



# When abusive supervision affects creative idea sharing: Understanding the role of employee cheating and organizational justice

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## ABSTRACT

Getting employees to share their creative ideas has long been recognized as a vital source of organizational effectiveness. This research uses the conservation of resources theory to investigate how employee's creative idea sharing is affected by abusive supervision. Data for this research was collected from 209 employees and their immediate supervisors of generic nurses and medical dispensers of Southern Punjab public sector hospitals working under the Ministry of national health services regulation and Coordination. Data were then analyzed with the AMOS software package for simple regression and moderated mediation. This study found that with the increase in abusive supervision, employees develop cheating behavior, diminishing probability of sharing their creative ideas with coworkers. Along these lines, organizational justice moderates this relationship and attenuates the negative indirect effect of abusive supervision on creative idea sharing. The researchers recommended that organizations should develop training programs or coaching sessions for leaders to make them equip with essential interpersonal skills that can eradicate abusive supervision. Research implications, limitations, and future research directions are also discussed.

## 1. Introduction

Creativity is considered to be the source of competitive advantage in this contemporary world [1]. Therefore, effective creativity management is crucial to ensure long-term sustainability as well as the success of the organization [2]. In recent times, a significant number of organizations have invested in different creativity management method that foster swift and effortless sharing of creative ideas among employees [3]. Nevertheless, scholars and practitioners pointed out that several obstacles impede the successful transfer to creative idea from idea generator to those who are in position to validate, endorse, or implement in the organization, and these

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barriers are chiefly linked to the employees instead of the technologies or systems [2,4,5].

In organizations, sharing of innovative ideas is regarded as one of the essential discretionary behaviors such as OCB [5,6]. Hence, it is vital to analyze the factors that facilitate or impede the creative idea-sharing behavior of the employees in the present knowledge-based economy. This is due to the fact that higher costs, as well as risks, are associated with the creative idea-sharing behavior of the employees as compared to other discretionary behaviors [7,8]. According to researchers, creative idea sharing typically entails sharing focused proficiency, and information along with unique skills [9]. Hence, the employees need to invest greater energy and time to engage in such behavior. To this end, some researchers argued that employees often are reluctant to share valuable ideas with their coworkers in social interactions [8,10] to retain their competitive position in the organization and for fear of being negatively evaluated by their co-workers, even when they are told no such thing will occur [11,12]. Therefore, fostering creative idea sharing in the organization can be difficult for managers.

Various researchers in the past have noted that leaders are often regarded as the organizational agent and play a noteworthy role in aspiring employees to share their ideas in at work [7,11]. The majority of the researches in the past have focused on the effective or constructive side of the leadership [13]. However, our research emphasized deviant or dysfunctional leader behaviors. To this end, various studies have analyzed the abusive behaviors of supervisors and its impact on employee's knowledge and information sharing [14]. These studies acknowledged the significance of leadership in organizational settings and at the same time consequence of intrinsic power balance among the employees and managers. According to researchers, abusive behaviors correspond to the perception of the subordinates about the extent to which the leaders exhibit unreceptive verbal as well as nonverbal behaviors [15]. Consequently, they try to diminish the damage by suppressing discretionary actions such as creativity sharing.

Hence, the conservation of resource theory [16] can be utilized to determine why the employees do not engage in creativity sharing when led by abusive supervisors. This research, therefore, draws essential insights from the COR theory in order to examine the effects of abusive leaders on the creative idea sharing of the subordinates. In addition, the research analyzes the psychological mechanism through which the abusive behaviors of the supervisors affect the creative idea sharing of the employees. Research on abusive supervision has demonstrated that abusive supervisors leaves the subordinates more vulnerable to engage in cheating and other unethical counterproductive work behaviors [17,18]. This research also analyzes the mediating role played by cheating behavior in the association among abusive supervision as well as the creative idea-sharing behavior of the employees.

Furthermore, a large number of researchers agreed that organizational justice is viewed essential in comprehending an individual's experiences under stressful circumstances for the reason that it can significantly influence the actions as well as reactions of the employees to workplace stressors, including abusive supervision [19,20]. Researchers also emphasized the importance of justice perception, some researchers found that unethical work behaviors of employees when triggered by their supervisors can be attenuated by supportive and justice environment at work [19,21]. We also predict here that the indirect impact of abusive supervision on creative idea sharing via cheating behavior is contingent on organizational justice: more specifically distributive as well as procedural justice [22] that may affect employee information and idea sharing intentions [21].

The researcher utilizes COR theory in order to achieve three predominant goals of the study. Along these lines, the first objective of the study is to analyze the negative impacts of abusive supervision on the creativity-sharing behavior of employees. The second objective of the study is to critically examine the process that leads to employees being cheaters and determine how employees working under extremely abusive supervision minimize their engagement in creative idea sharing processes due to cheating behavior. The last objective of the study is to strengthen the proposition that organizational justice, by applying a moderated mediation framework, acts as the buffer that could diminish the cheating behavior that employees are likely to promote while working with

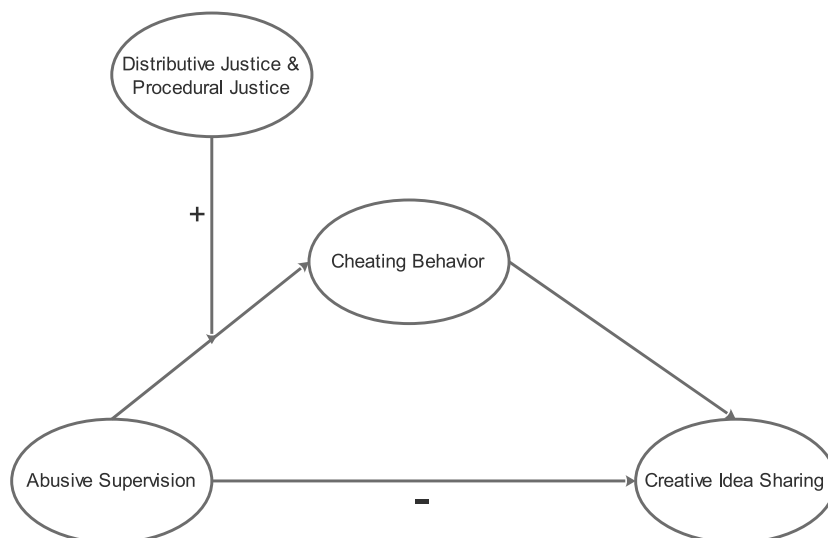


Fig. 1. Research model.

abusive supervisors.

## 2. Contributions of the study

To increase creative idea sharing at work, it is recommended that the organizations should take measures to prevent abusive supervision in organizations. For paradigm, organizations can develop training programs or coaching sessions for leaders to make them equip with essential interpersonal skills that can eradicate abusive supervision and help creative idea sharing among the employees. The findings of the study put forward several crucial insights into the relationship between creative idea sharing and abusive supervision. With this research we found that negative relation exists between employee creativity-sharing behaviors and abusive supervision. The study analyzed the potential drivers of creative idea sharing, which is often regarded as the discretionary behavior exhibited by employees. The findings of this study will not only enrich the existing literature on the issue but also produce novel insights that can be adopted by organizations to lessen the damaging impacts of abusive behaviors of the supervisors.

The proposed relationships are presented in [Fig. 1](#).

## 3. Background and hypothesis development

### 3.1. Abusive supervision and creative idea sharing

Over the past few years, various researchers have investigated the potential drivers of creative idea sharing in the current creativity-driven economy [23]. Researchers conducted an extensive review of past studies on creativity sharing and categorized its antecedents into motivational factors, individual attributes, the team as well as interpersonal characteristics, and cultural and organizational attributes [24]. Moreover, researchers have also emphasized the significance of organizational climate for sharing of creative ideas [25]. They proposed that climate fosters trust and, at the same time, learning promotes creative idea sharing. On the other hand, high competition at workplace act as a barrier to creative idea sharing culture [26]. Previous researchers have established a positive relationship between rewards and incentives and sharing behavior of the employees. Furthermore, scholars, have deduced that individual characteristics such as self-efficacy, openness to experience, greater work experience, and high level of education are strong predictors of information sharing among employees [27]. Similarly, the research performed by Ref. [28] investigated the crucial role of the leaders in the information-sharing intention of the employees [29]. Correspondingly, empowering leadership behaviors and management support are strong predictors of idea sharing in the organization [30].

Nevertheless, few types of research in the past have examined the role of supervisors in hindering sharing of knowledge and innovative ideas among employees [31]. As mentioned earlier that idea sharing can be categorized as discretionary behavior that can be negatively affected by the destructive behavior of the supervisors. In addition, limited research has applied the conservation of resources theory in order to elucidate the circumstances under which employees may or may not engage in process of sharing of their creative ideas. To this end, the lack of support the supervisors at the workplace can restrict the employees from sharing information and valuable ideas with their coworkers as creative idea sharing requires effort and time [32]. Hence, on the grounds of the conservation of resources theory, this research put forward that employees who face abusive supervision do not exhibit adequate creativity-sharing behaviors.

In recent times, a significant number of researchers and practitioners have started focusing on abusive supervision, which is regarded as a type of destructive leadership. For paradigm, researchers have revealed that over the past one year, nearly 13% of the employees working in U.S organizations have experienced abusive behaviors or non-physical aggression from the leaders [33]. Similarly, the studies carried out by other researchers have revealed that abusive supervisions have an unquestionably negative effect on different work outcomes including high-rate of turnover, workplace deviances and escalated levels of stress-related issues as well as lower job satisfaction and dedication [34]. According to some researchers, there is a negative correlation between abusive supervision and discretionary behaviors [35]. This is also affirmed by the findings of the researchers who explored the relationship between abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behaviors both at the individual as well as organizational levels [36].

On the other hand, a revealed that there is a negative correlation between organizational citizenship behavior and abusive supervision at individual level [37], however, at organizational level, the relationship between both the variables is not found to be negative. Moreover, some researchers also proposed that negative correlation exists among the abusive behaviors of the managers and the prosocial silence and prosocial voice behaviors nevertheless, this outcome was not significant [38,39]. Taking into consideration the continuous exploitation of power and authority by supervisors leading to a rise in abusive behaviors toward subordinates counterproductive work behaviors.

The conservation of resource theory put forwards that individuals are likely to attain, sustain and at the same time conserve resources such as energy as well as time [16]. Nevertheless, whether faced with a prospect of resource loss, a loss in actuality, or a failure to recover resources after an investment, people go through psychological stress. When a supervisor treats their subordinates unfairly or hostilely, they are more likely to actually lose valuable resources or perceive a threat of losing them. When supervisors are abusive, their actions can make their subordinates feel out of control. Examples include yelling and shouting, frightening staff with the prospect of losing their jobs, and establishing hostile eye contact [35]. According to, some researchers one of the crucial resources for employees at the workplace is control over the job [40]. Therefore, employees who are frequently abused and ill-treated by their supervisors suffer from frustration due to diminished sense of personal control and, at the same time, struggle to reestablish a sense of independence [41, 42]. They chose to respond to abusive supervisory behavior by not engaging much in behavior over which they have command such as sharing of knowledge and ideas with the coworkers. The ideas-sharing process is typically characterized by activities such as sharing of

specialized knowledge, information, skills, and expertise. Employees who do not receive adequate support from abusive supervisors may opt to withhold their ideas. Furthermore, the supervisors' persistent demonstration of abusive behaviors may compel the employees to protect and conserve their resources to prevent further resource loss. Hence, subordinates working under the supervision of abusive managers may engross less idea sharing as compared to non-abused counterparts.

As per the standpoint of [43], abusive supervision can lead to loss of resources in relation to leadership support. It can also alleviate the resources that are essential for the abused employees to deal with the mistreatment. Several researchers have agreed that the support of the leader is the most valuable asset for the employees and is deemed a crucial social resource. On the other hand, abusive behavior of the supervisors is likely to contribute to increased interpersonal stress, decreased work efficiency and at the same time, lower interest in engaging in discretionary or voluntary behaviors such as idea sharing. Moreover, a significant number of researches have established that leadership support can be a strong driver of an individual's enthusiasm to disseminate ideas and information [27]. Likewise, the findings by Ref. [27] confirmed that perceived support from the leaders significantly influence the participation of employees in information and ideas sharing. In light of the preceding discussion and based on OCR theory, this research work proposes that employees who witness aggressive or offensive supervisory behaviors will prefer to suppress creative ideas sharing.

**Hypothesis 1.** Abusive supervision is negatively related to employee's creative idea sharing.

### 3.2. Mediating effect of cheating behavior

The rise in cheating behavior suggests that employees are not only attempting to advance their interests at work, but that they do so with little consideration of how their actions impact others or the organization more generally. Therefore, cheating behavior can be deemed as the potential mechanism linking creative idea-sharing behavior of employees and abusive supervision. Researchers found that employees are lying, scamming, and deceiving to advance their interests-workplace cheating behavior [44] more than ever. Researches also noted that cheating behavior prevails when emotive demands exceed what a worker can afford in the course of interpersonal interactions at the workplace. In a similar vein, researchers found that cheating behavior witnessed by the employees as the form of strain that emerges from various stressors apparent in organizational setting [45]. Cheating behavior is one of the numerous detrimental psychological effects of abusive supervision [46], which is being having emotionally drained and weary due to workplace-related problems. The targets of abusive supervision are more likely to encounter excessive psychological issues and stressors from their abusive supervisors because they endure mockery, screaming, and demeaning [47]. According to researchers, an abusive supervisor is more likely to make a subordinate perceive that they are losing resources or, more crucially, to really lose resources [48]. To this end, the COR theory proposed that employees who witness abusive supervision have a greater propensity to develop cheating behaviors [49].

According to researchers, subordinates of an abusive supervisor do not prefer participating in additional tasks and only execute those specifically assigned to them even if needed by the organization [49] or even cost their organization in financial terms [50]. In fact, the scholarly work concentrating on stress emphasizes that cheating intentions discourages employees from investing their resources and stops them from overexerting themselves. Consequently, such employees do not exhibit discretionary behaviors. For paradigm, the research carried out by Ref. [51] illustrated that employees with cheating behavior diminish their efforts pertaining to the circumstantial performance aspect of job dedication as well as interpersonal facilitation. This is also supported by researchers, who established a negative correlation concerning workplace cheating and citizenship behavior toward organizations and supervisors [52]. The outcome of the study advocates that employees with unethical intentions try to reduce resource loss and, at the same time, recover control of circumstances by lessening discretionary circumstantial actions, including sharing of knowledge and innovative ideas.

The conservation of resource theory argues that abusive behaviors of the supervisors lead to psychological drains of the workforce that in turn restricts them to participate in voluntary activities such as creative idea sharing. Therefore, this research suggests that cheating behavior mediates the impacts of abusive supervision on the creative idea sharing of subordinates.

**Hypothesis 2.** The relationship between abusive supervision and employee's creative idea sharing is mediated by cheating behavior.

### 3.3. Moderating effect of procedural and distributive justice

This study further hypothesizes that the consequences of abusive attitudes of the supervisors in relation to creative idea sharing can be influenced by organizational justice while being mediated by cheating behavior. Organizational justice in recent times has appeared as the crucial factor in describing the experiences of the subordinates within stressful circumstances such as abusive supervision [53, 54]. A wide array of research have reported that the way in which employees perceive justice can influence their response to stress in the organizations [5,53]. Hence, this study suggests that considerate level of justice apparent in the organization diminishes the undesirable psychological as well as behavioral outcomes of abusive behaviors of the supervisors.

According to Ref. [22] justice can be categorized into three types based on the target of equality discernment: interactional (interpersonal treatment), procedural (procedures) and distributive (outcomes) [55]. noted that individuals can recognize the source of justice and determine if the unfairness comes from the organization or the supervisor. As indicated by Ref. [56], procedural and distributive justice are regarded as the forms of organizational justice for the reason that these types are more closely associated with organizational outcomes. On the other hand, the interactional justice is referred to as a supervisory-focused kind of justice. Furthermore, the research conducted by Ref. [57] demonstrated that a positive correlation exists between distributive and procedural justice and organizational identification, while interactional justice was found to positively link with work-unit identification. Similarly, the findings of [58] suggest that procedural justice is positively correlated with citizenship behavior directed towards the

organization and is mediated through organizational support. The outcomes further revealed that a significant correlation prevails between interactional justice and citizenship behavior directed towards supervisors, and leader-member exchange act as the mediating factor in this relationship. In light of the fact that interactional justice is closely linked to the leader-related outcome, it can be postulated that employees under supervision of abusive managers are likely to perceive low interpersonal justice. Hence, this particular research adopts a multi foci perspective on justice and analyzes procedural and distributive justice as the predominant moderators. It hypothesizes that employees witnessing paramount levels of justice at the workplace are expected to witness reduced resource depletion or are likely to get less exhausted emotionally even in situations where abusive supervision is highly prevalent.

According to the compensatory exchange principles, fair treatment at the workplace (i.e., procedural and distributive justice) can eradicate the detrimental impacts of abusive supervision by compensating the cost of abuse. In different contexts, despite an abusive supervisor may indicate an unfavorable exchange, professed rational conduct may still be viewed as a positive transaction. Employees concerned about potentially detrimental organizational transactions often evaluate how the expected favorable treatment at the workplace weighs against hostile supervisory abuse as noted by Ref. [59]. Therefore, the crucial mediating role of organizational justice can assist the researchers in analyzing the negative impacts of abusive supervision on behavioral as well as psychological outcomes. Furthermore, this mediating role of the organizational justice is supported by the cross-domain buffering approach. This is because the adverse impact of one source can be eliminated when supported by another source, as indicated by Ref. [34]. Hence, this research put forwards that when organizational justice is highly prevalent, the negative correlation among abusive supervision and creative idea sharing arbitrated by cheating behavior is reduced.

Moreover, in organizations where justice is highly prevalent, employees are not required to invest additional emotional or cognitive resources to deal with prejudicial employment relationships, which facilitate sustaining idea sharing. People who receive fair assessments or treatment from their employer may demand greater assistance from the organization to help them cope with a bad circumstance brought on by harsh monitoring. As a result, after investing resources due to supervisor abuse, people who feel that the outcomes they realize and the methods used to establish the outcomes are impartial as well as rightful would anticipate socio-emotional support as well as emotional energy from their company [60]. Precisely, high level of distributive justice at the workplace reflects the propensity to minimize the employee's vulnerability to cheating intentions as they anticipate attaining suitable results from the organization. Consequently, the positive impact of abusive supervision on cheating behavior is likely to alleviate.

Moreover, the extent to which procedural justice is evident in the organization can diminish the probability that the employees will exhibit cheating behavior while working under abusive supervision. Along these lines, a satisfactory level of procedural justice ensures the employees that there is an adequate procedure present in the organization to deal with unfair treatment by the abusive supervisor. In a nutshell, employees who perceive justice as fairly present are less likely to develop cheating behaviors while working with abusive supervisors.

**Hypothesis 3.** Distributive justice moderates the mediating relationship between abusive supervision and employees' creative idea sharing such that the mediated relationship is stronger under low organizational justice than under high organizational justice.

**Hypothesis 4.** Procedural justice moderates the mediating relationship between abusive supervision and employees' creative idea sharing such that the mediated relationship is stronger under low organizational justice than under high organizational justice.

### 3.4. Measures

All the items were measured on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" "5 = strongly agree". Abusive supervision, distributive justice, procedural justice, and cheating behaviors were rated by the subordinates. However, supervisors' rated creative idea sharing for each of their subordinate.

### 3.5. Abusive supervision

Abusive supervision was measured with fifteen items scale [15]. Sample items are "My supervisor ridicules me" and "My supervisor tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid." ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ).

#### 3.5.1. Distributive justice

Distributive justice was measured with four items scale [22]. Sample item is "Is employee outcome appropriate for the work I have completed?". ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ).

#### 3.5.2. Procedural justice

Distributive justice was measured with seven items scale [22]. Sample item is "Have employees had influence over the outcomes arrived by those procedures?" ( $\alpha = 0.78$ ).

#### 3.5.3. Cheating behavior

Cheating behavior was measured with seven items scale [49]. Sample items are "Misrepresented work activity to make it look as though you have been productive." and "Exaggerated work hours to look more productive. Scale items range from "1 = always" "5 = never". ( $\alpha = 0.72$ ).

### 3.5.4. Creative idea sharing

Creative idea sharing was measured with the scale item [61]. The scale item include “How likely is that focal employee share new insights or information with others?” ( $\alpha = 0.78$ ).

### 3.5.5. Control variables

Previous research has found that gender, age, and experience on a certain position influence victims subjected to the aggressive actions of the supervisors such as abusive supervision [62]. These variables have been used as control variables in several studies on abusive supervision [21,43,63]. Therefore, we also used gender, age, and experience on a certain position as control variables in this research.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Sample and data collection

This study was approved by the Ethical Committee- The University of Chenab; Ref: 06BE23. For this study, the researchers gathered data from permanent generic nurses and medical dispensers of public sector hospitals of Southern-Punjab working under the ministry of national health services regulation and coordination, Pakistan. The characteristics of the participants of this study provided an opportunity to test the proposed model in the health care sector of Pakistan and significantly contribute in the process of analyzing the association between abusive supervision and creative idea sharing. Pakistani Government in the year 2013 had initiated an extensive, long-term innovation campaign to facilitate transformations in the way employees work and share ideas. Additionally, the job rotation approach is extensively implemented in public hospitals in Pakistan, and it allows the employees to carry out different tasks and envision the broad picture. The human resource department of the organization is mainly responsible for developing generalists instead of specialists. In order to efficiently handle a range of duties and take on the responsibilities of a new work, it is crucial for the employees to share their unique information, expertise, specialized skills, appropriate tactics, and viewpoints with other team members. Although essential, sharing of ideas is an optional behavior and is not taken into account when evaluating performance.

The researchers developed two separate questionnaires for the subordinates and the immediate supervisors. Along these lines, 278 independent supervisor-subordinate pairs have been selected to complete the questionnaire. The researcher managed to control the potential supervisor impact by asking only one supervisor to complete one questionnaire for one subordinate. The guidelines to complete the survey were prepared and enclosed in the questionnaire. The researchers also informed the coordinators regarding the process through which the survey will be disseminated to the potential participants of the study. Prior to the execution of the survey, the researcher requested the coordinator to prepare a list of subordinate-supervisor pairs. The supervisors and subordinates involved in this research should be in a good position to judge each other’s behavior, the coordinators were informed as they were compiling this list. Because this organization functions as a team and has quite frequent official and informal contact among its members, supervisors may quickly learn about the actions of their subordinates. Each manager/supervisor was tasked with completing the rating forms after watching how their staff members shared ideas. Hence, there was a low probability of self-selection bias in this research. Prior to the commencement of the survey, the participants were guided about the process of completing the survey by one of the researchers in a meeting. The researcher also explained to the participants the purpose of completing the survey. Along these lines, the respondents were provided a cover letter describing the purpose of the research along with a questionnaire and a stamped envelope addressed to the researcher.

The questionnaire comprised of unique identification number that allowed the researchers to match the employee’s response to his/her immediate supervisor’s response. The researchers ascertained the participants that all their responses to the survey will be held confidential. Following the completion of the survey time period, the researchers received 243 questionnaires filled by the supervisors along with 227 questionnaires from the subordinates. This marked a response rate of 81 % in the case of subordinates and the 87 % for the supervisors. The researchers matched the subordinate questionnaires with the corresponding supervisory questionnaires and obtained 209 pairs that were further utilized for analysis. The employee population of the study comprised 61 % females with an average age of 36 years as well as an average experience of 6 years. On the other hand, the supervisory population of the study included 73% of males with an average age of 46.4 years along with an average experience of 17 years.

**Table 1**  
Confirmatory factor analysis results.

Model	Description	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	$\chi^2$	df
Baseline Model	Five Factors: Abusive Supervision, Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice, Cheating Behavior, Creative Idea Sharing	0.95	0.94	0.05	1814.02	232
Model 1	Four factors: Abusive Supervision, Distributive Justice and Procedural Justice (combined), Cheating Behavior, Creative Idea Sharing	0.88	0.86	0.07	1531.12	234
Model 2	Three factors: Abusive Supervision, Distributive Justice, and Procedural Justice (combined), Cheating Behavior, Creative Idea Sharing	0.77	0.72	0.19	1721.05	237
Model 3	Two factors: Abusive Supervision, Distributive Justice Procedural Justice, and Cheating Behavior (combined), Creative Idea Sharing	0.63	0.54	0.24	1913.25	238
Model 4	One factor: All variables combined into one factor	0.18	0.12	0.37	2172.29	241

## 4.2. Data analysis and results

We used two interlined approach to test hypotheses of this research. As a first step, for a simple mediation model, we performed hierarchical analysis by following the steps as recommended by the researches [64]. Additionally, several researchers have also recommended bootstrap approach for obtaining confidence intervals [65], therefore, for mediation analyses, we also performed bootstrapping and the Sobel test. Secondly, we tested our full moderated mediation model with SPSS macro [66]. By following these two steps, we analyzed our proposed model and demonstrated the strength of direct and indirect effects of abusive supervision on cheating behavior, and creative idea sharing as contingent on procedural and distributive justice. The results are also shown in Tables 2–4.

Before testing our hypothesized model, to confirm the construct distinctiveness among our research variables, we first performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS software package [67]. We used parceling on our five research variables, as shown in Table 1, the five factor model (CFI = 0.95; TLI = 0.94; RMSEA = 0.05;  $\chi^2(232) = 1814.02$ ) fit data well as compared to the alternative models.

Mean, standard deviation, and co-relation among the study variables are shown in Table 2. We then analyzed proposed relationships, as shown in Table 3, abusive supervision was negatively related with creative idea sharing ( $\beta = -0.21$ ,  $p < .05$ ) supporting hypothesis 1 of this research, the results also satisfied the first requirement of mediation. Next, we confirmed the mediating, role of cheating behavior in the relationship between abusive supervision and creative idea sharing, by following the steps as suggested by researchers [64]. Next, abusive supervision was positively related with cheating behavior ( $\beta = 0.26$ ,  $p < .05$ ) fulfilling the second requirement of mediation. Finally, we fulfilled the third requirement of mediation by regressing creative idea sharing on cheating behavior ( $\beta = -0.17$ , ns), non-significant coefficient confirmed that the relationship between abusive supervision and creative idea sharing is fully mediate by cheating behavior. We further performed sobel test and bootstrapping to confirm indirect effects [65]. The formal two-tailed significance test confirmed the significance of indirect effect ( $z = -2.06$ ,  $p = .04$ ), bootstrapping also confirmed the results of sobel, we estimated CI for indirect effects at 95 % bias-corrected by 10,000 sample. Our results, CI range from  $-0.12$  to  $-0.02$ , confirmed that indirect effects are statistically significant in our model [68], supporting hypothesis 2 of this research.

Next, we confirmed the moderating effect of justice (procedural, distributive) on the indirect effect of cheating behavior between abusive supervision and creative idea sharing. As presented in Table 4, the interaction of abusive supervision and distributive justice was significant for cheating behavior ( $\beta = -0.12$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The results of this interaction is also presented in Fig. 2, the interaction result showed that the relationship between abusive supervision and cheating behavior is strong when the employees ranked low distributive justice, and weak otherwise. However, the interaction term of abusive supervision and procedural justice was not significant with cheating behavior ( $\beta = 0.26$ ,  $p = ns$ ).

Finally, we confirmed the conditional indirect effect of abusive supervision on creative idea sharing through cheating behavior at two values of justice (procedural, distributive) using SPSS macro [66]. As recommended by the researchers, for this step, we set high and low levels of justice (procedural, distributive) at one standard deviation (SD) above and below the mean of procedural justice and distributive justice. The result showed that the indirect effect of abusive supervision on creative idea sharing through cheating behavior is conditional on the distributive justice level. The results as shown in Table 5, the indirect effect ( $-0.04$ ) was significant at lower levels of distributive justice (CI ranging from  $-0.13$  to  $-0.02$  and not crossing zero), however insignificant at higher levels (CI ranging from  $-0.04$  to  $0.03$  and crossing zero). However, indirect effect was not significant at lower and higher levels of procedural justice (CI ranging from  $-0.12$  to  $0.00$  and  $-0.14$  to  $0.00$ ; crossing zero). With all of the above results, we found support for hypothesis 1,2,3; rejecting hypothesis 4.

## 5. Research contributions

In the present dynamic business environment, employee creative idea generation and exchange has turned out to be a crucial element of success and competitive advantage [69,70]. The leadership of any organization plays a noteworthy role in enhancing or alleviating the valued sources of employees at workplace and, at same time influencing their creativity-sharing intention. This study adopted conservation of resource theory as the predominant theoretical framework in order to evaluate the effect of abusive supervision on the creativity-sharing behaviors of the employees. The study further examined the mediating impact of cheating behavior on the creative idea sharing behavior of the employees moderating by the organizational justice. The findings of the study propose that

**Table 2**  
Means, standard deviation, and correlation.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	1.21	0.46							
2. Age	36.54	4.39	0.039						
3. Experience	6.26	1.06	-0.108*	0.123**					
4. Abusive Supervision	3.21	0.26	-0.231*	0.107	0.132				
5. Distributive Justice	3.58	0.52	-0.103	-0.047	-0.341	0.121			
6. Procedural Justice	3.36	0.81	0.053	-0.176**	-0.019	0.192*	0.129		
7. Cheating Behavior	3.43	0.98	-0.143**	0.134*	0.073	-0.127	-0.082	0.031	
8. Creative Idea Sharing	3.05	0.72	-0.213	-0.424	-0.153	-0.025*	0.004*	0.310**	-0.187**

Note.  $N = 209$ . \* $p < .10$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$ .

**Table 3**  
Regression Results for simple mediation.

	Cheating Behavior		Creative Idea Sharing		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Control Variables</b>					
Gender	0.191	0.193	0.098	0.165	0.107
Age	0.691	0.683	0.082	0.078	0.079
Experience	0.098*	0.096*	-0.342	-0.428	-0.464
<b>Independent Variable</b>					
Abusive Supervision		0.026**		-0.21**	-0.17
<b>Mediator</b>					
Cheating Behavior					-0.21*
Overall F	4.92**	7.10**	0.41	2.07	3.12**
R <sup>2</sup>	0.08	0.14	0.02	0.05	0.06
Δ F		12.78***		6.78**	6.56*
Δ R <sup>2</sup>		0.07		0.04	0.04
<b>Indirect Effect</b>					
	Value	SE	Z	P	
Sobel	-0.06	0.03	-2.06	0.04	
<b>Bootstrap results for Indirect Effect</b>					
	Effect	SE	LL 95 % CI	LL 95 % CI	
	-0.06	0.03	-0.12	-0.02	

Note. N = 209. \*p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01.

**Table 4**  
Hierarchical regression analysis results for moderated mediation.

	Model1 Cheating Behavior		Model2 Creative Idea Sharing		Model3 Cheating Behavior	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
<b>Control Variables</b>						
Gender	0.021	0.01	0.68	0.45	0.68	0.45
Age	0.196	0.11	0.87	0.53	0.88	0.53
Experience	0.097	0.05	0.07	0.03	0.05	0.03
<b>Independent Variable</b>						
Abusive Supervision	0.88*	0.44	-0.88*	0.44	-0.18**	0.07
<b>Moderator</b>						
Distributive Justice	0.64	0.39	0.12	0.07	0.57	0.34
Procedural Justice	0.79	0.72	0.72	0.41	0.10	0.09
<b>Interactive Effect</b>						
Abusive Supervision X Distributive Justice	-0.12 *	0.06	0.99	0.37	-0.29	0.34
Abusive Supervision X Procedural Justice	0.26	0.13	0.17	(0.10)	0.66	0.33
<b>Mediator</b>						
Cheating Behavior					0.273***	0.090
Overall F	4.92**	7.10**	0.41	2.07	3.12**	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.08	0.14	0.02	0.05	0.06	
Δ F		12.78***		6.78**	6.56*	
Δ R <sup>2</sup>		0.07		0.04	0.04	

Note. N = 209. \*p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01.

with the increase in abusive supervision, the employees develop cheating behavior, that in turn diminishes their probability of sharing their valuable ideas with the coworkers. Along these lines, the organizational justice and, specifically, distributive justice moderate this mechanism. To this end, the outcomes suggest that organizations in which distributive justice is highly prevalent are less likely to witness the negative impacts of abusive supervision on creative ideas sharing of employees through cheating behavior. The succeeding segments will discuss the implications of the findings of the study for both practice and theory, as well as identify the limits of the research. In addition, directions for further studies will also be discussed in the following sections.



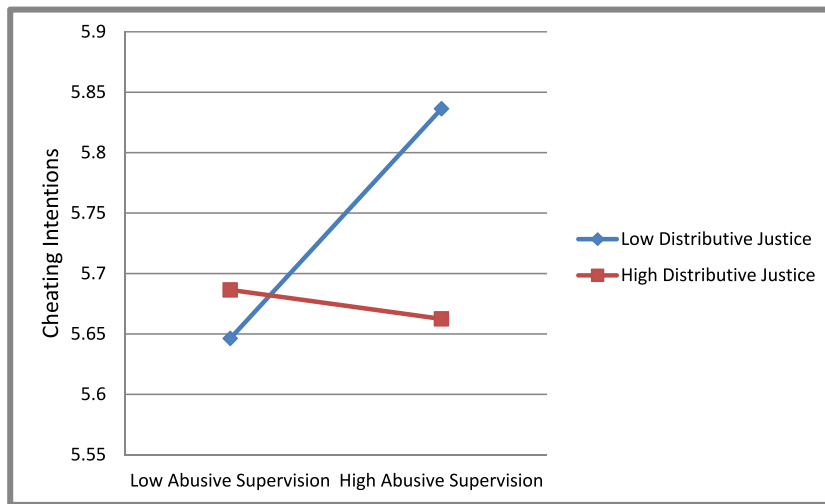


Fig. 2. Moderating effect of Distributive Justice on the relationship between Abusive Supervision and Cheating Behavior.

Table 5

Creative idea sharing across levels justice (procedural, distributive) for moderated mediation.

Moderators	Levels	Creative Idea Sharing			
		Conditional Indirect Effects	SE	LL 95 % CI	UL 95 % CI
Procedural Justice	Low (-0.81)	-0.06	0.04	-0.12	0.00
	High (0.81)	-0.05	0.04	-0.14	0.00
Distributive Justice	Low (-0.52)	-0.04	0.04	-0.13	-0.02
	High (0.52)	-0.00	0.02	-0.04	0.03

Note.  $N = 209$ . Bootstrap = 10,000.

### 5.1. Theoretical contributions

In recent times, there has been a rising significance of employees' creativity exchange in contemporary dynamic work environment. The findings of the study put forward several crucial insights into the relationship between creative idea sharing and abusive supervision. The first significant finding is that a negative correlation exists between employee creativity-sharing behaviors and abusive supervision. The study analyzed the potential drivers of creative idea sharing, which is often regarded as the discretionary behavior exhibited by employees. The researchers realized the significance of creative idea sharing within the knowledge-based environment and identified the factors that can foster or impede creative idea sharing in organizations. On the grounds of the COR theory, this research proposed that employees who face abusive supervision do not exhibit adequate idea-sharing behaviors. They prefer to conserve valuable resources such as knowledge and valuable ideas instead of sharing them with coworkers. According to the findings of the study, idea sharing typically entails sharing of specialized creative ideas, expertise and information along with unique skills. Hence, the employees need to invest greater energy and time to engage in such behavior. In other words, endorsing idea sharing is comparatively more complicated in contrast to fostering other discretionary behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior. The studies conducted in the recent times, such as [71], have analyzed the factors that facilitate information and idea sharing at the workplace. Even though a large number of studies have agreed that leaders play an important role in boosting employees' enthusiasm to exchange ideas, there is limited research analyzing the effects of negative leadership behaviors such as abusive supervision on the creativity-sharing phenomenon. Therefore, a research gap exists that ought to be filled. This study endeavored to narrow the gap by investigating the effect of abusive supervision on creativity sharing in the light of COR theory. The results of the study illustrated that the abusive behavior of the supervisor is the major stressor at the workplace that develops cheating behavior of employees that, in turn, lead to diminished creative idea sharing.

Secondly, the findings of the study proposed useful insights into how abusive supervision damage different work outcomes. The existing studies argue that abusive supervision, if not managed adequately, can lead to detrimental consequences for both individuals as well as organizations. Some of the deleterious effects of abusive supervisory behaviors, as indicated by past studies include supervisor-directed aggression, workplace deviance, the reluctance of the employees to exhibit discretionary behavior as well as high-levels of dissatisfaction among the employees [8]. This study enriches the existing literature by describing the adverse effects of abusive supervision on creativity-sharing behavior of the employees, that is deemed exceptionally crucial for the success of the organization [72].

Thirdly, the findings of the current study present a comprehensive explanation of how abusive supervision influence the creativity-

sharing behaviors of employees. The outcomes suggest that cheating behavior can be deemed as the potential psychological mechanism linking idea sharing behavior of employees and abusive supervision; in fact, mediates this relationship. The conservation of the resources theory argues that abusive supervisory behaviors lead to psychological drains of the employees that eventually restrict them from participating in deliberate activities such as idea sharing as their primary goal in such situation is to conserve the resources. Therefore, this study suggests that cheating behavior is negatively linked to idea-sharing of the employees. In spite of the possible relationship between psychological states and idea sharing, a limited number of researchers have investigated the psychological aspects as the antecedents of idea sharing. Studies in the future should analyze how psychological as well as emotional aspects can influence creative idea-sharing levels.

Lastly, in the light of the moderated mediation framework, this study found that mediating influence of cheating behavior in the correlation between abusive supervision and creative idea sharing varies on the basis of the extent of organizational justice. The organizational factors to a significant extent influence the adverse effects of abusive behaviors demonstrated by the supervisors. However, only two researchers have examined the moderating role of organizational factors [73]. Moreover, the research carried out by Ref. [43] analyzed the structures within the organization as the moderators. The outcomes of the study established that mechanistic structures strengthen the negative impact of abusive supervision on the performance and productivity of the employees. In a similar vein [74], pointed out that highly hostile organizational climates worsen the relationship between abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance. Therefore, this particular study attempted to narrow the existing gap in the literature by comprehensively describing the role of organizational justice (organizational dimension) in lessening the adverse effects of abusive behaviors of leaders. This particular research analyzed procedural and distributive justice as the predominant moderators. However, the findings of the study revealed that moderating impact of procedural justice was not significant when applied in the correlation between abusive supervision as well as cheating behavior of employees. Similarly, it was found that procedural justice did not moderate the relationship between creative idea sharing as well as abusive supervision while mediated through cheating behavior. There could be several reasons for the dissimilar outcomes of the moderation effect of procedural and distributive justice. For paradigm, distributive justice might place a stronger impact on cheating behavior when compared to procedural justice. This is also affirmed by research conducted by Ref. [75], who considered distributive justice as the strong predictor of employee outcomes. Secondly, the procedural justice is often not perceived as the organizational factor by the employees. In order to offer more comprehensive insights into the moderating effects of procedural and distributive justice, it is recommended to analyze the differential impacts of both the forms of organizational justice.

## 5.2. Practical contributions

Besides theoretical underpinning, there are several practical implications of this study. Firstly, leaders play a crucial role in enhancing the creative idea sharing among employees. Therefore, despite considerable investments made by organizations in implementing the creativity-management system, abusive behaviors of supervisors can make these efforts ineffective. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that organizations should take measures to prevent abusive supervision in organizational settings. For paradigm, they can develop training programs or coaching sessions for leaders to make them equip with essential interpersonal skills that can eradicate abusive supervision. Moreover, it is recommended that management should initiate strategies to eliminate the detrimental impacts of the abusive supervision. In light of the findings of the current study, it is suggested to strengthen organizational justice. Greater initiatives are also required to diminish the stress level experienced by the employees, as when employees are stress-free, they more readily engage in creative idea sharing behavior. On the other hand, constant work stressors cause cheating behavior, which has a negative impact on creative idea-sharing behaviors. Along these lines, it is recommended to develop training programs for employees in which they are guided about effective stress management strategies.

## 6. Limitations and future research directions

The researchers incurred several limitations in the course of this study. Firstly, the research design restricted the capacity of the researchers to deduce cause-effect relationship. The outcomes of this study do not essentially propose that engagement in creative idea-sharing behavior is reduced in the presence of abusive supervision since managers perceive creativity idea-sharing as an important element of organizational effectiveness. Nevertheless, sharing of creative ideas is regarded as optional behavior; its lack is not likely to be reason for the abusive actions of the supervisors. To this end, the studies in future are suggested to utilize field-experimental or longitudinal research designs to establish the causality of the relationship analyzed in this study. The attainment of rating for organizational justice, cheating behavior as well as abusive supervision from one sources (i.e., employees) also acted as a potential limitation of the study. The researchers tried to combat this limitation by measuring creative idea sharing by the means of a distinctive source (supervisors). In this manner they were able to enhance the objectivity of the data. The future studies can avoid this limitation by measuring creative idea sharing using different dimensions, including managers, employees, and coworkers.

Thirdly, the researchers gather data from subordinates and supervisors belonging to a single organization and chiefly associated with administrative jobs. Therefore, there is ambiguity pertaining to the degree to which the discoveries of the study can be generalized to other industries in the region as well as to distinctive cultural contexts. Hence, it is recommended that studies in the future should entail cross-cultural contexts. Along these lines, future researchers can obtain data from multiple organizations with different job types to augment the generalizability of the findings of this study. Lastly, this study did not take into account the organizational aspects as well as personal attributes despite both being crucial factors that are likely to influence the key variables of the study. They were overlooked as the researchers desired to conduct focused research. Regardless of the preceding limitation, this study significantly contributes to the existing writings on the association between abusive leader's behaviors and creative idea sharing as well as to the

COR theory. It is suggested that organizations should implement measures to reduce the damaging impacts of abusive supervision on creativity sharing in order to sustain competitive benefit.

## 7. Conclusion

Our research revealed that abusive supervision impedes creative idea sharing among employees and that supervisors may be unwitting instigators of this process by promoting cheating behavior of employees. In particular, with the increase in abusive supervision, the employees develop cheating behavior, that in turn diminishes their probability of sharing their valuable ideas with the coworkers. Decision makers should, therefore, take into account that how they raise creative idea sharing among the employees, as employees who experience abusive supervision can be motivated to cheating and in turn reduce sharing of creative ideas. It is recommended that organizations should design training programs for the supervisors to reduce chances of abusive supervision and for the employees to develop the sense of creative idea sharing among the employees.

## Data availability

Data associated with this study has not been deposited into any publicly available repository. However, the data is available with the corresponding author and will be made available on request.

## Ethics statement

This study was approved by the Ethical Committee- The University of Chenab; Ref: 06BE23.

## Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

## Research involving human participants and/or animals

Data were collected from humans only after obtaining formal approval, which is also mentioned in the methodology section, and we confirm that no humans were harmed during the data collection process.

## All the authors have made substantial contributions to all of the following

- I. The conception and design of the study, the acquisition of data, or the analysis and interpretation of data (ie. at least one of sections 1-4 below).
- II. Drafting the article or critically revising its important intellectual content.
- III. Final approval of the version submitted.

## Informed consent

Article submitted with consent of all researchers, our names can be used as authors of this article.

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Submission of an article implies that the work described has not been published previously.

## Use of inclusive language

The Authors ensure that writing is free from bias, stereotypes, slang, reference to dominant culture and/or cultural assumptions.

## CRedit authorship contribution statement

**Samreen Batool:** Writing - review & editing, Writing - original draft, Software, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Hazril Izwar Ibrahim:** Validation, Supervision, Project administration. **Ahmad Adeel:** Validation,

Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Meiqin Jiang:** Software, Methodology, Funding acquisition. **Sarminah Samad:** Software, Project administration, Funding acquisition.

### Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the revision of this research article the author(s) used Grammarly in order to improve language quality. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

### Declaration of competing interest

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### Scale Items

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#### Abusive Supervision

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My supervisor ...  
 Ridicules me  
 Tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid  
 Gives me the silent treatment  
 Puts me down in front of others  
 Invades my privacy  
 Reminds me of my past mistakes and failures  
 Doesn't give me credit for jobs requiring a lot of effort  
 Blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment  
 Breaks promises he/she makes  
 Expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for an- other reason  
 Makes negative comments about me to others  
 Is rude to me  
 Does not allow me to interact with my coworkers  
 Tells me I'm incompetent  
 Lies to me

#### Distributive Justice

Is employee outcome appropriate for the work they have completed?  
 Does employee outcome reflect the effort he/she has put into his/her work?  
 Does employee outcome reflect what he/she has contributed to the organization?  
 Is employee outcome justified, given his/her performance?

#### Procedural Justice

Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?  
 Have employees had influence over the outcomes arrived by those procedures?  
 Have those procedures been applied consistently?  
 Have those procedures been free of bias?  
 Have those procedures been based on accurate information?  
 Have you been able to appeal the (outcome) arrived at by those procedures?  
 Have those procedures upheld ethical and moral standards?

#### Cheating Behavior

Misrepresented work activity to make it look as though you have been productive  
 Made it look like you were working when you were not  
 Made up work activity to look better  
 Exaggerated work hours to look more productive  
 Came in late and didn't report it  
 Made up an excuse to avoid being in trouble for not completing work  
 Lied about the reason you were absent

#### Creative Idea Sharing

How likely is that focal employee share new insights or information with others?

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