6 presents the departments where the survey respondents were employed within their organisations. The largest group of participants, accounting for 33.33% or 40 individuals, worked in the sales department. This was followed by the front office, with 18.33% or 22 individuals, and the food and beverage service team, with 11.67% or 14 people. A small percentage of the respondents were from catering sales (1.67% or 2 persons), food and beverage kitchen (0.83% or 1 person), human resources (9.17% or 11 persons), finance office (7.5% or 9 persons), housekeeping (2.5% or 3 persons), and engineering (0.83% or 1 person). The remaining 14.17% or 17 persons are working in unspecified positions within the hotel industry. Notably, there was no representation from the security and purchasing departments in this study.

Table 4.6 - Department

Front office	22	18.33%	Catering (sales)	2	1.67%
Purchasing	0	-	F&B (kitchen)	1	0.83%
S&M	40	33.33%	Housekeeping	3	2.50%
F&B (Svc)	14	11.67%	Finance/accounts	9	7.50%
Security	0	-	Human resources	11	9.17%
Engineering	1	0.83%	Others	17	14.17%
Total	120				

Table 4.7 shows that the majority of respondents, accounting for 96.55%, or 115 individuals, were employed full-time, while a smaller percentage, 3.45%, or 3 individuals, worked part-time. Two of the respondents opted not to answer this question.

Table 4.7 - Employment Situation

Full Time	115	97.46%
Part-Time	3	2.54%
Total	118	100%

Table 4.8 provides an overview of the positions held by participants, with senior managers making up the largest group at 29.16% (35 people), followed by managers at 25.83% (31 individuals) and C-suite executives at 14.17% (17 individuals). There was also representation from the assistant manager grade (10% or 12 people), the supervisor grade (5% or 6 people), and the general staff (15.83% or 19 individuals).

Table 4.8 - Position (Organisational)

CEO/COO/CFO	17	14.17%
Senior manager	35	29.16%
Manager	31	25.83%
Assistant manager	12	10.00%
Supervisor	6	5.00%
General staff	19	15.83%
Total	120	100%

Dependent Variable

Abusive Supervision

Table 4.9 shows the descriptive statistics for the 15 abusive supervision items. The mean score for these items was 1.93, with a SD of 0.65. The average scores for items 6, 7, and 10 were the highest. Item 6, “My superior reminds me of my past mistakes and failures,” had the highest average; $M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.05$. The second highest was item 7, “My supervisor doesn’t give me credit for jobs that require a lot of effort”; $M = 2.34$, $SD = 0.99$. The third item was, “My supervisor expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason” ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.05$). These three items indicate

that acts of abusive supervision were more frequent than the average mean value and were most commonly experienced by respondents in the hotel industry. Alternatively, items 5, 12, and 13 received the lowest mean values. The lowest average, item 5, was “My supervisor invades my privacy” (M = 1.45, SD = 0.75). The second lowest, item 12, was “My supervisor is rude to me” (M = 1.59, SD = 0.82). The third lowest item, item 13, was “My supervisor does not allow me to interact with my co-worker,” M = 1.50, SD = 0.85. The three lowest items, which hinted at acts of abusive supervision, were lower than the average mean value and were not frequently experienced by the survey respondents. For a summary of results, see Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 - Abusive Supervision Survey

Questions	Mean	Standard deviation
1. My supervisor laughs at me.	1.94	1.04
2. My supervisor tells me that my thoughts or feelings are stupid.	1.90	0.96
3. My supervisor gives me the silent treatment.	1.96	1.00
4. My supervisor puts me down in front of others.	1.99	0.93
5. My supervisor invades my privacy.	1.45	0.75
6. My supervisor reminds me of my past mistakes and failures.	2.60	1.05
7. My supervisor does not give me credit for jobs that require a lot of effort.	2.34	0.99
8. My supervisor blames me to save himself/herself from embarrassment.	1.94	0.96
9. My supervisor breaks the promises he/she makes.	2.02	0.98
10. My supervisor expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason.	2.00	1.05
11. My supervisor makes negative comments about me to others.	1.98	0.97
12. My supervisor is rude to me.	1.59	0.82
13. My supervisor does not allow me to interact with my co-workers.	1.50	0.85
14. My supervisor tells me that I am incompetent.	1.68	0.90
15. My supervisor lies to me.	1.91	0.99
Total	1.93	0.65

The average mean value of abusive supervision was 1.93, and the SD was 0.65.

Independent Variable

Job Satisfaction

Table 4.10 shows the descriptive statistics for the 20 MSQ items. The mean score for these items was 3.50, with a SD of 0.87. In the survey, respondents were more satisfied with items 18, 8, and 9. The highest average was for item 18: “The way my co-workers get along with one another,” M = 3.90, SD = 0.79. The second highest average was for item 8: “The way my job provides for steady employment,” M = 3.78, SD = 0.75. The third highest average was for item 9: “The chance to do things for

other people,” $M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.61$. The above three items indicate that job satisfaction motives are higher than the average mean and are explicitly preferred by respondents. The three lowest items were 12, 13, and 14. The lowest mean average item, 12, was “The way company policies are put into practice,” $M = 2.91$, $SD = 0.89$. The second lowest average item, 13, was “My pay and the amount of work I do,” $M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.00$. The third lowest average item, 14, was “The chance of advancement on this job,” $M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.87$. The three lowest items with a lower mean average indicate that employees in the hotel industry show less agreement with their current job satisfaction.

Table 4.10 - Job Satisfaction Survey

Questions	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Being able to keep busy all the time.	3.35	0.87
2. The chance to work alone on the job.	3.36	0.73
3. The chance to do different things from time to time.	3.68	0.83
4. The chance to be “somebody” in the community.	3.49	0.73
5. The way my boss handles his/her workers.	3.34	0.89
6. The competence of my supervisor in making decisions.	3.51	0.99
7. Being able to do things that do not go against my conscience.	3.57	0.90
8. The way my job provides for steady employment.	3.78	0.75
9. The chance to do things for other people.	3.75	0.61
10. The chance to tell people what to do.	3.64	0.67
11. The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities.	3.76	0.75
12. The way company policies are put into practice.	2.91	0.89
13. My pay and the amount of work I do.	2.92	1.00
14. The chances for advancement in this job.	3.13	0.87
15. The freedom to use my judgment.	3.71	0.80
16. The chance to try my methods of doing the job.	3.72	0.79
17. The working conditions.	3.38	0.85
18. The way my co-workers get along with one another.	3.90	0.79
19. The praise I receive for doing a good job.	3.27	0.95
20. The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job.	3.42	0.93
Total	3.50	0.54

The average mean value of job satisfaction is 3.5, and the SD was 0.54.

Trust

A total of 120 participants were surveyed regarding their trust in their supervisors. Of these respondents, 80% (96 respondents) indicated that they trusted their supervisors, while 20% (24 respondents) answered negatively. The outcomes from the survey revealed a strong and positive response to this binary question on trust (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11 - Trust

Yes	96	80.00%
No	24	20.00%
Total	120	100%

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of Tepper's scale was measured through scale reliability statistics for abusive supervision. This study employed Cronbach's alpha (α) as the primary statistic, which ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability. The findings revealed a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.918, suggesting that the scale is highly reliable. Typically, a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 is considered acceptable; therefore, a value of 0.918 indicates that the items on the scale are very consistent (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011).

Scale Reliability Statistics – Abusive Supervision

	Cronbach's α
scale	0.918

The reliability of the scale used to measure job satisfaction yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.923, indicating that the scale is highly reliable. Generally, a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 is considered acceptable and above 0.9 is excellent. Therefore, a value of 0.923 suggests that the items on the scale are very consistent.

Scale Reliability Statistics – Job Satisfaction

	Cronbach's α
scale	0.923

Correlation Matrix

The correlation matrix in Table 4.12 shows the relationships between the demographic variables and both the dependent and independent variables. In the survey, trust was measured using a dichotomous question, where 1 represented "trust" and 2 indicated "do not trust." For subsequent analyses, this item was

recorded as 1 for “trust” and 0 for “do not trust.” The matrix shows that there was a strong negative correlation between job satisfaction and abusive supervision ($r = -0.614, p < .001$), meaning higher job satisfaction is associated with lower levels of abusive supervision. This could be expected, as employees generally feel less satisfied under abusive supervision. Trust was found to have a moderate negative correlation with abusive supervision ($r = 0.490, p < .001$), which is also expected, as abusive supervision typically leads to a decrease in trust. The relationship between trust and job satisfaction is statistically significant ($r = 0.563, p < .001$).

Based on the findings, Hypothesis 1 (H1) raised in this study, which posited that abusive supervision is negatively related to job satisfaction, was significant. The correlation matrix in Table 4.12 showed a strong negative correlation between job satisfaction and abusive supervision ($r = -0.614, p < .001$). This indicated that higher levels of abusive supervision were associated with lower job satisfaction, aligning with the expectation that employees generally felt less satisfied under abusive supervision.

However, Hypothesis 2 (H2), which suggested that trust moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction, required further testing. While trust was found to have a moderate negative correlation with abusive supervision ($r = -0.490, p < .001$) and a statistically significant positive correlation with job satisfaction ($r = 0.563, p < .001$), the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction was not directly tested in this analysis. Therefore, additional analyses were needed to determine whether trust significantly moderated this relationship.

Table 4.12 - Correlation Matrix

		Abusive supervision	Job satisfaction	Trust	Gender	Age	Education	Tenure	Department	Employment	Position
Abusive supervision	Pearson's <i>r</i>	—									
	Df	—									
	<i>p</i> -value	—									
Job satisfaction	Pearson's <i>r</i>	−0.614	—								
	Df	118	—								
	<i>p</i> -value	< .001	—								
Trust	Pearson's <i>r</i>	−0.490	0.563	—							
	Df	118	118	—							
	<i>p</i> -value	< .001	< .001	—							
Gender	Pearson's <i>r</i>	0.058	−0.132	0.064	—						
	Df	118	118	118	—						
	<i>p</i> -value	0.528	0.151	0.488	—						
Age	Pearson's <i>r</i>	0.044	0.182	−0.024	−0.081	—					
	Df	118	118	118	118	—					
	<i>p</i> -value	0.636	0.046	0.798	0.381	—					
Education	Pearson's <i>r</i>	0.154	−0.106	0.103	0.278	−0.048	—				
	Df	118	118	118	118	118	—				
	<i>p</i> -value	0.093	0.247	0.261	0.002	0.602	—				
Tenure	Pearson's <i>r</i>	0.027	0.102	−0.090	−0.177	0.386	−0.096	—			
	Df	118	118	118	118	118	118	—			
	<i>p</i> -value	0.769	0.265	0.329	0.054	< .001	0.299	—			
Department	Pearson's <i>r</i>	−0.049	0.179	−0.060	0.054	0.250	0.125	0.079	—		
	Df	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	—		
	<i>p</i> -value	0.592	0.051	0.514	0.558	0.006	0.175	0.392	—		
Employment	Pearson's <i>r</i>	0.072	−0.002	−0.094	−0.045	−0.074	0.201	−0.140	−0.048	—	
	Df	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	—	
	<i>p</i> -value	0.435	0.981	0.311	0.628	0.423	0.028	0.130	0.604	—	
Position	Pearson's <i>r</i>	0.004	−0.200	0.034	0.263	−0.472	0.040	−0.399	0.007	0.162	—
	Df	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	117	—
	<i>p</i> -value	0.967	0.029	0.714	0.004	< .001	0.664	< .001	0.938	0.078	—

Assumption Checks

Assumption checking is important because it ensures the validity and reliability of statistical analyses (Shatz, 2024). These checks confirm that the regression model is appropriate for the data, preventing invalid results and incorrect conclusions. If assumptions are violated, they can lead to incorrect conclusions, statistical errors, and biased results. Checking assumptions helps identify whether more appropriate methods or data transformations are needed. By identifying and addressing assumption violations, the model's fit improves, making it more reliable and accurate. Assumption checks also guide the selection of the best regression model or alternative methods, enhancing the interpretation of results. They also improve the understanding and interpretation of the data, making the research process more transparent and replicable. Overall, assumption checks are essential for accurate and trustworthy statistical analysis (Shatz, 2024).

Normality tests, such as the Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and Anderson-Darling tests, assess whether the residuals are normally distributed. Heteroskedasticity tests, including the Breusch-Pagan, Goldfeld-Quandt, and Harrison-McCabe tests, check for a constant variance of the residuals. The Durbin-Watson test checks for correlation between residuals. Autocorrelation, or the correlation of residuals across observations, can lead to biased estimates and invalid inferences. Multicollinearity statistics, such as the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance, assess the degree of correlation among independent variables. High multicollinearity can inflate the standard errors of the coefficients, making it difficult to determine the individual effect of each predictor. Ensuring low multicollinearity helps obtain stable and interpretable estimates of the regression coefficients. By conducting these assumption checks, researchers can ensure that their regression analysis is based on valid assumptions, leading to accurate, unbiased, and reliable results (Field, 2013; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2019).

The assumption checks for normality include the Shapiro-Wilk test with a statistic of 0.982 and a p -value of 0.130, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with a statistic of 0.0861 and a p -value of 0.361, and the Anderson-Darling test with a statistic of 0.780 and a

p -value of 0.042. These tests suggest that the data do not significantly deviate from normality (see Table 4.13)

Heteroskedasticity tests include the Breusch-Pagan test with a statistic of 3.62 and a p -value of 0.728, the Goldfeld-Quandt test with a statistic of 0.719 and a p -value of 0.879, and the Harrison-McCabe test with a statistic of 0.576 and a p -value of 0.900. These results indicate that there is no significant heteroskedasticity in the data (see Table 4.14).

The Durbin-Watson test for autocorrelation shows an autocorrelation value of 0.0153, a DW statistic of 1.96, and a p -value of 0.756, suggesting that there is no significant autocorrelation present (see Table 4.15).

Finally, the collinearity statistics reveal that Gender has a VIF of 1.12 and a tolerance of 0.892; Age has a VIF of 1.48 and a tolerance of 0.676; Education has a VIF of 1.05 and a tolerance of 0.955; Tenure has a VIF of 1.25 and a tolerance of 0.802; Department has a VIF of 1.11 and a tolerance of 0.897; and Position has a VIF of 1.52 and a tolerance of 0.656 (see Table 4.16). These values indicate that there is no significant multicollinearity among the predictors (Jou, Huang, and Cho, 2014).

In summary, the assumption checks before the regression model indicate that the data meet the criteria for valid statistical analysis. The normality tests (Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and Anderson-Darling) suggest that the residuals are normally distributed (Khatun, 2021). Heteroskedasticity tests (Breusch-Pagan, Goldfeld-Quandt, and Harrison-McCabe) show no significant heteroskedasticity (Uyanto, 2019). The Durbin-Watson test indicates no significant autocorrelation (Bartels, 1992). Additionally, the collinearity statistics reveal no significant multicollinearity among the predictors. These results confirm that the regression model is appropriate for the data, ensuring accurate, unbiased, and reliable results.

Table 4.13 - Normality tests

	Statistic	p
Shapiro-Wilk	0.982	0.130
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.0861	0.361
Anderson-Darling	0.780	0.042

Table 4.14 - Heteroskedasticity tests

	Statistic	p
Breusch-Pagan	3.62	0.728
Goldfeld-Quandt	0.719	0.879
Harrison-McCabe	0.576	0.900

Table 4.15 - Durbin-Watson test for autocorrelation

Autocorrelation	DW statistic	p
0.0153	1.96	0.756

Table 4.16 -Collinearity statistics

	VIF	Tolerance
Gender	1.12	0.892
Age	1.48	0.676
Education	1.05	0.955
Tenure	1.25	0.802
Department	1.11	0.897
Position	1.52	0.656

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Hierarchical regression is a statistical method used to understand the incremental value of adding sets of variables to a regression model. This technique allows researchers to see how much additional variance in the dependent variable is explained by adding new predictors, beyond what is already explained by the existing predictors (Woltman et al., 2012).

In Table 4.17, three models are presented. Model 1 includes only the control variables: gender, age, education, tenure, department, and position. The coefficients (B) and significance levels (Sig) for these variables indicate their contributions to the dependent

variable, satisfaction. For instance, department is significant with a coefficient of 0.2208 and a p -value of 0.024, suggesting that it has a meaningful impact on satisfaction in this model. The adjusted R^2 for Model 1 is 0.0476, indicating that the control variables explain approximately 4.76% of the variance in satisfaction.

Model 2 adds the independent variables, abusive supervision and trust, to the control variables. This model shows a significant improvement over Model 1, as indicated by the F-test value of 15.18 and a p -value of less than 0.001. The R^2 value increases from 0.0977 in Model 1 to 0.5340 in Model 2, indicating that these additional variables explain a substantial amount of variance in satisfaction. The adjusted R^2 for Model 2 is 0.4989, showing that after adjusting for the number of predictors, approximately 49.89% of the variance in satisfaction is explained. Abusive supervision has a significant negative effect ($B = -0.4573$, $p < 0.001$), while trust has a significant positive effect ($B = 0.3202$, $p < 0.001$). Hypothesis 1, therefore, is supported.

Model 3 introduces a moderating variable: the interaction between abusive supervision and trust. This model aims to examine whether the relationship between abusive supervision and satisfaction is moderated by trust. The interaction term (Abusive supervision x Trust) has a coefficient of -0.0577 and a p -value of 0.378, indicating it is not statistically significant. The F-test value for Model 3 is 13.56 with a p -value of less than 0.001, and the R^2 value is 0.5375. The adjusted R^2 for Model 3 is 0.4978, indicating that approximately 49.78% of the variance in satisfaction is explained after adjusting for the number of predictors. The change in R^2 (ΔR^2) from Model 2 to Model 3 is 0.0034, which is not significant ($p = 0.378$), suggesting that adding the interaction between abusive supervision and trust does not significantly improve the model. Hypothesis 2, therefore, is not supported. This indicates that while both factors independently influence job satisfaction, their combined effect does not provide additional explanatory power beyond their individual contributions.

Overall, hierarchical regression helps determine the added value of new predictors and interactions, showing how each set of variables contributes to explaining the variance in the dependent variable. In this case, while Model 2 significantly improves upon Model 1 by adding abusive supervision and trust, Model 3 does not provide a significant improvement over Model 2 by including the interaction term.

In conclusion, hierarchical regression analysis reveals the addition of abusive supervision and trust significantly enhances the explanatory power of the model, the interaction between these variables does not provide further significant improvement.

Table 4.17 - Hierarchical Regression Model

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	Sig	B	Sig	B	Sig
Control variables						
Gender	−0.0928	0.340	−0.1290	0.069	−0.1331	0.062
Age	0.0517	0.643	0.1106	0.174	0.1127	0.167
Education	−0.0948	0.313	0.0031	0.964	0.0108	0.876
Tenure	−0.0512	0.617	−0.0388	0.603	−0.0331	0.660
Department	0.2208	0.024	0.1238	0.083	0.1263	0.077
Position	−0.1398	0.218	−0.0970	0.240	−0.0892	0.282
Independent variables						
Abusive supervision			−0.4573	< .001*	−0.4781	0.009*
Trust (1 = Yes)			0.3202	< .001*	0.3536	0.032*
Moderating variable						
Abusive supervision x Trust					−0.0577	0.378
F-test	1.95	.0977	15.18	< .001*	13.56	< .001*
R2	.0977		.5340		.5375	
Adjusted R2	.0476		.4989		.4978	
ΔR2			.4363	< .001*	.0034	< .378

* p < .05

4.2 Qualitative Analysis of Interview Results

Descriptive Data

In the second phase of the study, the focus shifted to investigating unexplored aspects of abusive supervision, considering the impact of various variables following an analysis of quantitative data. The researcher reached out to 20 voluntary respondents: 9 were male, and 11 were female. One participant was above the age of 20, two participants were above the age of 30, five were above the age of 40 and 50, and seven were above the age of 60. Four participants graduated from secondary school, eight graduated from a vocational institute, four were university graduates, and four had postgraduate degrees.

The respondent group comprised individuals from diverse departments. Among them, two held the position of general manager, three worked in the housekeeping department, two were from the sales office, two from the catering sales office, two from the front office, and two from the human resources team. Additionally, there were representatives

from the finance office, Chinese kitchen, reservations, marketing, and food and beverage. Furthermore, two respondents were categorised as “Others,” working as a secretary and in the corporate office (Table 4.18).

Table 4.18 - Demographics of Respondents

Respondent	Gender	Age	Education	Profession
1	M	60+	Vocational institute	Housekeeping
2	M	50+	Vocational institute	Human Resources
3	F	50+	Master's degree	Catering Sales
4	M	60+	Secondary	Housekeeping
5	F	40+	Secondary	Housekeeping
6	F	40+	Bachelor's degree	Human Resources
7	F	60+	Vocational school	Others, Corp Office
8	M	60+	Secondary	Chinese Kitchen
9	M	50+	Master's degree	Finance
10	F	40+	Bachelor's degree	Catering Sales
11	F	40+	Bachelor's degree	Front Office
12	F	30+	Master's degree	Marketing
13	M	60+	Secondary	Food and Beverage
14	M	60+	Vocational school	Sales
15	F	50+	Master's degree	Sales
16	F	50+	Vocational school	Others, Secretary
17	M	60+	Vocational school	General Manager
18	F	40+	Vocational school	General Manager
19	F	30+	Vocational school	Reservations
20	M	20+	Bachelor's degree	Front Office

Thematic Data

In the qualitative stage of this study, the CIIT was employed to gather data from research respondents. The objective was to probe into the personal accounts of individuals who faced abusive conduct in their employment settings. In particular, the researcher prompted participants to provide comprehensive narratives of such experiences, concentrating on four principal elements: detailing the abusive events, the perception of the event, feelings towards the supervisor, and post-incident reactions. The data provided outline a structured approach to understanding the multifaceted effects of abusive supervision, which encompass both emotional and behavioural responses.

Participants were prompted to recall and describe a specific instance of abuse using the Tepper scale as a reference point, focusing particularly on episodes with significant career implications. This helped to identify and articulate the specific actions that constituted perceived abusive behaviour. Furthermore, the inquiry examined changes in interpersonal dynamics and professional conduct towards the abusive supervisor following the incident. Probing further, the inquiry captured the emotional stance the

participant held towards the supervisor in question, providing insight into the long-term impact of the abusive supervision on their professional relationships. These inquiries were directed towards the construction of an extensive understanding of the direct and indirect ramifications of abusive leadership as encountered by individuals within their occupational spheres. Participants were requested to delineate the abusive incidents they had experienced, providing a detailed account of the context, the involved parties, and the ensuing impacts on their well-being.

In the study, CIIT was recorded with a focus on the viewpoints of participants. The researchers engaged in active listening, probed attentively, and were guided by the cues offered by participants throughout the interview process. The rich data were further analysed under the impact, context, outcome, and reflection. For instance, one of the interviewees (R18) experienced avoidance from the general manager. Despite trying to communicate, the manager did not reply to calls or messages for days. When confronted in person, the manager claimed to be busy. The interviewee experienced feelings of disrespect and perceived the treatment received as inefficient. The context of the incident arose because the manager was hesitant to recognise the interviewee's legitimate concerns. Upon reflecting on the manager's intolerant conduct, the outcome was that the interviewee ultimately decided to resign after a tenure of three years. This incident will be coded as *“I worked with a general manager who plays favouritism; he weighs all attention to the front office and sales. As a supporting department, like me at housekeeping, he seldom values. I can give an example that there is a time he avoids me by not replying to my call. I have called his secretary to arrange a date to meet, no reply for 3 days. I went to his office; he said he was busy and would get back to me. I think his avoidance of seeing me is because he knows I am right but does not know how to reject me because I am right. I think this is very inefficient and disrespectful”* (R18). This statement is categorised under a leader-member trust (Table 4.19). The description of the codes is provided in the next section.

Table 4.19 - Example of Coding Process

Code	Description	Transcript quote
Leader-member Trust	• avoidance • disrespected • perceived the treatment as inefficient	<i>"I can give an example that there is a time he avoids me by not replying to my call. I have called his secretary to arrange a date to meet, no reply for 3 days. I went to his office; he said he was busy and would get back to me. I think his avoidance of seeing me is because he knows I am right but does not know how to reject me because I am right. I think this is very inefficient and disrespectful."</i> (R18)

Interpretation of the data was conducted through a methodical process guided by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis was the tool employed to reveal the story written by the collected data. After familiarising oneself with the data by transcribing, reading, cleaning, and re-reading, initial codes were generated. A total of 20 transcripts were carefully read and thoroughly analysed, leading to the identification and development of 7 initial codes that encapsulated the key themes and patterns emerging from the data. These codes were abusive supervision acts, leader-member trust, social exchange trust, job satisfaction and co-worker support, organisational policies and well-being, organisational policies and well-being, positive workplace dynamics, and personality and coping mechanisms. A total of 110 entries were labelled, capturing a wide range of experiences shared by respondents that were directly relevant to the research questions. These labels were methodically organised and analysed using Delve, a qualitative data analysis software. All transcripts were uploaded into Delve after being carefully read and reviewed by the researcher to ensure a comprehensive and systematic approach to the coding process. This method facilitated the identification of key themes and patterns within the data, contributing to a deeper understanding of the respondents' experiences for further analysis.

The qualitative data gathered during the second phase of the research highlighted participants' experiences with incidents of supervisory abuse in the workplace. Analysis of the data gathered through prompting strategies revealed three major categories – perceptions of the event, feelings towards the supervisor, and coping strategies – which emerged from seven distinct themes. Perception of the event was explained by the

theme of abusive behaviour and actions. Attitude towards the supervisor was explained by themes such as leader-member trust, social exchange trust, job satisfaction, and co-worker support. Coping strategies were explained by themes related to organisational policies and well-being, positive workplace dynamics, and personality and coping mechanisms. Through this integrative process, similar themes were grouped, allowing patterns to emerge within the data. After carefully organising the data, the researcher identified common patterns that provided insights into the factors influencing employees' acceptance or tolerance of abusive supervision. These patterns serve as a basis for potential thematic constructs, providing a structured framework for further analysis. This detailed categorisation not only enhances the clarity of the findings but also facilitates a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play in abusive supervisory relationships. The thematic data offer valuable insights for addressing the research questions and explaining key aspects of the study. Additionally, this phase of the research allowed for a deeper exploration of the emotional and subjective impacts of abusive supervision on employees, revealing the nuanced ways in which such experiences shape their professional lives and overall well-being. These findings underscore the importance of addressing abusive supervision to foster healthier and more supportive workplace environments.

Seven Themes

Abusive supervision and acts encompassed actions by leaders that were toxic and destructive, as described by research respondents. These behaviours included deliberate criticism, silent treatment, persistent and unnecessary questioning, bombardment with emails, non-verbal acts of disapproval like eye-rolling, unreasonable requests, deliberate non-communication, and generally unethical conduct by supervisors towards their subordinates. Such actions created a hostile work environment, leading to decreased morale and productivity among employees.

The themes described in the interviews represent specific aspects of abusive supervision experiences. Collectively, these findings provide a comprehensive view of an underlying factor that had not been investigated during the quantitative research phase. Among all interviewees, 13 people were able to recognise instances of abusive

behaviour or themes related to abusive supervision from their supervisors. One of the respondents, Respondent 11 (R11), specifically mentioned this experience.

My immediate boss was transferred to another location, leaving me without the support I needed. I was new to the role and didn't get a proper briefing because there was no proper handover. In a private discussion, my department head was unsupportive. He made me feel inadequate every time when we met. He suggested I should leave the company if I couldn't perform. His words were hurtful including demeaning remarks. To make things worse, he implied that my promotion was only because of my good relationship with the general manager, not because of my capabilities.

(R11)

Leader-member trust referred to the respondents' desire for a sense of independence, the necessary space to perform their work, the attitude of leaders, and a respectful leader-member relationship, all of which were critical for developing trust between employees and their direct supervisors. Leaders who demonstrated supportive attitudes and actions, such as encouraging and assisting subordinates and aligning with their values, could build trust (Xiaqi, 2012), or the reverse could occur. Trust was seen as essential for fostering a positive and collaborative work environment.

In this study exploring this theme, 14 individuals shared their personal experiences with such exchanges, providing valuable insights into how trust and communication influence their relationships with their leaders. Among these participants, the sixth respondent referred to as R6, offered their specific perspective on the matter. R6's account highlighted unique aspects of their interaction with their leader regarding trust-building and the challenges faced in maintaining a positive leader-member relationship.

It underscored just how crucial trust is within the workplace. My experience was a clear example of micromanagement being the antithesis of trust. It's not just about oversight; it's about allowing employees the space to perform their duties with confidence, something that was sorely lacking in my case. (R6)

Social exchange trust highlights that trust plays a foundational role in transparent and open communication as a medium through which trust is established and maintained within the framework of social exchange between leadership and team members. SET suggests that relationships gradually evolve into trusting, loyal, and mutually committed connections (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). In the dialogues, respondents expressed

the extent of trust, respect, communication, and loyalty they had with their leaders. Effective communication was crucial for building and sustaining trust.

In the interviews conducted for this study, data aligned with this theme, as nine participants shared their personal experiences and reflections. Among them, the 18th respondent, referred to as R18, provided particularly insightful commentary on their encounters. R18 elaborated on how trust played a pivotal role in their interactions, influencing their decision to engage in or withdraw from certain relationships.

I worked with a general manager who plays favouritism; ... As a supporting department, like me at housekeeping, he seldom values. I can give an example that there is a time he avoided me by not replying to my call. ... I think his avoidance of seeing me is because he knows I was right but did not know how to reject me because I was right. I think this is very inefficient and disrespectful.

(R18)

Job satisfaction and co-worker support connected the trust in leadership and friendship among colleagues with overall job satisfaction, illustrating how supervisory roles and supportive team dynamics could help individuals persevere through challenges. Positive relationships with co-workers and supportive supervisors were key factors in enhancing job satisfaction and reducing stress. Employees felt more motivated and engaged when they had strong support systems at work.

In the context of the interview discussions, the themes of “job satisfaction” and “co-worker support” were shared extensively. The interactions were highly indicative of how supervisory roles significantly influence the support system within a workplace. Among those sharing their experiences, approximately five individuals discussed the varying dynamics of support they encountered. One of the respondents referred to as R20 provided detailed insights into their experiences:

There was a time when a female guest from mainland China complained about a service issue. The case was handed over to me without any guidance. I was new, and it seemed like they thought my younger face would magically solve the problem. But it didn't. The case stayed unresolved, and guess who got the blame? Me. I had no support from anyone, no instructions, just a feeling of failing. (R20)

Organisational policies and well-being concerned the interplay between organisational rules and the employee's personal life, emphasising the importance of policies that were both fair and accommodating to the well-being of the workforce, which might be disrupted by incidents of abusive supervision. Respondents partially related their individual experiences of abusive acts to whether or not they were influenced by organisational policies. Fair and supportive policies were essential for all workplaces and for maintaining employee well-being. Organisations needed to ensure that their policies promoted a healthy work-life balance.

Upon further analysis of the interview data, the theme “organisational policies and well-being” came into focus. This is critical for enacting policies that are equitable and provide for the well-being of employees. Among the 11 individuals who offered their perspectives, respondent two (R2) stated that a well-balanced approach between organisational policies and well-being is necessary.

This experience was a reminder of the delicate balance in human resources management. It's not just about adhering to policies and procedures. There's a critical human element, especially during significant life events such as births, deaths, illnesses, and retirements. These moments require a delicate touch that goes beyond the rigidity of policies. (R2)

Positive workplace dynamics describe a positive workplace culture, which involves effective communication, streamlined processes, perseverance, professionalism, peer support, and informed career decisions. The positive dynamics of the workplace contribute to a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. It is more likely for employees to flourish in environments where communication is open, and processes are efficient.

The concept of “positive workplace dynamics” pertains to how professionalism contributes to a vibrant and effective work setting. Within the sample of participants interviewed, a subset of six provided their insights on this subject, describing how these dynamics have moulded their professional experiences. Among these participants, an individual denoted as respondent six (R6) elaborated on the experiences, offering a deeper understanding of how positive workplace dynamics are crucial.

I prioritize clear and empowering communication with my associates because there has to be trust in my profession. Over-monitoring and excessive commentary are counterproductive and

erode trust. Just as an example, having employees go through ten different departments just to apply for annual leave is absurd. Similarly, requiring approval from the corporate office to promote a server is not only inefficient but also indicative of a low level of trust within the organisation. (R6)

Personality and coping mechanisms addressed the influence of personal attributes and resilience strategies on the ability to withstand and adapt to abusive supervision, thereby solidifying a person's expertise and professional self-assurance. Personal resilience and effective coping mechanisms were crucial for navigating challenging work environments. Respondents who developed coping strategies were better equipped to handle stress and maintain their professional growth. Moreover, respondents employed coping strategies to withstand abusive supervision.

Upon the analysis of the interview data, the theme "personality and coping mechanism" was examined, which highlights how individual personality traits, and the adoption of resilience strategies can impact a person's capacity to endure and adjust to abusive supervision. The concept suggests that harnessing these personal attributes and coping mechanisms not only helps individuals navigate difficult supervisory relationships but also strengthens their professional expertise and self-confidence. Twelve dialogues captured how their unique personalities and resilience techniques played a role in managing their professional environment. Specifically, respondent 17 (R17) offered their own reflections, adding depth to our understanding of how personality and coping strategies can serve as vital tools in maintaining professional well-being in the face of challenging workplace dynamics.

Throughout my career, I've encountered various challenges, but I wouldn't necessarily label them as "abuse." One particular experience stands out. I had a female boss who occasionally raised her voice and used sarcastic remarks. However, I never considered it abusive. Instead, I focused on finding practical ways to navigate the situation. ... I don't support abusive behaviour, but sometimes you need ways to cope. For me, it meant avoiding fights, leaning on my co-workers, and trusting myself. (R17)

There were a total of 20 participants who shared their stories about abusive supervision. During their interviews, all individuals mentioned incidents or experiences associated with abusive supervision, providing a diverse array of personal accounts. Surprisingly, only 10%, which amounts to two people, decided to leave their positions after a relatively short period, ranging from three months to more. The majority of them chose to tolerate

this phenomenon for over a year or more, highlighting a significant endurance of such negative experiences. It was noted that among the interviewees at that time, one person remained active in abusive leadership environments, continuing to face these challenges daily. Quantitative studies had difficulty capturing ongoing incidents, and qualitative studies provided deeper insights into the lived experiences of these individuals. The data collected from the interviews represented raw data used to address research questions four and five, offering a detailed and nuanced understanding of the factors influencing employees' decisions to remain in their jobs or their intention to leave.

Framework Analysis

The thematic data and explored themes examined both individual and organisational factors, as well as the layers of barriers contributing to employees' attitudes, acceptance, or tolerance of abusive supervision. The impact of abusive supervisors, coping strategies, trust, communication, and workplace dynamics (see Table 4.16) played critical roles in shaping employees' perceptions and acceptance of abusive supervision. Additionally, using the barriers model of abusive supervision (Breevaart, Wisse, and Schyns, 2021), the study provided a theoretical framework to explain why employees tolerated abusive supervision at both individual and organisational levels. Employees' tolerance of abusive supervision was largely due to various barriers that prevented them from leaving, effectively forcing them to remain in the abusive relationship. According to the barriers model, multiple layers of obstacles compel employees to accept toxic relationships in the workplace. Data were analysed with a focus on four distinct layers: societal context, organisational context, the relationship between leader and respondent, and individual barriers. For instance, societal context barriers included financial dependence, a lack of alternative employment opportunities, fear of retaliation, and social or familial pressures. These factors contributed to employees feeling trapped and unable to escape the toxic environment, leading to prolonged exposure to abusive supervision.

Framework Analysis – Barriers Model

The barriers model of abusive supervision, adapted from the original barriers model of domestic abuse (Grigsby and Hartman, 1997), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the persistence of abusive supervisory relationships. Originally designed

to help therapists comprehend the obstacles victims of domestic violence face, this model uses an onion-shaped framework with the victim at the centre, surrounded by layers of barriers. Breevaart, Wisse, and Schyns (2021) adapted this model to the workplace context to explain why abusive supervisory relationships endure over long periods.

This study delved into the reasons why employees tolerate abusive supervision, applying the barriers model to uncover the hidden challenges that prevent them from leaving toxic relationships. The research categorised interview data into four layers – societal, organisational, relational, and individual barriers – supporting the theoretical model (see Table 4.20). By identifying these obstacles, organisations can develop targeted interventions to address and reduce the prevalence of abusive supervision, ultimately fostering a healthier and more supportive work environment. This approach not only highlights the complexity of abusive supervision but also underscores the importance of comprehensive strategies to mitigate its impact.

Table 4.20 - Analysis Flow Chart

Prompting strategies	Thematic data	Framework analysis
1. Detailing the abusive events 2. Perception of the event 3. Attitudes towards the supervisor 4. Post-accident reactions	Perception of the event 1. Abusive supervision/act Feelings towards the supervisor 2. Leader-member trust 3. Social exchange trust 4. Job satisfaction and co-worker support Coping strategies 5. Organisational policies and well-being 6. Positive workplace dynamics 7. Personality and coping mechanism	Barriers model 1. The societal context includes the job market and economy of the respondent 2. Organisational context includes the organisational norms, values, and team support 3. The relationship between the leader and the respondent includes coping strategies or avoiding respondents leaving 4. Individual barriers, personality, and social identification

Societal Context Barrier

The societal context influenced employees' perceptions and experiences of workplace dynamics. Cultural norms and societal attitudes towards authority and hierarchy played a role in shaping interactions and expectations within the workplace. The societal barriers that hindered employees from obtaining resources encompassed an unsupportive culture and restricted job opportunities. These barriers included economic instability, limited access to social support systems, and pervasive societal norms that normalised abusive behaviour. Power distance and established norms desensitised individuals to abusive relationships, ultimately deterring employees from exiting these detrimental situations. Additionally, societal stigma and fear of retaliation further discouraged employees from seeking help or leaving their toxic work environments. Understanding these societal barriers is crucial for developing comprehensive strategies to support employees and address the root causes of abusive supervision.

To be honest, I've been quite confused. On one hand, there's the option to join the usual practice of aligning with co-workers, which is common in Chinese workplace culture, and on the other, to stand my ground and directly report to the management. ... I opted for changes and by bypassing the traditional alignment, I noticed a shift in dynamics. The hierarchy seems less rigid, and decisions tend to be made quicker, improving efficiency. It's also changed the culture somewhat.

(R1)

Economic stress, limited job market options, salary incentives, specialised industry fields, and industry influence have historically prevented individuals from disengaging from toxic relationships. These factors create a complex web of constraints that makes it difficult for employees to leave harmful work environments. Understanding these societal barriers is crucial for developing comprehensive strategies to support employees and address the root causes of abusive supervision. By acknowledging and addressing these underlying issues, organisations can implement effective interventions that promote employee well-being and retention. This approach is essential for fostering a healthier and more supportive work environment where employees feel valued and empowered to thrive.

It was certainly tough. I experienced a lot of emotional distress and always kept a resignation letter with me, ready to quit at any moment. However, I worked with him for over three years, ...

largely because I was open about the situation and, frankly, because of the salary. ... The financial pressures of life pushed me to persevere, and in the end, I succeeded. (R9)

Organisational Context Barrier

Organisational policies and practices significantly affected the overall work environment. Policies promoted fairness, inclusivity, and organisational barriers such as norms and values that permitted abuse. Obstructions faced by individuals aiming to exit abusive relationships were linked to the norms and values prevalent within organisations. Interviews with respondents disclosed that organisational and departmental norms remained influential in their workplace systems. Aggressive norms and hostile work environments could normalise abusive behaviour, resulting in increased occurrences of abusive supervision (Restubog et al., 2011). Specific organisational structures, notably those that are bureaucratic or characterised by traditionally masculine norms, tend to be more accepting of abuse, thus complicating the potential for victims to extricate themselves. Studies have emphasised these difficulties in altering abusive dynamics within organisational contexts (Ayree et al., 2007; Ferris et al., 2007). One of the respondents disclosed that the norms dictating her daily tasks within the organisation were toxic, yet compliance was obligatory due to the established status of norms and policies.

Having employees go through ten different departments just to apply for annual leave is ridiculous. (R6) and

Requiring approval from the corporate office to promote a server is not only inefficient but also indicative of a low level of trust within the organisation. (R6)

Sharing negative experiences within a team can strengthen cohesion and solidarity (Breevaart et al., 2021). Employees who endure abuse from a supervisor often develop solidarities with colleagues who encounter similar adversities, which can make the situation more bearable and discourage them from seeking an exit from the abusive context. Respondents shared their views and supported the theory, highlighting how mutual support and understanding among team members can foster a more resilient and united work environment. This collective resilience can lead to improved morale and a stronger sense of community within the team.

Having supportive co-workers made a significant difference. Their presence provided emotional balance and a sense of bond. We could share our experiences and find ways to cope together. (R17) and

I struggled for those four months. But my saving grace was my peers – they understood my frustration. Their support kept me going. (R20)

Relationship Barrier

Barriers from abusive supervisors include isolation and a negative impact on followers. Barriers arose due to the abusive relationship, which often led to social isolation for the victims. They found themselves increasingly alienated from supportive networks and resources that might mitigate the effects of the abuse. Respondents revealed in their transcripts that

I was really angry. It felt like being thrown into deep water without any help. I had no support from anyone, no guidance, no instructions – just a feeling that I was failing. It was unfair. What did I do wrong? I was just following his poor guidance. (R20)

In attempting to cope with an abusive supervisor and manage challenges, victims employed various strategies. Some individuals might have chosen to avoid the supervisor altogether, minimising interactions to reduce stress. Others might have sought emotional or practical support from colleagues, friends, or family members to help them cope with the situation. Conversely, some victims might have taken a more proactive approach by directly addressing the issue with the supervisor, attempting to resolve conflicts with an open mind, and focusing on improving their circumstances by engaging in personal development activities such as building resilience, enhancing their skills, and undermining the abusive impact.

My extensive knowledge in my field played a crucial role. I focused on my expertise and the value I brought to the organisation. When faced with nonsense or unreasonable demands, ... Believing in my abilities and resilience helped me endure. (R17) and

Buying him happy hours was part of that effort – an attempt to show goodwill and bridge the gap, ... despite the unintended consequences of my superior's actions. (R4)

Furthermore, such abusive dynamics frequently included mechanisms that prevented employees from leaving the toxic environment. Abusive supervisors might employ tactics, as stated by one respondent, that made the departure process challenging and emotionally draining. These tactics often involved manipulation, threats, and creating a sense of dependency, further entrenching employees in the toxic workplace.

I tried to tolerate his behaviour, hoping things would improve. I compromised by altering job tasks to align with my comfort level ... Leaving this toxic environment isn't easy. My success in the industry is partly attributed to him, and our small circle means that quitting could tarnish my reputation. (R12)

Abusive supervision impacted followers' emotional resources by creating negative emotions such as fear and sadness, as well as presenting challenges to the toxic relationship. A respondent indicated that such emotional drain could deter individuals from ending the relationship by depleting their awareness of the need to leave.

My boss warns me not to outshine the team. Despite my anger and fear, I continue to express myself patiently, repeating details to my boss. His unethical behaviour and demands for assistance create immense pressure and challenges for me. (R12)

Individual Barrier

Individual obstacles within the abused follower, including social identification, implicit leadership theories, and personality factors, influence the abused follower to remain in abusive conditions. These internal barriers often make it difficult for individuals to recognise the toxicity of their environment, further complicating their ability to seek help or leave the situation. The complexity of these factors can create a sense of entrapment, making it challenging for individuals to break free from the cycle of abuse.

Employees developed a strong social identification with their organisation, which led them to tolerate abuses that conflicted with their well-being, as a respondent stated. This deep connection often resulted in a sense of loyalty and fear of losing their professional identity, making it even harder to break free from the abusive dynamics. The emotional attachment to their roles and colleagues can further entrench them in the toxic environment, intensifying their struggle to seek change,

I was disheartened and had the intention to quit. But something inside me shifted. Instead of giving up, ... regardless of overtime or sleepless nights. My team was behind me, and together, we weathered the storm. (R11) and ... there was a culture of working to please our boss to gain opportunities and recognition. It was like an apprenticeship, and he is still very proud of me. (R9)

Implicit leadership theories held by followers, unspoken assumptions, and beliefs could also play a role in how they perceive and respond to abusive behaviours. Followers who idealised authoritative or commanding traits in leaders might have overlooked or rationalised abusive actions as necessary components of strong leadership; consequently, they may not have chosen to terminate a toxic relationship. A respondent assumed a bittersweet relationship with an abusive leader as a victory:

In a private discussion, my department head was unsupportive. He made me feel inadequate every time when we met. He suggested I should leave the company if I couldn't perform. His

words were hurtful including demeaning remarks. ...I was disheartened and had the intention to quit. ... My function head acknowledged my capabilities, granting his approval. It was a bittersweet victory that taught me resilience and the power of positive thinking. (R11)

In some cases, certain personality characteristics of followers made them more subject to enduring abusive situations rather than seeking change. Traits such as high agreeableness, low self-esteem, and a strong need for approval can contribute to or make them more sensitive to negative supervision. Individuals with these characteristics may find it challenging to assert themselves or recognise their worth, leading them to tolerate mistreatment. Additionally, a tendency towards optimism or a belief in the possibility of change within the abuser can further entrench them in these harmful dynamics.

Despite my worries about age and finding another job, I find myself always insecure. I have had experience before this employer, and I believe changing jobs may not help. (R16)

For instance, individuals with a high tolerance for ambiguity or those with a more dependent personality might be more likely to stay, despite the negative consequences of the abuse. These internal barriers, deeply rooted in the followers' self-concept and worldview, add layers of complexity to the issue of why abused individuals might not easily detach themselves from abusive leadership dynamics. Additionally, factors such as fear of change, low self-esteem, and a lack of perceived alternatives further entrench these individuals in harmful situations, making it even harder for them to break free.

Barriers at different levels presented various challenges for followers to terminate abusive situations, which acted as a reason for the tolerance of such circumstances by those experiencing abusive supervision in the workplace. These included societal norms, organisational norms, the relationships and impacts of leaders, and the employees' personal beliefs. Research participants revealed in their experiences that they struggled with insufficient support, acceptance of abusive behaviour, the trauma stemming from the abuse, developing coping strategies, and their own beliefs that prevented them from leaving. These barriers collectively sustained the cycle of abuse and complicated the employees' ability to move forward and improve their situations, serving as both a reason and a factor for employees' forced acceptance and tolerance of abusive supervision. Additionally, economic dependence, fear of retaliation, engagement in a tight-knit profession, and lack of alternative job opportunities further entrenched employees in

these toxic environments. The combination of these factors created a complex web that made it exceedingly difficult for individuals to break free from abusive leadership dynamics, perpetuating a cycle of tolerance and endurance.

Acknowledging and understanding these contributory factors is essential in addressing the issue of abusive supervision. By categorising the qualitative data into these themes, a clearer understanding of the intricate workplace dynamics and the complexities surrounding abusive supervision emerged. This organised analysis facilitated a deeper comprehension of the patterns of abusive leadership. These interconnected themes reveal how various factors influence individuals who deal with abusive leadership, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to mitigate these barriers and support affected employees. This comprehensive approach underscores the importance of addressing both the immediate and underlying issues that perpetuate abusive supervision in the workplace (Table 4.22).

Table 4.21 - The Seven Themes

Codes	Description	Example quote
Abusive supervision/act	Including excessive monitoring, questioning by supervisors, silent treatment, and unethical leadership behaviour	“There was a time I faced an indirect form of what could be termed as abusive... my superior reassigned me to assist the third-in-command... criticising No. 3 in comparison to me. (R4) “She had a habit of sitting on my documents for extended periods, delaying approval and causing a great deal of frustration.” (R6) “He would meticulously circle my entries and journals, scrutinising every line, which made me feel quite incompetent.” (R9) “My superior consistently forgot basic details, such as what AGM stood for (Annual General Meeting) ... I was repeatedly subjected to the same questions. It was demoralising.” (R10) “My immediate boss was transferred to another location, leaving me without the support I needed. I was new to the role and didn’t get a proper briefing because there was no proper handover. In a private discussion, my department head was unsupportive. He made me feel inadequate every time when we met. He suggested I should leave the company if I couldn’t perform. His words were hurtful including demeaning remarks. To make things worse, he implied that my promotion was only because of my good relationship with the general manager, not because of my capabilities” (R11). “He employs tactics like giving me the silent treatment, taking away my responsibilities, and reassigning them to others, making me feel incompetent.” (R12) “He withheld information and ignored me in the workplace.” (R13) “Despite the constant bombardment of emails, there were seldom any constructive directions or innovative ideas from the leadership. The environment felt suffocating, and the stress weighed heavily on me.” (R14) “What I consider abusive is micromanagement and their never-ending questioning” (R15). “Woke me up at 3 a.m. to retrieve a computer file” – unreasonable request. (R16) “She would ask numerous questions, often seeking excessive detail.” (R7) “She would often communicate her disapproval through non-verbal cues like opening her eyes wide, blinking rapidly, or rolling her eyes.” (R7) “There was a time when he deliberately avoided me by not responding to my calls. Frustrated, I reached out to his secretary to arrange a meeting, but even then, there was no reply for three days. When I finally confronted him in his office, he claimed to be busy and promised to get back to me.” (R18) “My supervisor has developed a habit of expecting me to work beyond regular office hours. It doesn’t matter if it’s 8 PM or midnight; she frequently sends emails or tasks that require immediate attention.” (R19) “I worked under this supervisor for about four months. Communication with him was like navigating a maze with no map. He’d give unclear directions, leaving me feeling lost and frustrated.” (R20)
Leader-member Trust	The quality of the relationship affects trust and the desire for independence and space to work.	“My preference would be for them to allow me the space to work independently.” (R15) “It led to my promotion and provided me with an opportunity to showcase my capability... strained my relationship with No. 3.” (R4) “It’s about allowing employees the space to perform their duties with confidence, something that was sorely lacking in my case.” (R6) “I experienced a lot of emotional distress and always kept a resignation letter with me, ready to quit at any moment.” (R9) “I had to find indirect ways to address problems because direct communication with my superior was unproductive.” (R10) “Instead of giving up, I walked past that emotional negativity, fuelled by double effort, regardless of overtime or sleepless nights.” (R11) “Despite my anger and fear, I continue to express myself patiently, repeating details to my boss.” (R12) “I bypassed my manager and worked directly with the head chef.” (R13) “I tried to maintain my professionalism and focus on my work. However, as time went on, the toll on my mental and physical health became undeniable.” (R14) “Avoiding direct confrontations to maintain peace of mind.” (R17) “It felt like a direct challenge to my competence.” “It was my commitment ... that eventually won her trust.” (R7) “I believe his avoidance stemmed from the fact that he knew I was right, but he didn’t want to acknowledge it. This behaviour was both inefficient and disrespectful.” (R18) “I want to provide the best for my daughter, but I also deserve a healthy work environment.” (R19) “There was this time when a female guest from mainland China (PRC) complained about a service issue. John simply handed the case over to me without any guidance. It was as if he thought my younger face would magically solve the problem. But it didn’t. The case remained unresolved, and guess who got the blame.” (R20)
Social Exchange Trust	Trust is an exchange in the workplace and highlights the importance of open communication.	“I trust her judgment. I’d rather she talk openly because at least I know what she’s thinking.” (R15) “I’ve taken the lessons from that experience seriously and have committed myself to treat everyone with respect.” (R6) “We’ve maintained our contact over the years, and we can even share a laugh about those times now.” (R9) “Leaving was liberating. I want to get a new role where I’m respected, where communication flows both ways, and where my experience matters.” (R10) “We can soar above it, just as I did during that difficult period.” (R11) “Peers provided emotional support, reminding me I wasn’t alone.” (R16) “I think his avoidance in seeing me is because he knows I am right, but he did not know how to reject me because I am right. I think this is very inefficient and disrespect.” (R18) “To cope, I’ve started delaying my responses to her emails. Sometimes, I don’t respond at all until the next working day. It’s my way of asserting boundaries, even though it’s not a long-term solution.” (R19) “He wouldn’t shout in front of customers; that would tarnish the image. But behind closed doors, he’d criticise us relentlessly. It was demoralising. And the worst part? He lacked a sense of responsibility. To him, passing the buck was an art form.” (R20)
Job Satisfaction and Co-worker support	Support from co-workers, organisation, or leader despite challenges.	“Despite some occasional misunderstandings, I’m quite content with my current job and appreciate the support.” (R2) “Requiring approval from the corporate office to promote a server is not only inefficient but also indicative of a low level of trust within the organisation.” (R6) “Having supportive co-workers made a significant difference.” (R17) “Balancing work and family is crucial, and I won’t compromise my daughter’s well-being.” (R19) “I had no support, no instructions – just a sinking feeling of incompetence. It was unfair. I mean, what had I done wrong? I was following his lead – or lack thereof.” (R20)

Codes	Description	Example quote
Organisational Policies and Well-Being	Recognising the balance between policies and human connection.	“There’s a critical human element ... beyond the rigidity of policies.” (R2) “Buying him happy hours was part of that effort – an attempt to show goodwill and bridge the gap ... despite the unintended consequences of my superior’s actions.” (R4) “Unlike my previous boss, I refuse to hinder the progress of others. I prioritise clear and empowering communication with my associates because there has to be trust in my profession.” (R6) “In the past, there was a culture of working to please our boss, to gain opportunities and recognition. It was like an apprenticeship, and he is still very proud of me.” (R9) “I realised that my growth and advancement were stunted under this supervisor. I needed a supportive environment where my expertise was valued.” (R10) “My function head acknowledged my capabilities, granting his approval. It was a bittersweet victory that taught me resilience and the power of positive thinking.” (R11) “Leaving may be the only viable solution to protect my well-being and professional integrity.” (R12) “I also collaborated with other department heads, such as HR and the Executive Assistant Manager, to drive success even without my boss’s participation.” (R13) “After decades of dedication, I decided that my well-being was more important than meeting unrealistic targets. I chose to step back, prioritise my health, and enjoy my retirement years.” (R14) “Handling personal matters diverted attention from essential tasks.” (R16) “During a staff party, he was on stage drawing lucky winners. In front of everyone, he announced that he would discard any winning tickets from housekeeping. And he did exactly that. This incident left all of us from housekeeping feeling unfairly treated and angry. His tone in communicating with us consistently conveyed a sense of superiority.” (R18)
Positive Workplace Dynamics	Policies or workplace climate resulting from direct reporting and bridging hierarchical gaps.	“By bypassing the traditional alignment, I noticed a shift in dynamics ... improving efficiency.” (R1) “Having employees go through ten different departments just to apply for annual leave is ridiculous.” (R6) “The financial pressures of life pushed me to persevere, and, in the end, I succeeded.” (R9) “Believing in my abilities and resilience helped endure.” (R17) "I managed to maintain a constructive dialogue and work through the issues." (R7) “I struggled for those four months. But my saving grace was my peers – they understood my frustration. Their support kept me going. Eventually, I decided to leave. My career deserved better.” (R20)
Personality and Coping Mechanism	Overcoming challenges and reinforcing expertise to manage adversities.	“By bypassing the traditional alignment, I noticed a shift in dynamics ... improving efficiency.” (R1) “Having employees go through ten different departments just to apply for annual leave is ridiculous.” (R6) “The financial pressures of life pushed me to persevere, and, in the end, I succeeded.” (R9) “Believing in my abilities and resilience helped endure.” (R17) "I managed to maintain a constructive dialogue and work through the issues." (R7) “I also collaborated with other department heads, such as HR and the Executive Assistant Manager, to drive success even without my boss’s participation.” (R13) “I am a positive person, and I just handle my task professionally; I am pleasing myself but no one else.” (R18) “I’ve decided to monitor the situation for a few more months. If these unreasonable expectations persist, I may have no choice but to resign.” (R19) "To cope, I’ve started delaying my responses to her emails. Sometimes, I don’t respond at all until the next working day. It’s my way of asserting boundaries, even though it’s not a long-term solution.” (R19) “It was tough. I struggled for those four months. But my saving grace was my peers – they understood my frustration. Their support kept me going. Eventually, I decided to leave. My career deserved better.” (R20) “I tried to maintain my professionalism and focus on my work.” (R14) “Avoiding confrontations to maintain peace of mind.” (R17)

Themes drive impacts of abusive supervision, coping strategies, trust, communication, and workplace dynamics across.

Table 4.22 Framework Analysis (Barriers Model)

Layer 1 – Barriers in the larger societal context	
Societal culture	Quotes “By bypassing the traditional alignment, I noticed a shift in dynamics.” (R1)
The economy and the job market	“The financial pressures of life pushed me to persevere, and in the end, I succeeded.” (R9)
The law	None
Layer 2 – Barriers in the organisational context	
Organisational norms and values	“Having employees go through ten different departments just to apply for annual leave is ridiculous.” (R6) “Requiring approval from the corporate office to promote a server is not only inefficient but also indicative of a low level of trust within the organisation.” (R6) “There’s a critical human element ... beyond the rigidity of policies.” (R2)
Team solidarity and support	“Having supportive co-workers made a significant difference.” (R17) “I struggled for those four months, but my saving grace was my peers – they understood my frustration. Their support kept me going.” (R20)
Corporate social responsibility	None
Layer 3 – Barriers due to the abusive relationship	
Social isolation	“I had no support, no instructions – just a sinking feeling of incompetence. It was unfair. I mean, what had I done wrong?” (R20)
Impact of an abusive supervisor	“His unethical behaviour and demands for assistance create immense pressure and challenges for me.” (R12)- “During a staff party, he was on stage drawing lucky winners. In front of everyone, he announced that he would discard any winning tickets from housekeeping. And he did exactly that. This incident left all of us from housekeeping feeling unfairly treated and angry. His tone in communicating with us consistently conveyed a sense of superiority.” (R18)
Coping with an abusive supervisor	“Balancing work and family is crucial, and I won’t compromise my daughter’s well-being.” (R19) “Believing in my abilities and resilience helped me endure.” (R17) “Buying him happy hours was part of that effort – an attempt to show goodwill and bridge the gap, ... despite the unintended consequences of my superior’s actions.” (R4) “Leaving may be the only viable solution to protect my well-being and professional integrity.” (R12) “I also collaborated with other department heads, such as HR and the Executive Assistant Manager, to drive success even without my boss’s participation.” (R13)
Preventing employees from leaving	“Leaving this toxic environment isn’t easy. My success in the industry is partly attributed to him, and our small circle means that quitting could tarnish my reputation.” (R12)
Layer 4 – Barriers within the abused follower	
Social identification	“My team was behind me, and together, we weathered the storm.” (R11) “It was like an apprenticeship, and he is still very proud of me.” (R9)
Implicit leadership theories	“My function head acknowledged my capabilities, granting his approval. It was a bittersweet victory that taught me resilience and the power of positive thinking.” (R11)
Personality	“Despite my worries about age and finding another job, I find myself always insecure. I have had experience before this employer, and I believe changing jobs may not help.” (R16)
Conservation values	None

4.3 Examining Data and Insightful Findings

The qualitative analysis explores three distinct and interconnected stories of workplace challenges. Despite the negative leadership experiences and difficulties at work, some respondents developed resilience and adaptability, showcasing unexpected positive outcomes. From the narratives, respondents shared insights from challenging workplace environments. These stories collectively underscore the complex dynamics of workplace abuse and the surprising ways individuals can develop resilience and valuable skills in response to such environments.

Background of Stories

Respondent 6 (R6) shared a significant encounter with a previous manager who exhibited abusive conduct during the qualitative research interview. Abusive behaviours, including delays in document approvals and unclear directives, were common frustrations and challenges for the respondent as a new joiner. R6 was wrongly accused of a hiring incident despite following the manager's approval to employ a headhunting agency. In addition, R6 faced public criticism and overwhelming work expectations from the boss, who delegated tasks with little notice, resulting in skipped meals, missed social events, extra hours of work, and detailed, disheartening feedback through emails. This environment created a high-stress situation for R6, significantly impacting both professional and personal life.

Respondent 8 (R8) shared the experience of working in a Chinese kitchen, marked by an environment where shouting and foul language were daily occurrences and accepted as part of the culture, especially for those who were less educated. During R8's days of apprenticeship, R8 faced a challenging and selective teaching approach from the head chef. The head chef would only actively instruct apprentices he favoured, and his teaching method involved yelling, which the apprentices interpreted as a sign of attention and a learning opportunity. The Chinese kitchen had no standardised rules then; chefs had their own implicit rules that apprentices were expected to understand and follow without clear instructions. Learning and progression in that environment were unstructured and depended on gaining the head chef's recognition. Communication was predominantly top-down, with apprentices required to present themselves in a way that

pleased the boss to earn a chance to learn. It was common for someone to spend years in the kitchen and still gain minimal knowledge due to the lack of a structured training program and the unpredictable nature of the head chef's coaching. This chaotic environment made it difficult for apprentices to advance their skills and careers.

Respondent 9 (R9) recounted a stressful situation when the immediate supervisor exhibited abusive behaviour, including avoidance of direct communication when instructions were not followed, inspecting work to a degree that felt demeaning, and using aggressive mannerisms. This micromanagement led R9 to feel incompetent, causing emotional distress to the point where R9 carried a resignation letter at all times. Despite the hostile environment, R9 remained in the position for over three years due to the openness in dealing with the issue and the financial benefits of the job. The constant stress and pressure from the supervisor's abusive behaviour took a toll on R9's mental health, yet the need for financial stability and the occasional moments of transparency kept R9 in the role.

The thematic analysis of the provided data reveals a consistent pattern of workplace abuse and its profound impact on employees' professional and personal lives. However, it also highlights some unexpected positive outcomes that contrast with current literature. R6 experienced significant stress due to a manager's abusive conduct, characterised by delays in document approvals, unclear directives, wrongful accusations, public criticism, and unreasonable work expectations. Despite these challenges, R6 developed resilience and a strong ability to manage high-pressure situations. This experience unexpectedly enhanced R6's problem-solving skills and adaptability, which are valuable in any professional setting. Respondent 8 (R8) described a challenging apprenticeship in a Chinese kitchen, where shouting and foul language were normalised. The head chef's selective and aggressive teaching methods created an unstructured learning environment. Surprisingly, this chaotic atmosphere fostered a sense of camaraderie among the apprentices, who supported one another through tough times. This peer support network helped R8, and others develop strong teamwork and communication skills, which are crucial in any collaborative work environment. Respondent 9 (R9) faced micromanagement and abusive behaviour from a supervisor, leading to feelings of incompetence and emotional distress. Despite the hostile

environment, R9 remained in the position for financial stability and occasional moments of transparency. This experience taught R9 the importance of career prospects and resilience. Additionally, R9's ability to endure and navigate a difficult work environment demonstrated a high level of perseverance and emotional intelligence.

Overall, while the data underscore the detrimental effects of abusive management practices on employees' mental health, job satisfaction, and career progression, they also reveal unexpected positive outcomes. These include enhanced resilience, problem-solving skills, peer support, communication, and emotional intelligence. These findings will be further discussed in the next chapter, suggesting that even in adverse conditions, individuals can develop valuable skills and attributes that contribute to their personal and professional growth.

4.4 Linking Quantitative Results to Qualitative Inquiry

The study indicated that there was no significant correlation between demographic variables, such as age, gender, or educational background, and the prevalence of abusive supervision. This type of supervision was found to be relatively low in the Hong Kong context, with a score of 1.93 on the measurement scale used. These findings suggest that abusive supervision is not a widespread issue in this region.

On the other hand, job satisfaction received a moderate score of 3.5. This level of satisfaction was largely attributed to several positive factors identified in the quantitative data. These included positive interpersonal relations among co-workers, which fostered a supportive and collaborative work environment. Additionally, employees appreciated the opportunities to help others, which contributed to a sense of purpose and fulfilment in their roles. Consistent company growth also played a significant role, as it provided employees with a sense of stability and optimism about their future within the organisation.

However, the study also highlighted several areas of dissatisfaction. The aspects that scored the least favourably included company policies, which employees felt were either unclear or unfair. Salary was another significant area of concern, with many employees feeling that their compensation did not reflect their efforts or market standards. Lastly,

limited promotion opportunities were a major source of frustration, as employees felt that their career advancement prospects were restricted, leading to feelings of stagnation and demotivation.

This finding suggests that employees placed considerable value on trust within their professional relationships. The significance of trust implies that it played a crucial role in how employees perceived their leaders and the broader organisational culture. Trust, along with a positive and productive work environment, was found to significantly influence employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall organisational effectiveness. When trust is present, it often correlates with higher levels of employee job satisfaction and a reduced likelihood of turnover intentions, as noted by Liu and Peng (2007). Conversely, a lack of trust contributes to a negative view of management and can exacerbate the effects of perceived abusive supervision.

The high importance placed on trust by participants indicated that they viewed trustworthiness in their superiors as an essential quality. This trust could mitigate some of the adverse effects associated with supervisory abuse, leading to a more positive work experience overall. This was further supported by qualitative data, which showed that employees felt trust in their workplace was significant and had a substantial impact on their overall job satisfaction.

H1, which posited that abusive supervision is negatively related to job satisfaction, was confirmed by the data. This aligns with the expectation that employees generally feel less satisfied under abusive supervision. In contrast, H2, which suggested that trust moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction, was not directly tested in this analysis and requires further investigation. This indicates that, while trust is crucial, its role as a moderating factor in the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction was not proven.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results from both the quantitative and qualitative data in this mixed-methods study. The quantitative data analysis, encompassing descriptive and inferential statistics, provided a numerical overview of the key variables and their relationships. This statistical analysis revealed important links between variables. For

instance, the analysis highlighted significant correlations between job satisfaction and trust in leadership.

The qualitative data analysis, analysed through themes, delved into the details and complexities of the topic. Initially, seven themes were identified from the respondents' stories and later refined into five main themes. These themes provided a basic understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives. Illustrative quotes from the qualitative data supported the identified themes, adding depth and context to the statistical results. It adds depth to what has not been explored quantitatively by quantifying perceptions based on abusive acts. A selection of quotes from participants highlights specific examples of leadership behaviour that were supportive or detrimental.

A theoretical framework was used to further analyse the collected data, which provided insights and context for the study results. This framework helped interpret the findings within a broader academic context, linking the study's results to existing theories and literature. The correlation between the two datasets was examined to identify how the qualitative insights complemented and enriched the quantitative findings. This mixed-methods approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem, as the qualitative data provided context and depth to the numerical trends observed in the quantitative analysis.

A more comprehensive discussion of the results, including the implications of these findings and their relevance to the existing body of knowledge, will be presented in the next chapter. This discussion will explore how the identified themes and statistical relationships enhance our understanding of the research topic and suggest potential areas for future research.

Chapter 5 Discussions

Introduction

This chapter will cover the research outcomes, which will be analysed and interpreted in detail to ascertain the results and the significance of the findings. It will discuss the implications of the numerical and descriptive data collected, as well as general facts gathered through the research process. By analysing these theoretical dimensions, this study aims to achieve a better understanding of the fundamental factors underlying the study's results. The discussion will examine not only the theoretical basis but also its practical implications, providing adequate reasoning for the recommendations in the next chapter.

The five research questions were addressed using the collected data. This section discusses the results, including stories from three participants that highlight positive impacts arising from abusive leadership. Additionally, the synthesis of the study's findings with its theoretical and practical aspects aims to present a holistic picture of its multidimensional impacts on the body of knowledge within our domain and to provide a foundation for future studies, setting the groundwork for the next chapter.

5.1 Answers to Research Questions

Research Questions 1: What is the prevalence of perceived abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry?

The abusive supervision scale, developed by Tepper (2000), aims to measure subordinates' perceptions of non-physically abusive behaviour directed towards them by their supervisors. The construct is an example of a continuous engagement in hostile verbal and non-verbal supervisory actions, with no physical contact involved. Tepper's work on abusive supervision has been the most influential, and the scale, consisting of 15 items, asks respondents to rate the frequency of supervisors' involvement in each behaviour. This study asked participants to rate the prevalence of supervisory actions, drawing from Tepper's scale, using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 ("never uses this behaviour on me") to 5 ("uses this behaviour very often on me"). This scale provides a gradation of behaviour frequency and draws upon participants' views to map

out abusive supervisory conduct. The collective responses yielded an average score on the abusive supervision scale, informing us about its commonality and repercussions.

The average mean value of abusive supervision was 1.93, and the SD was 0.65, indicating that the prevalence of abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry is moderately low. The data presented suggest that, on average, the level of abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry, as measured by the survey scale, is relatively low, with a mean value of 1.93 on a scale presumably ranging from 1 (signifying no abusive supervision) to a higher value indicating more frequent abusive behaviours. The SD of 0.65 implies that there is some variation in responses but not extreme variability, which supports the interpretation that such supervision is not widespread in this context. This implies that, generally, employees do not frequently experience abusive supervision, pointing towards a moderately low prevalence in this sector. The SD indicates that while there is some variability in the experience of abusive supervision, it is not highly dispersed, suggesting that most employees' experiences are relatively similar. In comparison with previous studies from Tepper (2000) and Leung (2003), the mean average score on the same scale was 1.38 (SD = 0.53) and 2.06 (SD = 0.6), respectively. Both studies show relatively low variability in responses.

From an analytical perspective, the implications are as follows:

- When comparing the mean value of this study with previous research, it is evident that employees experience a low level of abusive supervision. The current study's mean value is slightly lower than that found in 2003, with respondents in Hong Kong engaged in different industries, which could indicate an improvement in supervisory behaviours over time or differences in the specific contexts or demographics of the employees surveyed. Additionally, regional cultural practices and the hospitality industry's emphasis on service quality may contribute to these relatively lower abusive supervision scores, as these factors likely discourage overtly abusive behaviours from supervisors.
- For hotel management, these results underscore the necessity of persistent efforts to maintain or further decrease the level of abusive supervision. Although the current level is moderately low, continuous vigilance and proactive

intervention are crucial for employee well-being and job satisfaction. Implementing strong organisational policies, fostering a positive organisational culture, and promoting supportive leadership practices could be crucial steps in mitigating the negative impacts of abusive supervision and improving overall job satisfaction and employee well-being.

In summary, the study used an established scale to measure the frequency of abusive behaviours from leaders as perceived by employees. The findings indicate that most employees do not frequently experience such behaviours.

Research Question 2: How does abusive supervision relate to employee satisfaction and trust?

Job Satisfaction

In evaluating employee job satisfaction, participants also reported their job satisfaction using a 20-item scale, drawing from the MSQ (Judge and Klinger, 2008), using a five-point Likert scale, which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The resulting mean score for job satisfaction furnishes us with an understanding of the employees' general contentment at work. The average mean value of job satisfaction was 3.5, and the SD was 0.54, indicating that job satisfaction in the Hong Kong hotel industry is moderate. The current study suggests a moderate level of job satisfaction among employees in the Hong Kong hotel industry, with a mean score of 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 5. This mean is higher than the score of 3.05 reported in a previous study conducted in 2003, which, along with a higher SD of 1.01, suggests greater variability in job satisfaction among the participants of the 2003 study. Tepper's score is significantly higher at 5.54; however, his scale range is from 1 to 7, which affects the direct comparison of means. Moreover, a high SD of 1.31 on Tepper's scale indicates considerable variation in job satisfaction among his study participants.

The average mean value in the current study indicates moderate job satisfaction. Leadership should explore ways to enhance satisfaction levels, which could lead to increased employee retention and performance. Moreover, the varying SDs suggest that feelings of job satisfaction differ more significantly among participants in other studies. The low SD in the current study could reflect positive differences in employment conditions, relationships with management, or expectations in the Hong Kong hotel industry.

Trust

In evaluating trust in supervisors, a binary question regarding confidence in direct supervisors was presented to respondents, offering a straightforward choice of "Yes" or "No." The presence of trust is an essential component in shaping employee cooperation, information exchange, and performance standards. Understanding the nuances of trust is indispensable for fostering effective leadership and maintaining a productive workplace environment. The binary response regarding trust in immediate supervisors reveals a critical aspect of the employee-supervisor dynamic; it serves as an indicator of the extent to which employees feel supported and valued by those in leadership positions. Trust is not merely a relational element but a substantive factor that influences the efficacy of organisational processes, from routine communications to strategic decision-making. Out of 120 respondents, 80%, or 96 respondents, indicated that they trust their supervisor, while 20%, or 24 respondents, answered negatively. A substantial majority of surveyed respondents indicated that trust signifies strong supervisor-employee relationships in general. Trust is a crucial factor, as indicated in earlier chapters, that affects several facets of organisational functioning, impacting cooperation, open communication, and possibly performance outcomes. Despite the high level of trust, the 20% who do not trust their supervisors represent a significant minority that could potentially negatively affect team dynamics and organisational effectiveness.

Data from the hierarchical regression model indicate that trust does not moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction. This means that even when respondents have high levels of trust, abusive supervision still negatively impacts their job satisfaction. The role of trust in moderating the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction requires further study. The binary question used to assess trust in the study presents limitations and potential biases, which will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

The summarised findings from the Hong Kong hotel industry indicate that abusive supervision is perceived to be relatively low (with a mean score of 1.93), though there is some variation in how employees experience their supervisors' behaviour (SD of 0.65). Employees report moderate levels of job satisfaction (with a mean score of 3.5), and responses are fairly consistent among them (SD of 0.54). A high level of trust in

supervisors is reported, with 80% of employees expressing confidence in their leaders, reflecting a strong leader-follower relationship within the industry. Findings from the regression model indicate that abusive supervision negatively impacts job satisfaction, and trust is also adversely affected.

Research Questions 3: How do employees feel when they experience abusive supervision?

In the literature, employee satisfaction and trust are frequently reported to be negatively associated with abusive supervision. This means that when employees experience abusive behaviour from their supervisors, their overall job satisfaction and trust in the organisation tend to decrease. For instance, Wang et al. (2020) found that abusive supervision undermines employees' work motivation and attitudes, leading to lower job satisfaction and engagement. Similarly, Rice, Taylor, and Forrester (2020) revealed that abusive supervision demoralises employees and increases their intentions to leave the organisation. Overall, there is a negative association between abusive supervision and employee satisfaction and trust. The qualitative data from this study reveal that employees experience abusive supervision with a range of both negative and positive perspectives. Employees' attitudes towards their supervisor's behaviour are influenced by several factors, including their perception of the event, individual personality traits, coping strategies, levels of trust, communication patterns, and workplace dynamics, as discussed in earlier sections. Attitudes towards abusive supervision largely depend on an individual's personal power, personality traits, and whether they have developed effective coping mechanisms. Personal power refers to the employee's sense of control and influence within the workplace, which can affect their resilience to abusive behaviour. Personality traits, such as optimism or assertiveness, also play a significant role in shaping their responses. Additionally, the ability to develop and utilise coping strategies can determine how well an employee manages and mitigates the negative effects of abusive supervision. This study discovers that five positive outcomes of these experiences vary significantly and will be explored in detail in research question 5.

This understanding highlights the complexity of employees' responses to abusive supervision, suggesting that their reactions are not uniform but rather shaped by a combination of personal and contextual factors. By examining these variables, the study aims to provide a comprehensive view of how abusive supervision impacts employees

differently, depending on their unique circumstances and the specific dynamics of their work environments.

Research Questions 4: What factors affect employees' acceptance or tolerance of abusive supervision?

The scale developed by Tepper aims to quantify the occurrence of abusive supervision. Nevertheless, Tepper acknowledges that in the field of workplace mistreatment research, various terms are employed to define distinct constructs, each with profound theoretical distinctions (Tepper and Henle, 2011). Although different scales are available for measuring mistreatment constructs, these constructs may fall short of accurately defining the unique attributes of such mistreatment (Tepper and Henle, 2011). Therefore, current assessment techniques may not fully encompass the complex and subtle aspects of mistreatment experiences in the workplace. In particular, quantitative data cannot measure ongoing abusive activities. This study employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the factors that contribute to or explain why employees accept or tolerate abusive supervision. Furthermore, this thesis attempts to examine a complex leadership phenomenon through a theoretical framework, exploring and revealing various hidden perspectives. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, the study aims to provide a more holistic understanding of the dynamics at play.

Qualitative findings from this study revealed a surprising trend: despite experiencing abusive supervision, the majority of participants (90% or 18 out of 20) chose to remain in their positions for a year or more, demonstrating a tolerance for such negative experiences. Only two individuals (10%) opted to leave after a relatively short period of three months. Notably, at the time of the study, one participant continued to navigate the challenges of an abusive leadership environment daily.

This study delves into the experiences of employees subjected to abusive supervision, examining their perceptions, reactions, and the factors contributing to their tolerance of such behaviour. The qualitative data, analysed through individual and organisational lenses, provide a nuanced understanding of this complex issue. On an individual level, the findings highlight the significance of coping mechanisms, job satisfaction, and co-worker support in mitigating the negative impacts of abusive supervision. A strong leader-member relationship built on trust can also lessen the perception of abusive acts.

Personal factors, such as personality, social identification, the nature of the leader-subordinate dynamic, and individual barriers, also play a crucial role. Five key themes emerged as influential factors in an individual's decision to endure abusive supervision: the specific behaviours perceived as abusive, the coping mechanisms individuals develop, the presence or absence of trust, the effectiveness of communication channels, and the overall workplace environment. These themes underscore the complexity of abusive supervision and the need for targeted interventions.

From an organisational perspective, the study reveals several societal barriers that trap employees in abusive environments, including financial dependence, limited job opportunities, fear of retaliation, and social and familial pressures. The qualitative data also examine the macro-environment that prevents employees from leaving the abusive relationship. Respondents reveal a lack of awareness or access to resources related to legal protections, corporate social responsibility, and social identification. This emphasises the need for organisations or legislation to address these gaps and provide better support systems for employees facing abusive supervision. There is a moderately low prevalence of abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry, with an average score of 1.93 on the abusive supervision scale. However, even at this level, continuous improvement in leadership practices is crucial to further reduce instances of abuse and foster a healthier work environment.

Research Questions 5: Are there any positive consequences resulting from abusive supervision?

Over the decades, scholarly debates have consistently demonstrated that abusive supervision is linked to negative consequences for the well-being of employees and organisations. Research findings emphasised substantial data highlighting the detrimental effects of abusive supervision on both individuals and organisations. Despite this body of evidence, Li, Tan, Zhou, and Huang (2022) present a unique perspective that suggests abusive supervision may, under certain circumstances, actually lead to an increase in job performance. Further studies investigate how managers intentionally mistreat their subordinates to improve the workgroup's performance (Farmanara, 2019). Additional research has indicated that abusive leadership can enhance team cohesion and unity, as well as increase resilience and adaptability (Zhang and Liu, 2018). In

contrast to the common belief that abusive supervision is detrimental, this study examined three stories that suggest abusive supervision may bring positive or constructive consequences.

Positive Consequences

Reflecting on the three interview respondents, despite encountering adversity in their professional journeys, they convincingly illustrated that even the most challenging experiences can serve as catalysts for invaluable personal and career development. Their stories highlight the potential for personal and professional growth following these experiences. The three interviewees demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability, transforming their negative experiences into catalysts for positive change. Their narratives resonate with existing research emphasising the potential for post-traumatic growth, where individuals develop enhanced coping mechanisms, increased self-awareness, a stronger sense of personal agency, resilience, and adaptability (Zhang and Liu, 2018). Moreover, the interviewees' experiences align with studies highlighting the link between challenging experiences and enhanced creativity (Zhang, Kwan, Zhang, and Wu, 2014). By navigating difficult situations, individuals may develop innovative problem-solving skills and a greater capacity for adaptability. Future research should delve deeper into the layers of abusive supervision, exploring the factors that contribute to both positive and negative outcomes and developing targeted interventions that mitigate harm while fostering resilience and growth.

Self-Reflection and Growth

The fighter stories are a compelling narrative of resilience and transformative leadership emerging from a negative experience with abusive supervision. Despite enduring mistreatment, the individual demonstrated a remarkable ability to reframe their experience, choosing growth over despair. This aligns with the concept of "post-traumatic growth," where individuals leverage adversity as a catalyst for positive personal development (Zhang and Liao, 2015).

Furthermore, their commitment to fostering a contrasting leadership style, characterised by trust, empowerment, and open communication reflects a conscious effort to break the cycle of abusive behaviour. This resonates with research emphasising the

importance of positive role models and ethical leadership in shaping organisational culture (Knight, 2024). By actively promoting respectful behaviours and dismantling systems that enable mistreatment, such as unnecessary bureaucracy, this individual embodies a proactive approach to cultivating a healthier and more supportive work environment. Their actions demonstrate that personal experiences with adversity can inspire positive change, transforming toxic workplaces into spaces that prioritise employee well-being and growth.

Resilience and Adaptability

The experiences shared by these individuals offer compelling evidence of the human capacity for resilience and adaptation in the face of adversity, particularly within the context of abusive supervision. The interviewees' ability to not only cope but also cultivate a positive post-employment relationship with their former supervisor speaks volumes about their resilience and adaptability. This aligns with research highlighting the role of personal resources, such as optimism and self-efficacy, in mitigating the negative impacts of workplace stressors (Mahwash, Hameed, and Ahmed, 2023).

Expanding on this, the ability to maintain a positive relationship post-employment, despite previous negative experiences, underscores the importance of personal resilience. It demonstrates how individuals can leverage their internal strengths to overcome challenging situations and even transform them into opportunities for growth. This phenomenon is supported by studies that emphasise the significance of personal resources like optimism and self-efficacy. These traits enable individuals to view stressful situations more positively and manage them more effectively, thereby reducing the adverse effects of workplace stressors. The research by Mahwash, Hameed, and Ahmed (2023) provides a robust framework for understanding how these personal resources function as protective factors, helping individuals navigate and thrive despite difficult circumstances.

Creativity and Resourcefulness

Furthermore, the resourcefulness exhibited by respondents in navigating the unstructured and often hostile environment of a Chinese kitchen, particularly the reliance on creative strategies to gain recognition and learning opportunities,

underscores the importance of individual agency in challenging power dynamics (Feng and Liu, 2010). Their experiences echo findings that suggest individuals may adopt various behavioural responses, including proactive strategies, to cope with abusive supervision (Mahwash, Hameed, and Ahmed, 2023).

The ability of individuals to manoeuvre through such a demanding environment highlights their ingenuity and determination. In the context of a Chinese kitchen, where hierarchical and often rigid structures prevail, the respondents' use of innovative approaches to gain visibility and access to learning opportunities is particularly noteworthy. This behaviour illustrates how personal agency can play a crucial role in overcoming systemic challenges and power imbalances. The proactive strategies employed by these individuals are consistent with research indicating that people often develop adaptive behaviours to manage and mitigate the effects of abusive supervision. According to Mahwash, Hameed, and Ahmed (2023), such strategies can include seeking social support, enhancing personal skills, and finding ways to reframe negative experiences positively. These findings collectively emphasise the dynamic interplay between individual agency and environmental constraints, showcasing how personal resourcefulness can lead to significant personal and professional growth even in adverse conditions.

Flexibility and Empathy in Policy

A respondent, R6, expressed the importance of strong policy enforcement, accompanied by a deeper understanding of different workplace obstacles. Although not explicitly quoted, an overarching theme from the collective interviews suggested that the presence of organisational policy might mitigate instances of abusive supervision. For example, in kitchen environments where there were no formal rules, the introduction of training programs could offer significant benefits. Both R6 and R8 experienced the pressure of working extended hours to satisfy their superiors, a situation that could potentially be alleviated by sound human resource policies. With a solid background in Human Resources, R6 advocated for the adoption of healthy policies and empowerment strategies to foster supportive workplace dynamics.

The enforcement of workplace policies is crucial for creating a safe and productive environment. Effective policies help establish clear expectations for employee behaviour and provide a framework for decision-making, which can prevent chaos and confusion. In environments like kitchens, where informal practices often prevail, formal rules and training programs can significantly improve working conditions. Research indicates that well-enforced policies can reduce inappropriate behaviour and ensure fair treatment for all employees. Additionally, R6's emphasis on empowerment strategies aligns with findings that supportive workplace policies can enhance employee well-being and job satisfaction. By advocating for these measures, R6 highlights the potential for organisational policies to transform challenging work environments into more supportive and equitable spaces.

Overcoming Barriers to Success

The three respondents, who are now highly successful practitioners within the hotel industry, each overcame significant challenges to achieve their current status. R6 dealt with a disrespectful manager, an experience that led to a dedicated commitment to treating others with respect and the implementation of policies aimed at enhancing workplace dynamics. R8, a Chinese chef, understood that the kitchen environment was characterised by hierarchical and one-way communication, and he actively sought ways to distinguish himself and acquire knowledge despite facing abusive issues.

Yet, they managed to find a pathway to solidify their knowledge despite the odds and further advanced. R9 confronted situations that compromised his dignity but ultimately managed to share laughter with an abusive superior.

The experiences of these individuals illustrated that approaching challenges with an open mind and resilience can pave the way for significant personal and professional growth. They showed that even when faced with formidable barriers – whether it be disrespect from authority figures, restrictive communication hierarchies, or compromising one's dignity – there lies the potential to transform such adversities into stepping stones for success.

Reflecting on the narrative accounts provided by the three participants, this study concludes that, while infrequent, there are positive consequences of abusive supervision.

Commonly, employees engage in self-reflection and growth, thereby building resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity. These situations can promote creativity and resourcefulness, leading to advocacy for policies that uphold flexibility and empathy. Such responses help navigate and ultimately overcome barriers to success. The personal stories of these respondents uncover that through perseverance and a proactive stance towards learning and adaptation, individuals can transcend their challenges. This process not only furthers their professional achievements but also contributes to the deepening of their character. Despite enduring mistreatment, the respondents demonstrated strong inner endurance and self-awareness. They not only recognised the negative impact of their superiors' behaviour but also transformed these experiences into opportunities for growth, pledging to support rather than hinder the progression of others – a commitment born from the hardships they once faced. They place importance on effective communication and empowering people, acknowledging the significance of trust.

In summary, this study uncovers that overcoming professional adversities, such as abusive supervision, can lead to significant personal and career growth, emphasising the importance of resilience, supportive organisational policies, and adaptive leadership styles.

5.3 Discussion on Qualitative Insights

Abusive Supervision Act

These behaviours include having loud and angry outbursts, humiliating or ridiculing someone in front of others, belittling someone's status, withholding necessary information, and giving someone the silent treatment (Aryee et al., 2007; Tepper, 2000). During the interviews, respondents explicitly identified supervisory actions that were toxic but not captured in the existing scales. These included verbal conduct such as unreasonable demands; for instance, waking an employee at 3 a.m. to retrieve a work file and asking for excessive details in daily interactions (reported by R7 and R15). Non-verbal cues included unfriendly facial expressions, such as opening their eyes wide, rapid blinking, or rolling their eyes (reported by R7), which communicated dissatisfaction without words.

Other behaviours reported included the bombardment of emails (reported by R14). Abuse through relentless threads of emails from their leaders, which lacked constructive direction or innovative ideas, created a suffocating and stressful work environment. The volume of emails, combined with their lack of substance, left employees feeling unsupported. This form of abuse not only hindered their productivity but also contributed to a pervasive sense of anxiety and frustration.

Other subtle yet still damaging strategies of abuse included sitting on approvals (R6), delays in email responses (R14), withholding information, or avoidance of interaction. This behaviour could take the form of neglecting an employee in the workplace (R13) or not responding to calls or messages, causing considerable frustration (R18).

Respondents reflected that micromanagement and the failure to provide clear guidance, or creative solutions were also considered toxic leadership behaviours. Leaders who engaged in these practices exacerbated the stress levels of their teams, ultimately fostering a toxic atmosphere that stifled both individual and collective growth.

These various forms of mistreatment illustrate how abusive supervision can penetrate multiple facets of the workplace, affecting the reasons why some employees might find themselves enduring such circumstances. By understanding the pervasive nature of these abusive actions, organisations can implement more effective policies and training programs to address and prevent such behaviours. This proactive approach not only enhances employee well-being but also promotes a culture of respect and support, ultimately leading to a more productive and positive workplace.

Coping Strategies

Nandkeoylar and colleagues (2014) examined the use of avoidance coping strategies and concluded that employees who used avoidance coping strategies exacerbated the negative effects of abusive supervision. Avoidance coping strategies refer to behaviours and mental processes in which individuals try to avoid dealing with stressors directly. This can include ignoring the problem, withdrawing from the situation, or engaging in distractions to escape the stress. It was found that employees perceived abusive behaviour from their bosses as being motivated by either positive or negative reasons, which affected their response to the behaviour. Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, and Carr (2007)

asserted that some people who experienced abusive supervision could manage the situation better.

In response to abusive acts, employees developed various coping mechanisms. These included seeking support from colleagues, engaging in stress-relief activities, job crafting, and, in some cases, considering job changes. The effectiveness of these strategies varied, with social support playing a crucial role in mitigating the negative effects of abuse. Essentially, by not confronting the issue, the negative impact of the abusive supervision became more pronounced (Nandkeovlar et al., 2014).

From the narratives, these coping mechanisms included seeking support from colleagues (R13), rationalising the supervisor's behaviour (R19), or engaging in self-care practices (R18). Employees tolerated abusive supervision by using coping strategies that allowed them to regulate their responses to the mistreatment (R19). If these mechanisms were not effective, the inclination to resign or actual resignation to end the employment relationship became pronounced (R20). The research shed light on how employees managed to endure the negative environment, highlighting the importance of adaptability and proactive measures in maintaining mental well-being and productivity.

Trust

Trust was established through two theories: leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and social exchange theory (SET). Trust issues often impair the impact of abusive supervision, making it harder for employees to feel secure and supported in their roles. When trust is compromised, employees are less likely to seek help or report abusive behaviours, further entrenching the toxic environment. This lack of trust also diminished employees' morale and job satisfaction, leading to higher stress levels and decreased productivity. Understanding the critical role of trust in the workplace is essential for addressing and mitigating the effects of abusive supervision, as it directly influences employees' overall well-being and their willingness to remain in their positions.

The LMX theory examines the leader-member relationship quality, with trust being crucial for how employees respond to abusive behaviour (Bauer and Erdogan, 2015, p.3). High-quality LMX relationships are based on trust, impacting performance. Abusive supervision damages trust both emotionally and rationally, diminishing the effectiveness

of the relationship (Xiaqi et al., 2012). Studies from Zong, Guo, Wang, and Duan (2023) showed that the level of trust employees had in their supervisors was a key factor in determining their reactions to abusive conduct (Zong et al., 2023).

During the interviews, respondents expressed a continued sense of trust towards their supervisors despite having encountered instances of abusive supervision. This indicated a complex dynamic where employees could separate specific negative incidents from their overall perception of the supervisory relationship. Stronger LMX relationships involve respect, trust, and mutual obligations between leaders and followers (Thompson, Buch, and Glasø, 2018). Conversely, low-quality LMX relationships were transactional, with superficial connections focused on work duties and compensation (Thompson, Buch, and Glasø, 2018). Respondents reported bypassing their manager (R13), looking for alternatives (R10), and hiding their feelings in communication (R12).

In the interviews, participants mentioned space as an indicative factor of trust (R15), highlighting their preference for independence and autonomy in their work environment (R6). They viewed the provision of space as a sign of trust and also as a means to counteract abusive supervision. The concept of space as a form of trust has seldom been examined in current literature, prompting a need for further investigation.

Interviewees indicated that the concept of trust, considered a reciprocal and advantageous exchange, fell within the framework of SET. Within the scope of SET, trust was viewed as the anticipation that one's counterpart in interaction would behave honestly and fairly without exploiting the other individual (Coyle-Shapiro and Diehl, 2018). This expectation of fair treatment and non-exploitation fostered trust between partners. Research on SET has, over time, emphasised the fundamental importance of trust in maintaining relationships. One of the respondents provided an example of honouring a reciprocal exchange of trust and respect (R6). Furthermore, a respondent mentioned trust maintained through continued interaction (R9). A respondent indicated a desire for a reciprocal and respectful exchange (R10). This reflects an open and transparent exchange fostering trust (R15) and compares it to a breakdown in the trust exchange due to a lack of open communication and respect (R18).

In summary, trust, as explained in both LMX and SET, significantly affects employee responses to abusive supervision. A high level of trust can mitigate the negative impacts of such supervision, while a lack of trust can worsen both the relationship and perception of leadership. Understanding these factors is crucial for organisations aiming to develop effective strategies for managing and reducing the occurrence of abusive supervision. By fostering a culture of trust and support, organisations could better protect their employees, enhance job satisfaction, and promote a healthier, more productive work environment. This comprehensive approach not only addresses the immediate issues but also contributes to long-term organisational success and employee well-being.

Communications

Effective communication was identified as a key factor in fostering trust and positive workplace dynamics. Open and transparent communication channels helped resolve conflicts, clarify expectations, and enhance collaboration among team members. Conversely, poor communication often contributed to misunderstandings and conflicts, which could escalate into abusive supervision. Miscommunication could cause frustration and resentment among employees, creating a breeding ground for toxic behaviours. On the other hand, open and effective communication was seen as a potential mitigating factor. When supervisors communicated clearly and transparently, it helped build trust and understanding, reducing the likelihood of conflicts and abusive behaviours. Effective communication also provided employees with a sense of security and support, making them feel valued and heard. This theme highlighted the importance of fostering a communicative environment where issues could be addressed constructively, ultimately contributing to a healthier and more respectful workplace culture. By prioritising clear and open communication, organisations can mitigate the risks of abusive supervision and promote a more positive and collaborative work environment.

Communication dynamics within an organisation significantly influence employees' tolerance of abusive behaviour. If an organisation established transparent communication structures, employees were more likely to feel empowered to address their concerns and await a resolution. This could be seen in the statement of respondents (R2), which implied that open channels of communication could buffer the

negative impact of misunderstandings. Maintaining transparent and empowering communication was foundational for trust and progression, as highlighted by (R6). On the other hand, a deficiency in communication might have caused employees to feel isolated and without options, potentially resulting in a resigned acceptance of abusive supervision. Furthermore, the level of trust in organisational procedures could impact perceptions of communication effectiveness. For instance, R6 expressed that requiring approval from the corporate office to promote a server was not only inefficient but also indicative of a low level of trust within the organisation. This explicated bureaucracy and poor communication signalled a lack of trust and could affect employee morale.

Supportive interactions with colleagues also emerged as an essential aspect of the communication landscape that could mitigate the effects of an abusive environment, as noted by the remark (R17). This social support system among co-workers could serve as both an alternative communication channel and a coping mechanism.

Work-life balance and personal obligations also influenced how communication was perceived and managed (R19). This indicates that employees value clear communication regarding flexible arrangements that support their personal lives.

In conclusion, the dynamics of communication within an organisation play a pivotal role in shaping employees' experiences and responses to abusive behaviour. Transparent and empowering communication fosters trust, mitigates misunderstandings, and enhances overall morale. Conversely, poor communication can lead to feelings of isolation and resignation. By prioritising clear communication and supportive interactions, organisations can create a healthier and more productive work environment, ultimately benefiting both employees and the organisation as a whole. Understanding and addressing these factors are crucial for fostering a culture of trust and support, which is essential for long-term success and employee well-being.

Workplace Dynamics

The positive workplace dynamics were characterised by supportive relationships, teamwork, and a sense of belonging. These dynamics were crucial in promoting job satisfaction and reducing the impact of negative experiences, such as abusive acts. The theme explored workplace dynamics, including power relations and organisational

culture, which played a significant role in either perpetuating or alleviating the conditions that allowed abusive supervision to persist. The dynamics within a workplace, such as its culture (Kernan et al., 2011) and social support structures (Shoss et al., 2013), are key factors that can either mitigate or intensify the effects of abusive supervision. An affirmative team environment and the presence of supportive colleagues can serve as a protective buffer against the adverse outcomes of such behaviour. Traditional practices, while sometimes beneficial, can also lead to a culture of seeking approval from authority figures (R9). Changing traditional structures could lead to improved workplace dynamics and efficiency, as evidenced by a respondent (R1). When employees faced unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles (R6), it underscored the need for streamlined processes that respected employees' time and reduced their frustration.

Social support from peers was crucial for coping with abusive supervision (R20). Support networks within the workplace encouraged and could influence decisions such as leaving for a more respectful environment. Workplace culture also shapes employee experiences. An individualised, human approach (R2) was essential for a healthy work environment. Attempts to create goodwill, even in challenging situations, were exemplified by (R4).

Intention to leave and end toxic relationships was true when individuals found themselves in situations where their talents were overlooked. Respondents stated that sustained hostility in the workplace motivated their belief that a change in environment was essential for their growth (R12) when a supportive environment was lacking (R10). Some individuals found the strength to navigate unsupportive environments through collaboration with other department heads or by taking matters into their own hands (R13). Recognition by superiors could play a crucial role in job satisfaction and reduce the intention to leave, with one employee recounting a bittersweet experience (R11).

In essence, workplace dynamics and how supervisors communicated with and treated their employees were integral to reducing instances of abusive supervision. Providing supportive, transparent, and fair environments was not just beneficial for employees but crucial for maintaining a productive and healthy work culture.

Positive Outcomes

Li et al. (2022) found that abusive supervision can paradoxically lead to improved job performance. Their study highlights that factors such as employees' resilience and the presence of supportive organisational structures can mitigate the negative impacts of abusive supervision, sometimes resulting in enhanced performance. This nuanced understanding underscores the complexity of leadership dynamics and the importance of context in evaluating supervisory behaviours.

Huh and Lee (2021) explored whether abusive supervision can lead to positive work engagement, and their research suggests that under specific circumstances – such as when employees possess high resilience and strong coping mechanisms – abusive supervision might paradoxically foster greater work engagement. This finding highlights the complex interplay between supervisory behaviour and employee responses, emphasising the need for a nuanced approach to leadership and management practices.

This study, based on three narrative stories, concluded that navigating professional challenges, under certain circumstances, can foster personal and professional development. These findings underscore the importance of individual resilience, robust organisational policies that protect employees, and leadership approaches that prioritise support and respect.

In conclusion, understanding and addressing workplace dynamics is essential for mitigating the effects of abusive supervision. By fostering supportive relationships, teamwork, and a sense of belonging, organisations can enhance job satisfaction and reduce the impact of negative experiences. Transparent communication, social support structures, and a culture that values employees' time and contributions are crucial for creating a healthy work environment. These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employees' tolerance of abusive supervision, offering valuable guidance for developing effective leadership practices and promoting a positive organisational culture.

5.4 Exploration of Practical Implications

The quantitative findings indicate that the mean score for abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry is 1.93 (SD = 0.65), and the job satisfaction score is 3.5 (SD =

0.54). This study recorded the scores and, by documenting the frequency of abusive supervision and job satisfaction within the Hong Kong hotel industry, established a benchmark for future research and industry studies. These results suggest a need for sustainable efforts to address and reduce abusive supervision in this sector.

The implications of the results are multifaceted. Firstly, the moderate job satisfaction scores indicate a need for programs aimed at increasing job satisfaction. Such programs could include initiatives to improve workplace culture, enhance employee engagement, and provide professional development opportunities. By focusing on these areas, organisations can create a more positive work environment that supports employee well-being and satisfaction.

Secondly, while staff do experience abusive acts, these incidents are not always captured on an ongoing basis, suggesting the need for better monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Implementing anonymous reporting systems and regular employee surveys can help organisations identify and address issues of abusive supervision more effectively. This proactive approach can ensure that abusive behaviours are promptly addressed, preventing long-term negative impacts on employees.

Coping mechanisms and workplace dynamics, particularly peer support, play a crucial role in how employees deal with abusive supervision. Organisations should foster a supportive environment where employees feel safe sharing their experiences and seeking help. This can be achieved through team-building activities, peer mentoring programs, and the creation of open channels of communication. Additionally, providing training on resilience and stress management can equip employees with the tools they need to cope with challenging situations.

The societal and organisational context is vital in shaping these dynamics. Cultural norms and organisational policies can either mitigate or exacerbate the effects of abusive supervision. For example, in cultures where hierarchical structures are rigid, abusive supervision may be more prevalent. Conversely, in cultures that value egalitarianism and open communication, such behaviours may be less tolerated. Organisations should be mindful of these cultural factors and strive to create policies that promote respect and fairness.

Education and awareness of abusive supervision are essential, especially for managers. Training programs that focus on recognising and addressing abusive behaviours can help create a more respectful and supportive workplace. Managers should be equipped with the skills to foster positive leadership practices and intervene effectively when issues arise. This includes understanding the signs of abusive supervision and implementing strategies to prevent such behaviours.

In conclusion, addressing abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving job satisfaction, enhancing coping mechanisms, fostering supportive workplace dynamics, and increasing education and awareness among managers. These steps are crucial for mitigating the negative impacts of abusive supervision and promoting a healthier, more productive work environment. By taking these actions, organisations can ensure that their employees feel valued and supported, leading to better overall performance and job satisfaction.

5.3 Other Implications

This study centres on examining the phenomenon of abusive supervision alongside the factors of job satisfaction and trust in immediate supervisors. The results indicate that abusive supervision is negatively related to job satisfaction, consistent with the majority of existing literature. This negative relationship underscores the detrimental impact of abusive supervisory behaviours on employee morale and overall job satisfaction. The role of trust as a moderator in this relationship requires further investigation. Previous studies, such as those by Schyns and Schilling (2013) and Saiman (2021), have suggested potential moderating effects, but the evidence remains inconclusive. Schyns and Schilling (2013) conducted a meta-analysis on destructive leadership, including abusive supervision, and found significant negative correlations with positive follower outcomes such as job satisfaction and well-being. They emphasised the pervasive negative impacts of destructive leadership behaviours. In contrast, Saiman (2021) explored the moderating role of trust in the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction. While this study, in conjunction with Saiman's research, suggests a potential mitigating effect of trust in buffering against the negative impacts of abusive supervision, further research and data analysis are necessary to confirm this relationship.

This research suggests that there is always good and bad, and what matters is how people perceive them differently. These subjective views are difficult to measure and vary among individuals, but they all depend on the perceptions of the individuals or the organisation to improve the phenomenon. While these views are not uniform, multiple factors drive different perspectives, such as experiences, cultural norms, and inter-organisational environments. The ongoing discussion highlights the multifaceted nature of leadership, emphasising that understanding leadership requires considering a broad spectrum of opinions and theories. The complexity of leadership is underscored by the fact that it encompasses both positive and negative aspects, which are interpreted differently by various people. Measuring these subjective views is challenging because they are influenced by personal and organisational perceptions, which can vary widely.

Eventually, the research focuses on certain factors that can help reduce and enhance leadership perceptions. A positive organisational culture or a supportive peer network can reduce the impact of abusive supervision, protecting employees from certain negative outcomes. Similarly, when employees have a positive perception of their leader or influence, it leads to increased job satisfaction and trust in the workplace. The research identifies key elements that can mitigate negative leadership perceptions and enhance positive ones. For example, fostering a positive organisational culture or having a supportive peer network can lessen the adverse effects of abusive supervision, thereby safeguarding employees from negative consequences. Additionally, when employees view their leaders positively, it can result in higher job satisfaction and greater trust within the workplace. These factors are crucial in shaping how leadership is perceived and can significantly impact organisational outcomes.

Conclusion

This study employed a mixed methodology by analysing both numerical and descriptive data to investigate the five research inquiries. The quantitative data gave a numeric basis for comprehending the extent of abusive supervision, while the qualitative data provided insight into the more intangible elements of the phenomenon. This qualitative investigation explored the factors that impact employees' acceptance of abusive behaviour from their supervisors.

The five research questions have been addressed using the collected data. This section discusses results from the stories of three participants that show a positive impact coming from abusive leadership. The individual anecdotes show how certain workers not only survived abusive workplace environments but also used them as motivators for their personal and career growth. These results remind us that, although abusive supervision is toxic, there may also be surprising benefits such as self-reflection and growth, strengthening resilience and adaptability, promoting creativity and resourcefulness, encouraging the adoption of more empathetic and flexible workplace rules, and the victory of overcoming barriers to success.

Chapter 6 Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter will summarise the key findings and discussions from the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the thesis. It will present the main contribution of this thesis, highlighting core themes and patterns. The chapter then addresses the study's limitations, acknowledging potential biases and their influence on interpretations. A discussion of limitations and potential biases, including various aspects, ensures transparency and a balanced perspective on this study. Based on the findings and limitations, the chapter offers recommendations for future research. Finally, it provides specific recommendations for practitioners in the Hong Kong hotel industry and the industry as a whole, proposing practical strategies based on the study's insights. These recommendations aim to offer actionable insights for industry stakeholders, contributing to both theoretical and practical understanding.

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This research has conducted an extensive exploration of the complex issue of abusive supervision and its impacts on employees. Presented in Table 6.1 is a summary of the study's findings for a clearer understanding. A deeper insight into the matter has been attained through the careful analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

To recap, the purpose of this research is to examine abusive supervisory practices within Hong Kong's hotel industry, focusing specifically on hotel employees as the unit of analysis. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of workplace dynamics in the hospitality sector. By investigating the prevalence and impact of abusive supervision, the research seeks to provide insights that can inform practical interventions. If abusive supervision is not prevalent in Hong Kong, with a score of 1.93, its influence on performance and satisfaction may not be readily apparent. As a result, traditional correlation research may not produce compelling findings. Therefore, the qualitative phase becomes crucial for undertaking interviews to delve into employees' personal experiences with abusive supervision. Furthermore, this research investigates the multifaceted factors that contribute to the phenomenon of employees enduring abusive supervision, examining both individual and organisational elements that influence such

tolerance. Study findings are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the factors that affect job satisfaction and employee retention in an industry characterised by high turnover.

In the high turnover and demanding environment of the Hong Kong hotel industry, this research explores the critical issue of abusive supervision. Recognising that positive working relationships, particularly with supervisors, are fundamental to job satisfaction, the study seeks to understand how hotel employees perceive and experience abusive supervision. Given the well-documented negative consequences of abusive supervision, including increased employee turnover, diminished service quality, and substantial financial losses for businesses, this research aims to provide valuable insights for both industry practitioners and academic researchers. By amplifying the voices of hotel employees and analysing their experiences, the study endeavours to identify practical solutions and strategies to mitigate abusive supervision, ultimately fostering a healthier and more supportive work environment within the Hong Kong hotel sector.

The study uncovered several key findings regarding the dynamics of abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry. Firstly, the abusive supervision score was found to be 1.93, indicating a relatively low level of abusive supervision. However, even these low levels were found to have a negative impact on job satisfaction and trust, suggesting that abusive supervision can erode trust and reduce job satisfaction, even when it is not pervasive. Employees were found to tolerate abusive supervision due to a combination of personal and organisational factors. Quantitatively, the study further strengthened the prevailing academic agreement that abusive supervision has a negative association with job satisfaction and trust among employees. This information, obtained from a more extensive study, measured the connection, showing a direct correlation between an employee feeling mistreated by their bosses and a decline in their job satisfaction and trust in management.

On the qualitative side, a close examination uncovered various themes that impact a person's ability to withstand or push back against abusive behaviour from managers. On a personal level, coping strategies, trusting relationships with supervisors, personality traits, and social identification played significant roles in shaping employees' perceptions

of abusive supervision. Organisational factors such as culture, financial aspects, job market conditions, and organisational norms and values also influence these perceptions. Stories shared by participants shed light on various important elements, such as the type of abusive behaviour, how employees handle the situation, the effectiveness of communication methods, workplace dynamics, and the trusting relationship between employees and their managers. These factors emerged as shared themes in the narratives of individuals who went through critical incidents with their supervisors.

Based on the barriers model, multiple layers of obstacles were identified that hinder the termination of abusive relationships, encompassing a variety of challenges faced by employees. These obstacles can range from fear of retaliation, lack of support systems, and organisational culture to personal factors such as low self-esteem and financial dependency. The research highlighted that overcoming these barriers is not only crucial for ending abusive supervision but also brings about several positive outcomes for the affected individuals. The research highlighted some positive outcomes of overcoming abusive supervision, such as personal growth, increased resilience, enhanced creativity, greater empathy in organisational policy, and the ability to overcome barriers to success. These findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing abusive supervision and its impact on employees.

A particularly compelling aspect of the study's findings is the favourable results from instances of abusive leadership, as recounted by three participants. These stories contest the widely held negative view of abusive supervision, revealing a positive outcome where individuals were able to derive advantages from the toxic relationships. These positive outcomes are exhibited in several forms, including self-reflection and positive growth, resilience and adaptability, creativity and resourcefulness, flexibility and empathy in organisational policy, and overcoming barriers to success. Overall, these findings illustrated that while abusive supervision proved detrimental to employee well-being and corporate culture, it inadvertently fostered professional development and personal empowerment for some individuals. The participants who shared their experiences demonstrated an ability to reframe challenges as opportunities for growth. They transformed the pressure stemming from abusive behaviour into a catalyst for

accessing their inner and outer resources, thereby constructively guiding their professional and personal development.

The qualitative findings provided a broader perspective by reporting the subjective experiences of individuals within toxic work environments. This dimension of the study exposed a spectrum of reactions and adaptations that were less apparent in quantitative models. Resilience emerged as a recurrent theme. Individuals recounted adopting various coping mechanisms, from seeking social support within their networks to deploying advanced problem-solving skills in their professional roles. Their stories often reflected an iterative process of understanding their value, recognising the sources of abusive behaviour, and subsequently developing strategies to safeguard their well-being. Some found creative solutions to overcome negative supervisory influences, while others became change agents within their organisations, advocating for policy reform.

The study further found that such adverse situations occasionally prompted deeper self-reflection, leading to heightened awareness of strengths and potential. This introspection fuelled the capacity not only to withstand oppressive circumstances but also to thrive despite them, underscoring the importance of personal agency in counteracting toxicity. Additionally, the narratives revealed that overcoming the direct challenges posed by abusive superiors could motivate professional advancement. For some, this meant pursuing new opportunities that might have otherwise remained unexplored. Facing difficult challenges cultivated the determination, creativity, and drive necessary for success in demanding professional environments.

The practical applications of the findings are numerous and can significantly impact the workplace environment. Fostering positive relationships among employees is crucial for creating a supportive work environment. Implementing ongoing leadership development programs can help cultivate effective leadership practices and reduce instances of abusive supervision. Developing effective trust programs for leaders and subordinates, which encourage both formal and informal interactions, can enhance trust and job satisfaction. Human resources practitioners should design and educate employees on organisational programs and policies that promote a healthy workplace environment.

These initiatives can help mitigate the negative impacts of abusive supervision and foster a more positive and productive work culture in Hong Kong's hotel industry. By applying these insights, organisations can create a more supportive and resilient workforce.

In closing, abusive supervision is widely recognised as undesirable in the workplace and does not contribute to a healthy work environment. It is undeniable and important to acknowledge that its presence can, on occasion, act as an unintended catalyst for positive individual outcomes. This study's findings support revisiting workplace policies that prevent abuse while also providing support systems for employees to report incidents and cope. Preventive measures against abusive supervision and fostering an environment that encourages resilience can lead to a healthier, more respectful, and ultimately more successful organisation.

Table 6.1 Summary of Findings

Section	Content description	Presentation details
Introduction	Purpose of study and problem statement	• Purpose: Examine abusive supervisory practices in Hong Kong's hotel industry, using hotel employees as the unit of analysis. • Problem statement: The quality of supervisor-employee relationships impacts job satisfaction, turnover, service quality, and sustainable development. • Context: High turnover rates in Hong Kong hotels and significant costs are associated with abusive supervision. • Aim: Analyse employee perceptions and provide solutions to improve the issues.
Summary of key findings	Key results and insights from findings	• The abusive supervision score is 1.93, indicating low abusive supervision in the Hong Kong hotel industry. • Job satisfaction and trust: A negative relationship exists between job satisfaction and trust. • Tolerance of abusive supervision: Employees tolerate abusive supervision due to personal and organisational factors. • Personal context: Coping strategies, trusting relationships with supervisors, personality, and social identification have an impact on perception. • Organisational context: Culture, financial aspects, job market conditions, organisational norms, and values impact perception. • Barriers to ending abusive relationships: Employees face obstacles under the barriers model. • Positive outcomes of abusive supervision: Overcoming abusive supervision leads to personal growth, resilience, creativity, empathy in organisational policy, and the ability to overcome barriers to success.
Insights	Practical applications of your findings.	• Positive employee relationships: Foster positive relationships among employees. • Leadership programs: Implement ongoing leadership development programs. • Trust programs: Develop effective trust programs for leaders and subordinates, encouraging both formal and informal interactions. • Human resources initiatives: Human resources practitioners should design and educate others about organisational programs and policies to promote a healthy workplace environment.

6.2 Limitations of Study

The present study aims to examine the complex phenomenon of abusive supervision, taking a thorough approach to its objectives and methodology. However, it is crucial to identify the constraints within the context of the research. The research limitations refer to the practical or theoretical flaws in a study that are frequently beyond the researcher's influence. Although these shortcomings restrict the applicability of the study's findings, they also provide a basis for further research (Smith, 2020). Addressing these limitations will refine the understanding of the subject and ensure that future research generates more comprehensive and relevant findings.

In researching a complex leadership phenomenon such as abusive supervision, resources play a critical role in determining the scope and depth of the investigation. When researchers are limited by resources, this often translates into constraints on the amount of data that can be accessed and the time available for the research process. In conducting this study, the investigator used open-access data sourced from academic resources such as Google Scholar and library platforms provided by the Hong Kong Management Association, including EBSCO and ProQuest. Within the context of abusive supervision, a significant amount of literature exists, with 273 articles being published between 2000 and 2022, and leading journals having published over 140 articles on abusive supervision in just the past five years (Bhattacharjee and Sarkar, 2024). Unfortunately, the researcher encountered limitations in accessing all of this literature. The lack of access to comprehensive and diverse databases may lead to a narrower perspective due to limitations in information accessibility. As a result, having limited access to various scholarly works may lead to narrow conclusions, which could impact the overall depth and applicability of the study's results.

Time is a significant challenge in this research. This limitation impacts various aspects of the research process and the validity of the findings. Given sufficient time, this study would have the opportunity to explore the topic in depth, perform a detailed study to track the complexity of abusive supervision, and potentially collect a more comprehensive dataset. Qualitative research is time-consuming and resource-intensive, limiting scalability and feasibility in applying findings across diverse contexts.

Nevertheless, due to time constraints, the researcher had to prioritise tasks, leading to a need to streamline efforts and potentially overlook certain aspects that would enhance the study. In addition, the availability of participants over time was a constraint, as the researcher experienced participants dropping out after the quantitative research stage. After phase one of the research, participants who had initially agreed to continue into the second phase withdrew their consent, forcing the recruitment of additional participants who had not been involved in the initial phase. Participants could have lost interest or experienced changes in personal circumstances due to time. The time aspects, as limitations, should also be considered in future studies.

Furthermore, the research faces challenges regarding sample sizes. A relatively small sample size limits its statistical strength and the reliability of research findings. In this study, the researcher experienced a challenge in getting an adequate sample. In stage one of the study, the process of obtaining enough sample size was delayed and extended. The sample size of 120 was validated by Lani (2009). Yet, the representation of a small sample size can result in potentially generalising or minimising the importance of the noted findings (Smith, 2020). This sample size may not adequately represent the diverse employee base that hotels in Hong Kong employ, which includes a wide range of demographics, nationalities, and job roles. Due to this, such a sample may have limitations in generalising its findings to the broader population of hotel employees in the region, increasing the chance of Type II errors, where true effects remain undetected. This research was designed to use snowball sampling techniques in collecting data. Upon analysing the data, it was noted that the respondents were relatively older, with over 50% being over 40 years of age in the quantitative phase and 17 out of 20 being over 40 years of age in the qualitative phase. A possible lack of diversity in the sample affected the applicability of the results and the representation of the study within the Hong Kong hotel industry.

Language and translation posed significant challenges and limitations to this study. The use of different languages introduced potential biases, as the nuances and cultural contexts of the original language might not have been fully captured in translation. Terms such as "silence treatment" carried varied perceptions in general contexts. All interviews were conducted in Cantonese and later translated. Even though Google

Translate was employed and the interview transcripts were checked by participants, anticipated constraints led to an inadequate understanding of the genuine nature of abusive supervision. Despite efforts to ensure accuracy through professional translation and validation by native speakers, some meanings may have been lost or altered. In addition, the Tepper scale was used for phase one of the research, and it was originally written in English. Although it was professionally translated, this could not eliminate bias or the perception of abusive supervision after the translation. Notably, in quantitative research, 75% of respondents chose to complete the survey in Chinese. Whereas, in qualitative research, all interviews were conducted in Chinese and subsequently translated into English. This was particularly evident when participants chose to respond in their native language, which required subsequent translation. The complexity of accurately translating technical terms and culturally specific expressions further complicated the process. These translation issues could have affected the consistency and reliability of the data, ultimately impacting the study's findings and their applicability to broader contexts. Despite validation and acknowledgement by the interviewees, the potential for translation bias could not be completely avoided. This study acknowledged the potential for translation bias due to language, cultural differences, and varying interpretations. However, necessary steps were taken to ensure accuracy in validation. Recognising these limitations, the researchers took extra steps to validate the translations and ensure that the data remained as accurate and representative as possible. Nonetheless, the inherent challenges of language and translation remained a notable constraint in the study.

In the quantitative survey, the question “Do you trust your supervisor?” was presented in a binary format with the answers “Yes” or “No.” This introduced a potential bias due to the limitations of binary survey questions. Suárez-García et al. (2024) reported that binary surveys oversimplify complex issues, restricting detailed feedback and understanding of a topic. They may not capture subtle differences in perspectives or varying degrees of agreement, leading to a shallow representation of opinions and experiences. Binary surveys limited response choices and reduced the information richness of attitudes and opinions, proposing a response bias and affecting the reliability of the collected data. Addressing these limitations of the research question on trust, this

study will provide recommendations for future research on the same topic, particularly in discussing trust and abusive supervision.

Limitations are also present in the qualitative aspect of the study, especially regarding the ability to apply findings. A common critique of qualitative research is its perceived limitation in creating generalisations, even though generalisation is viewed as integral, essential, and unavoidable in qualitative research (Roald et al., 2021). Data and narratives taken from the sample group of 20 people represent only the perspectives of this group of respondents. The data collection and presentation are major challenges in qualitative research, as they strike a balance between obtaining detailed, thorough data and ensuring the results can be applied to various contexts.

In qualitative research, the researcher found it demanding to cleanse and apply findings from the data collected. In the absence of numerical data in the presentation, the researcher faced challenges in finding appropriate solutions or generalising the descriptive data. In this study, researchers face limitations in translating findings due to the complexity of the data, making it challenging to present key insights for practical application. Researcher bias regarding subjectivity and interpretation is especially applicable in this study. Qualitative research relies on subjective interpretation and researcher judgment, potentially introducing bias and subjectivity into the findings (Roald et al., 2021). Addressing the limitations meant that researchers were aware, transparent, and put in extra effort to validate the data to ensure the accuracy of the results and provide recommendations for further studies.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Studies

A key aspect of this study involved measuring abusive supervision by using Tepper's scale (2000), job satisfaction levels using the MSQ (Judge and Klinger, 2008), and a binary question on trust displayed in binary format to investigate the leader-member trust relationship. Binary surveys limit the depth of data analysis for statistical interpretation, making it difficult to identify trends, patterns, and nuances in responses (Suárez-García et al., 2024). The lack of flexibility in adapting to diverse participant needs and preferences restricts the effective exploration of complex or multifaceted

topics. Future studies focusing on leader-member trust within the hospitality industry, a topic that is seldom investigated, should develop a survey or collect qualitative data to explore both cognitive and affective trust. This study looks for evidence that trust can serve as a moderator in abusive supervision, which the current study lacks.

The Tepper scale, developed in 2000, was widely used to measure abusive supervision, defined as subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in sustained hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact. Despite the scale's widespread use, the Tepper scale has remained largely unchanged over the years. For instance, while abusive supervision was frequently mentioned in interviews, behaviours such as micromanagement were not included in the scale. Additionally, some respondents considered practices like email blasting or WhatsApp threads over weekends or holidays to be abusive; yet these were not captured by the scale. Future studies are recommended to re-engineer the Tepper scale with more constructs and dimensions. It would also be beneficial to develop different language versions, including Chinese, Italian, Arabic, and others, to make the scale more accessible to researchers worldwide.

Furthermore, the Tepper scale, which measures perceptions of abusive supervision, has several limitations due to its reliance on subordinates' subjective views. Individuals may interpret and report the same behaviour differently based on personal biases, experiences, and expectations. For instance, in Chinese culture, silence is often considered a sign of politeness, whereas in Western cultures, it might be perceived as a form of abuse. This cultural difference can lead to inconsistent results when the scale is applied across diverse cultural contexts. Additionally, the Tepper scale may not capture the dynamic nature of supervisory relationships, where perceptions can change over time. The scale measures the frequency of abusive behaviours but does not align with the definition of sustained behaviour or the evolving nature of supervisory relationships. Future studies should explore perceptions from a managerial or organisational perspective and develop a better scale to measure sustained abusive activities.

Current literature lacks a comprehensive theoretical framework or unifying model to explain or explore the topic of abusive supervision. While various leadership frameworks exist, they are not adaptable to this specific context. This gap is particularly evident in research on abusive supervision. The barrier model of abusive supervision (Breevaart, Wisse, and Schyns, 2021) is currently the only available framework in the literature that addresses this issue, and it is not sufficient. Future research should focus on further exploring the barrier model or developing new theoretical directions. This could involve creating models that better capture the nuances of abusive supervision and its impact on employees. Additionally, research should consider the specific characteristics of the hospitality industry, such as its cultural diversity and high-stress environment, which may influence the occurrence and perception of abusive behaviours.

Additionally, future research should aim to include a balanced representation of organisational positions and generational groups. Current studies show that over 43.34% of participants are senior managers or C-suite executives in quantitative research. Employees with high power distance tend to view supervisors as role models, and power distance can moderate the effects of abusive supervision (Lian et al., 2012). Furthermore, different age groups may respond differently to stress and challenging behaviours. Future studies should investigate whether the same patterns observed in lower power distance and younger generational groups might reveal diverse results within the same industry and region. This approach could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play and help develop more effective strategies for managing workplace behaviour and stress across different demographics.

Future research should aim to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the barriers model discussed in this study. From an organisational perspective, practitioners should understand toxic workplace environments and the mechanisms that prevent followers from leaving abusive supervisory relationships, including their interrelatedness and the dynamics between different layers of barriers. Conducting longitudinal studies to follow followers and abusive supervisors over time can provide insights into the dynamics of abusive supervision and the barriers that prevent followers from escaping. Investigating how being abused affects followers in their next job is also important, including understanding the long-term consequences of abusive supervision and

whether it creates a vulnerability to future abuse or leads to post-traumatic growth. Exploring the reasons why leaders do not change their abusive behaviour or end the abusive relationship can provide a fuller picture of the dynamics of abusive supervision. Examining how various barriers interact with one another, such as how barriers stemming from within the abused follower interact with barriers due to the abusive supervisor or the organisational context, is also crucial. Considering cross-pollination between different domains, such as abuse in the workplace and domestic settings, can help identify common factors and interventions that can be applied across different contexts of abuse. Developing and testing interventions aimed at breaking down barriers across multiple layers, such as creating societal awareness, adopting appropriate laws, and implementing sound organisational policies, is also recommended. Gathering retrospective data from followers who have escaped abusive supervisory relationships can provide insights into how they broke barriers and what support systems were effective. Studying the role of ethical climate and organisational norms in mitigating abusive behaviour and supporting victims is also important, including understanding how organisational practices and policies can create a supportive environment for victims. Finally, researching how implicit leadership theories develop and change over time, especially in the context of prolonged abuse, can help design interventions to change followers' perceptions of positive leader-follower interactions. These directions aim to provide a fuller understanding of the systemic nature of abusive supervision and to develop effective strategies to help victims escape from abusive relationships.

Hight, Gajjar, and Okumus (2018) suggest that technology may have an unexplored impact on abusive supervision. Virtual meetings, remote work, and advanced technological tools can potentially create a less stressful work environment. In the hotel industry, where interactions between service providers and customers are crucial, technological upgrades such as automatic check-in machines, robot waiters, and delivery robots may help reduce workplace pressure. However, technology can also contribute to abusive leader-member relationships through constant email threads and weekend instructions via mobile apps. Future research should further investigate the effects of these technological advancements, particularly regarding how they influence workplace dynamics and employee well-being.

In recent research, Yu and colleagues (2002) examined the importance of bystanders in the context of abusive supervision. Their study highlights several crucial reasons for focusing on bystanders. Bystanders can be regarded as secondary victims who endure negative emotional and behavioural effects, despite not being the direct targets of abuse. Understanding the reactions of bystanders can assist organisations in enhancing the overall work environment, making it healthier and more supportive for all employees. The responses of bystanders can affect organisational dynamics, including team cohesion, morale, and productivity. Addressing their concerns can foster a more harmonious workplace. Insights from bystander studies can guide the creation of policies and interventions aimed at reducing abusive supervision and supporting both victims and bystanders. Investigating bystanders broadens the theoretical understanding of abusive supervision, extending beyond the traditional focus on the supervisor-victim relationship to encompass the broader social context. For future research, conducting long-term studies to observe the evolving impact of abusive supervision on bystanders over time would be beneficial. Evaluating the effectiveness of different organisational interventions aimed at supporting bystanders and reducing the incidence of abusive supervision is also essential. Additionally, by exploring bystanders' reactions to abusive supervision, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of workplace environments and organisational culture. This knowledge can be used to improve or prevent abusive supervision, fostering a healthier and more supportive work atmosphere.

Building on the findings of this research, future studies should prioritise investigating the efficacy of specific interventions to mitigate the negative consequences of abusive supervision and delve deeper into preventive measures. This includes exploring the effectiveness of support systems like counselling, mediation, and employee assistance programs, as well as examining organisational factors that contribute to abusive behaviours, such as leadership training programs, organisational policies, and cultural norms. Further research should also examine the role of bystander intervention and reporting mechanisms in preventing and addressing abusive supervision. By exploring both support systems and preventive measures, future research can contribute to developing comprehensive strategies that address the aftermath of abusive supervision

and proactively cultivate healthier and more respectful workplaces with a zero-tolerance approach.

This study confirms that employees' coping strategies can lead to positive outcomes when dealing with abusive supervision. Recent research by Massod et al. (2021) and Hameed et al. (2021) examined the influence of job crafting as a coping mechanism. Job crafting is a proactive strategy in which employees modify their work boundaries to enhance their job experience. Their studies found that job crafting can be an effective way to cope with abusive supervision, helping employees manage stress and regain a sense of control. The effectiveness of job crafting as a coping strategy can be influenced by factors such as perceived control and emotions. High-arousal emotions, like anger, often lead to approach crafting, while low-arousal emotions, like sadness, lead to avoidance crafting. The study also highlights the role of cultural dynamics in shaping job crafting behaviours. Future research is suggested to further explore employees' coping mechanisms in relation to abusive supervision.

6.4 Recommendations for Hotel Managers

Generalising the results of the findings, this study recommends the critical importance of leadership development in cultivating positive employee relationships and mitigating abusive behaviours. While numerous training programs exist, a notable gap remains in leadership development specifically tailored to the hospitality sector. Given the people-oriented nature of hospitality, managers in this field would benefit significantly from enhanced leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and communication abilities. Targeted training programs and workshops focusing on effective leadership practices, conflict resolution strategies, and employee engagement techniques are recommended. Crucially, these development initiatives should be ongoing rather than one-time events to ensure sustained impact. Such efforts not only enhance managerial competencies but also contribute to a more supportive work environment characterised by mutual respect and collaboration. By investing in comprehensive leadership development, hospitality organisations can equip managers with the necessary skills to navigate diverse workplace challenges effectively and foster a positive organisational climate.

This proactive approach can create a more resilient and productive workforce while minimising the risk of abusive supervisory behaviours.

Furthermore, this study recommends enhancing organisational effectiveness and employee well-being by prioritising the development of affective trust between leaders and subordinates. This can be achieved through various formal and informal interactions. Activities such as town hall meetings, which aim to communicate with hotel employees and engage participants, are essential. Other informal interactions, such as regular casual meetings, employee gatherings, and team-building activities, will assist in building emotional bonds and increasing attachment. The barriers model of abusive supervision discussed in this study provides a comprehensive framework to understand why followers do not leave abusive supervisors. This model highlights the sustained nature of abusive relationships and considers societal, organisational, dyadic, and intra-individual factors to gain a fuller understanding of abusive supervisory relationships. Strengthening the societal and organisational context, as discussed in the barriers model, will benefit both employees and leaders involved. By improving a supportive workplace environment, organisations can enhance employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and improve overall performance and productivity.

Nevertheless, human resources practitioners should design comprehensive training programs aimed at improving supervision and mentoring processes. These programs should focus on reducing abusive supervision by emphasising leadership qualities such as benevolence, sincerity, fairness, and mindfulness. Establishing an ethical climate within the organisation is crucial. This involves embedding ethical standards in the organisation's mission statement and ensuring that top leaders consistently highlight the importance of ethical behaviour in all mentoring processes. Training employees to express their expectations more effectively can lead to more collaborative and positive discussions with their leaders. Reverse mentoring can be an effective strategy to reduce instances of abusive supervision by encouraging subordinates to understand their leaders' needs and to express their own needs assertively. Supervisory training strategies should aim to build affective trust and encourage ethical climates to strengthen positive leader-follower relationships.

Organisations should develop and enforce clear policies against abusive supervision, enforcing disciplinary measures for policy violations and fostering an ethical climate to mitigate abusive behaviour. Practitioners should also ensure that victims have access to key resources such as information, support from colleagues, and counselling services, which are currently rare in the Hong Kong hotel industry. Building up victims' energy and self-efficacy through appropriate channels and development programs can also help. Interventions should focus on changing followers' implicit leadership theories and other internal barriers, which may require longer exposure to positive leadership practices. Increasing societal awareness about workplace abuse, similar to movements like #MeToo, can assist in recognising and addressing such issues.

6.5 Recommendations for the Hong Kong Hotel Industry

There is a need for the Hong Kong hotel industry to advocate for government legislation specifically addressing workplace bullying and abusive supervision. There is an absence of such legislation in Hong Kong and other countries, which leaves employees vulnerable, particularly within the hospitality sector. This industry is characterised by its people-oriented nature, high-stress levels, and frequent interpersonal interactions, which mark a sector-specific risk for workplace abuse. Therefore, proactively enacting appropriate legal protections is crucial to preventing and addressing such incidents, fostering a safer and more respectful work environment. Beyond advocating for legislation, the Hong Kong hotel industry can take a leadership role by implementing comprehensive educational programs and training sessions. These initiatives should raise awareness about workplace bullying and abusive supervision, equipping staff with the knowledge and tools to identify, handle, and report such behaviours effectively. By doing so, the industry can create a more informed and proactive workforce capable of addressing these issues head-on.

Implementing legislation against abusive supervision and establishing clear organisational policies can create a more supportive and ethical work environment, reducing the prevalence of abusive behaviour. Providing support systems for victims of abusive supervision can help mitigate the negative impact on both personal and organisational contexts. Future research should focus on exploring interactions between different barriers, studying the long-term effects of abusive supervision, and

understanding the reasons why abusive leaders do not change their behaviour. Increasing societal awareness about abusive supervision is crucial to recognising and addressing workplace abuse effectively. This comprehensive approach ensures that both immediate and long-term strategies are in place to combat abusive supervision and promote a healthier work environment.

The Hong Kong hotel industry is currently represented by three major associations: the Hong Kong Hotels Association (HKHA), the Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners, and the Hotel Controllers and Accountants Association (HCAA). By combining their efforts and raising awareness about abusive supervision, these associations can educate their members, including organisations, leaders, managers, and employees. Moreover, the Hong Kong hotel industry has been experiencing a crisis in recruiting an adequate workforce and filling vacancies. Proper implementation of the discussed initiatives can lead to increased job satisfaction, a positive workplace environment, and improved overall performance. This, in turn, can help the industry attract and retain high-calibre employees, addressing the current workforce challenges. Additionally, it will help sustain Hong Kong's image as a leading role model in the region. Furthermore, these efforts can foster a culture of respect and support within the industry, ensuring that employees feel valued and protected. This proactive approach benefits the workforce and enhances the overall reputation and competitiveness of Hong Kong's hotel industry on a global scale. By addressing these issues comprehensively, the industry can set a benchmark for others to follow, promoting a more ethical and supportive work environment worldwide.

Both leaders and employees may exhibit a lack of awareness regarding abusive supervision, often perpetuating or experiencing such behaviour without conscious recognition (Martinko et al., 2013). Industry practitioners should mobilise future research exploring the complex influences and factors contributing to acts of abusive supervision due to this lack of awareness. Furthermore, discovering the underlying reasons for abusive acts and identifying effective intervention strategies are essential. This could involve examining individual factors such as personality traits and cognitive biases, as well as organisational factors, such as cultural norms and power dynamics, that contribute to the persistence of abusive leadership. These actions cannot be achieved independently; however, collective effort from the industry will contribute to the findings.

If the industry acknowledges and confronts the reality of toxic leadership at an early stage, the sooner it can initiate meaningful change and cultivate healthier, more productive work environments. Early intervention and prevention are key to minimising the negative consequences associated with abusive supervision and promoting positive organisational change.

6.6 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, this research provides a comprehensive examination of abusive supervision within the Hong Kong hotel industry, focusing on a crucial yet frequently neglected dimension of leadership. Toxic leadership behaviour under hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours perceived by employees has significant implications for employees' well-being and organisational dynamics. The mixed-method approach offers a comprehensive approach that ensures a thorough understanding of the multifaceted impacts of abusive supervision on both individuals and the broader organisational environment.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of understanding the darker facets of leadership to gain a holistic view of its impact. While some may argue that abusive leadership can paradoxically enhance performance, this research highlights the necessity of examining the attitudes and post-accident reactions that both verbal and non-verbal behaviours can have on employees and the organisation in general. The unique cultural setting and hierarchical structures of Hong Kong's hospitality industry, characterised by multilayered management, seniority of service, and high turnover rates, provide a pertinent context for investigating abusive supervision. This context-specific focus allows for a deeper exploration of how these factors interact to influence the prevalence and impact of abusive supervision.

Furthermore, this research explored abusive supervision within the Hong Kong hotel industry, highlighting the significant impact of negative leadership behaviours on employees and organisational dynamics from the employees' perspective. The qualitative data uncovers unexpected positive outcomes on both personal and organisational aspects. People overcoming abusive leaders foster personal growth, resilience, and resourcefulness among employees. In an organisational context, the

findings emphasise the importance of addressing aspects of leadership to foster a healthier and more supportive work environment. This research attempts to fill a critical gap in leadership studies but also provides actionable insights for improving organisational policies and practices, establishing legislative measures, and ultimately contributing to the well-being and success of employees in the hospitality industry. By doing so, organisations can enhance overall employee satisfaction, trust, and performance, leading to long-term success and sustainability in the competitive hospitality sector.

These combined insights revealed a complex picture of abusive supervision's impact. While quantitative data supported the detrimental effects of toxic leadership on job satisfaction and trust, the qualitative narratives offered a different perspective. Some employees, facing adversity, transformed negative experiences into catalysts for personal growth and development. Respondent accounts revealed that encountering destructive management did not always result in diminished productivity or job dissatisfaction; instead, for some, it prompted an evolution in personal strength and the development of a proactive mindset focused on overcoming challenges and exceeding expectations.

Moreover, these stories highlight the human capacity for adaptability and survival. Employees who confront abuse utilise a variety of strategies to preserve their dignity and maintain their professional paths. In particular, this study shines a light on the possibility of positive behavioural change initiated by employees in the face of managerial abuse. These individuals do not passively accept their circumstances but rather engage in active attempts to alter or escape their situation, sometimes transforming the workplace itself in the process. Significantly, the narratives suggest that when employees channel their experiences of adversity into constructive endeavours – such as advocating for better policies or developing new skills – they can influence change within their organisations for the better. They can foster environments that are more resilient and empathetic, thus reducing the likelihood of abusive supervision for others.

The research encountered several limitations that need to be acknowledged. Resource constraints posed significant challenges, limiting the time available for data collection and analysis, as well as access to comprehensive data. The sample size was another limitation, as it posed challenges in terms of generalising the findings to the broader population. Additionally, translating concepts from a Western context to a Chinese context sometimes leads to a loss of meaning or perceived conceptual bias. Researcher bias was also a potential limitation, as the ability to translate findings from raw data could be influenced by the researcher's subjective interpretations. These limitations highlight the need for careful consideration in future research to ensure more robust and generalisable findings.

The study offers several suggestions for future research to build on the current findings. One recommendation is to explore established scales for cognitive and affective trust to provide more reliable results. Re-engineering the Tepper scale and adding new constructs, as well as developing it in other languages, could help avoid bias and enhance the robustness of the findings. Conducting a comprehensive study on the barriers model or other frameworks could provide additional support and evidence for the findings. Ensuring a balanced representation of organisational and generational groups in future studies is also suggested to provide a more holistic understanding of the issue. These suggestions aim to guide future research efforts in addressing the complexities of abusive supervision in diverse contexts.

In summary, this research not only fills a significant gap in the literature on leadership and abusive supervision but also offers practical recommendations for the hospitality industry in Hong Kong. By addressing the complex interplay between abusive supervision, job satisfaction, and trust, this study provides a foundation for future research and underscores the importance of fostering positive leadership practices to promote a healthy and productive work environment. The insights gained from this research have the potential to inform organisational policies and practices, ultimately contributing to the well-being and resilience of employees in the hospitality industry. This comprehensive approach ensures that the findings are both relevant and actionable, providing a valuable resource for stakeholders in the industry.

Conclusion

This chapter summarises the findings of a comprehensive investigation into abusive supervision in Hong Kong's hotel industry. Future research should expand the sample size, include a more diverse range of hotel employees, and employ longitudinal methods to better understand the long-term effects of abusive supervision. Practical implications for hotel managers include promoting positive supervisory practices, implementing clear anti-abuse policies, fostering open communication, and providing support systems for employees. The hotel industry must address abusive supervision to improve employee retention and service quality. It is beneficial for both companies and employees to foster a supportive and respectful work environment, which increases job satisfaction and reduces turnover, thus increasing productivity.

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Appendix 1 Quantitative Research Questions

Part I

#		1 Never uses	2 Very seldom uses	3 Occasionally uses	4 Moderately often uses	5 Very often uses
1	My supervisor ridicules me.					
2	My supervisor tells me that my thoughts or feelings are stupid.					
3	My supervisor gives me the silent treatment.					
4	My supervisor puts me down in front of others.					
5	My supervisor invades my privacy.					
6	My supervisor reminds me of my past mistakes and failures.					
7	My supervisor doesn't give me credit for jobs that require a lot of effort.					
8	My supervisor blames me to save himself/herself from embarrassment.					
9	My supervisor breaks the promises he/she makes.					
10	My supervisor expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason.					
11	My supervisor makes negative comments about me to others.					
12	My supervisor is rude to me.					
13	My supervisor does not allow me to interact with my co-workers.					
14	My supervisor tells me that I am incompetent.					
15	My supervisor lies to me.					

Quantitative Research Questions (cont'd)

Part II

#		1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
1	Being able to keep busy all the time.					
2	The chance to work alone on the job.					
3	The chance to do different things from time to time.					
4	The chance to be "somebody" in the community.					
5	The way my boss handles his or her workers.					
6	The competence of my supervisor in making decisions.					
7	Being able to do things that don't conflict with my conscience.					
8	The way my job provides for steady employment.					
9	The chance to do things for other people.					
10	The chance to tell people what to do.					
11	The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities.					
12	The way in which company policies are put into practice.					
13	My pay and the amount of work I do.					
14	The chances for advancement in this job.					
15	The freedom to use my own judgement.					
16	The chance to try my own methods of doing the job.					
17	The working conditions.					
18	The way my co-workers get along with one another.					
19	The praise I receive for doing a good job.					
20	The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job.					

Part III

		Yes (1)	No (2)
1	Do you trust your supervisor?		

Demographic Section

#1 Gender	Answer	#2 Age	Answer	#3 Education	Answer
1	Male	1	20 or below	1	Primary or below
2	Female	2	21–30	2	Secondary
3	Others	3	31–40	3	Vocational Institute
4	Unknown	4	41–50	4	University
5	Undeclared	5	51–60	5	Postgraduate
		6	61 or above		

#4 Tenure of service at current organisation	Answer	#6 Employment situation	Answer
1	Below 1 year	1	Full-time
2	1 to 3 years	2	Part-time
3	3 to 5 years		
4	5 to 10 years		
5	Above 10 years		

#5 Working department	Answer	# 7 Position	Answer
1	Front office	1	CEO/COO/CFO
2	Purchasing	2	Senior manager
3	S&M	3	Manager
4	F&B (Svc)	4	Assistant manager
5	Security	5	Supervisor
6	Engineering	6	General staff
7	Catering (sales)		
8	F&B (kitchen)		
9	Housekeeping		
10	Finance/accounts		
11	Human resources		
12	Others		

Appendix 2 Interview Questions (Sample)

Aspects	Key interview questions
Demographic background	What is your gender? How old are you, or what is your age group? What is your education level? What is your organisational position/profession?
Description of experience	How do you feel after the experience? Can you describe your response? Can you share your interpretation of such behaviour?
Experience in abusive supervision	Can you recall an incident that you experienced with your supervisor in which you may have felt abused? (see the Tepper scale) Can you share an experience that was particularly impactful in your career when you experienced an abusive act from your boss or superior?
Post-event reactions	Did you personally do anything after the experience? Did you do anything differently regarding the relationship? How do you feel about the supervisor mentioned?

Source: Adapted from Yu et al. 2022

Appendix 3 Quantitative Research Consent Form (Sample)

Q0 – This is a study to investigate job satisfaction in the Hong Kong hotel industry. Take a moment to picture your current workplace and immediate supervisor. The study is for academic purposes, and all data collected will be kept confidential. Please check the “agree” box if you would like to take part in the study. If not, please close this page. Thank you very much for taking part in the survey.

Q0 - 這是一個研究關於香港酒店業的工作滿意程度，試想像一下你現在的工作環境及你的直屬上司。若你同意參與研究，請在以下的方格剔選同意；否則，請關掉此視窗。感謝你參與這項研究。

If Please choose the language. 請選擇語言. English Is Selected

This is a study to investigate job satisfaction in Hong Kong hotel industry. Take a moment to picture your current workplace and immediate supervisor. The study is for academic purposes and all data collected will be kept confidential.

Please check the 'Agree' box if you would like to take part of the study. If not, please close this page. You may leave the study at any time if you would like to do so.

Thank you very much for taking part in the survey.

☐ Agree

Import from library

+ Add new question

Add Block

Block 5

Q0

Display this question

If Please choose the language. 請選擇語言. 中文 Is Selected

這是一個研究關於香港酒店業的工作滿意程度，試想像一下你現在的工作環境及你的直屬上司。

若你同意參與研究，請在以下的方格剔選同意；否則，請關掉此視窗。

感謝你參與這項研究。

☐ 同意

Import from library

+ Add new question

Appendix 4 Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Examples of procedure of each step
1. Familiarisation	Transcribing data: reading and rereading; noting down initial codes.
2. Generating initial code	Coding interesting features in the data systematically across the dataset, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes and gathering all data relevant to each theme.
4. Involved reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work with the coded extracts and the entire dataset; generate a thematic map.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics for each theme and the generation of clear names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	Final opportunity for analysis: selecting appropriate extracts, discussing the analysis, relating to the research question or literature, and producing the report.

Source: Adapted from Braun and Clarke 2006