Does employees' gender matter? Investigating the indirect effect of abusive supervision on employee creativity through job insecurity in Indonesia

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to investigate the effect of abusive supervision on employees' creativity through the mediating role of job insecurity and the moderating role of subordinate gender in Indonesia.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from various sources using online recruitment methods. The abusive supervision scale, job insecurity scale and employee creativity scale were the three measures in this study. Participants completed a three-wave data collection procedure using an online survey platform. After removing participants with incomplete and careless responses, the final data set contained 515 usable responses.

Findings – The results suggested that the negative effect of abusive supervision on employees' creativity was mediated by job insecurity, and employees' gender moderated this adverse effect. Gender roles shaped

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how employees respond to their leader's hostile behaviours. In Indonesia, abusive supervision increased employees' job insecurity and consequently reduced their creativity. However, the damage was more profound for the male employees than the female employees.

Practical implications – Gender role theory and perspectives are essential in explaining leader–employee interactions and must be included in leadership strategies. Also, support and resources must be provided equally for both male and female employees. However, more attention must be given to male employees to ensure their security working in organisations. Finally, some interventions are necessary to mitigate the effect of abusive supervision.

Originality/value – This study offers insight into how male and female employees, in a traditional gender role culture like Indonesia, respond to their leader's abusive behaviours.

Keywords Abusive supervision, Job insecurity, Employee creativity, Organisation, Gender

Paper type Research paper

Introduction
Abusive supervision is a perception of an immediate leader's hostile behaviours, excluding physical contact, and these behaviours are detrimental to individuals and organisations (Gallegos *et al.*, 2022; Tepper, 2000; Tepper *et al.*, 2007). Abusive supervision attracts many scholars' attention because it negates employee performance (Shen *et al.*, 2020; Shin and Hur, 2020; Zhou, 2016) and deteriorates individual mental health and well-being (Lee and Kelloway, 2016; Liang *et al.*, 2022; O'Halloran *et al.*, 2018; Zhou *et al.*, 2018). Being abused by superiors in the workplace has serious mental health consequences for employees. To advance the literature, this study incorporates gender role perspectives to understand abusive supervision's effect on male and female employees in organisations.

Job insecurity is an immediate consequence of abusive supervision in organisations (Glambek *et al.*, 2014; Li *et al.*, 2019; Shin and Hur, 2020). Job insecurity is a feeling of distress related to losing a current job (Shoss, 2017; Witte, 1999). Drawing from the Conservation of Resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018), people become insecure, as they lose energy and resources when dealing with an abusive supervisor. While many studies have endorsed this relationship (Li *et al.*, 2019; Shin and Hur, 2020; Wang *et al.*, 2019), the cascading effect of abusive supervision and job insecurity on extra-role behaviours (e.g. creativity) still demands further investigation.

Creativity is one of the desired employee behaviours (Collin *et al.*, 2020; Zhou and Hoever, 2014). Abusive supervision has become a barrier to fostering employees' creativity and innovative behaviours (Han *et al.*, 2017; Mahmood *et al.*, 2020; Shen *et al.*, 2020). Also, it causes employees to withhold their creativity (Shin and Hur, 2020; Wang *et al.*, 2019). Supervisors' hostile behaviours prevent employees from displaying extra-role behaviours related to creativity. However, understanding the role of other variables in the relationship is essential as other factors, such as individual differences and culture, determine the abusive supervision–creativity relationship (He *et al.*, 2021; Shen *et al.*, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2021).

Similarly, research has also shown the negative impact of job insecurity on employees' creativity (Sverke *et al.*, 2019; Teng *et al.*, 2019; Zhou and Long, 2011). However, culture, context and demographic variables could influence this relationship (Sverke *et al.*, 2019). Literature has supported the relationships between abusive supervision and job insecurity, but the relationship between abusive supervision and creativity is indirect and influenced by other variables (He *et al.*, 2021; Jiang and Gu, 2016; Shen *et al.*, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2021). Thus, this study proposes that abusive supervision might harm employees' creativity by increasing job insecurity.

Two factors must be considered in the indirect effect of abusive supervision on employee creativity: culture and gender. Firstly, culture influences how employees perceive their

supervisor's abusive behaviours. In a high power distance country (e.g. Indonesia, *see* Hofstede, 1983), employees tend to tolerate their leaders' hostile behaviours because this type of culture endorses hierarchy and dominance in leader–member exchanges (Zhang and Liao, 2015). Secondly, some empirical findings have suggested that male and female employees develop different implicit expectations related to their leader's behaviours (Daraba *et al.*, 2021; Dionisi and Barling, 2018; Joon Hyung Park *et al.*, 2018; Wells *et al.*, 2014). This expectation shapes how followers react to their leader's behaviours.

Some studies have suggested the interaction between abusive supervision and gender roles in predicting employees' outcomes (Pradhan *et al.*, 2018; Zhou *et al.*, 2018). Female employees who perceived abusive supervisory behaviours were more prone to quit their job or showed negative reactions than their male counterparts (Koay and Lim, 2023; Pradhan *et al.*, 2018). Unfortunately, evidence regarding how genders moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' negative and positive outcomes is still scarce.

Through the lens of gender role perspectives, male and female employees hold different roles in society, which determine how they respond to stressors (e.g. abusive supervisor) at work. The traditional view of social roles believes that women are caregivers while men are providers (Donald and Linington, 2008; Mintz and Mahalik, 1996; Ngo *et al.*, 2014). In a traditional gender-view culture, being a provider demands male employees to have a secure job, making supervisors' abusive behaviours more threatening for the male than for their female counterparts.

Indonesians hold a high power distance cultural value with a traditional gender view (Daraba *et al.*, 2021; Hofstede, 1983). Gender roles and expectations are deeply embedded in Indonesian society, influencing various management practices, including leader-member exchange. Despite recent improvements towards gender equality in Indonesia, gender disparities persist in the workplace, particularly in positions of leadership. The traditional gender roles can create barriers for women in the Indonesian workplace (Kokkaliali and Nurhaeni, 2017; McLaren *et al.*, 2019). Women in Indonesia have to prioritise their family responsibilities over their careers, causing it difficult to pursue a career or balance work and family life (Andajani *et al.*, 2016; Marpaung *et al.*, 2022). This traditional gender role can make differences between male and female employees in perceiving abusive supervision in the workplace.

Following the above arguments, this study provides new insight into how employees' gender roles determine the effect of abusive supervision on job insecurity and employee creativity in Indonesia. There is a possibility that gender moderates the effect of abusive supervision on employees' creativity via the role of job insecurity.

Literature review and hypotheses

Abusive supervision is subordinates' perception of supervisors' hostile behaviour, excluding physical contact (Tepper, 2000; Tepper *et al.*, 2007, 2017). This behaviour can increase job insecurity (Mao *et al.*, 2020) and reduce creativity (Mahmood *et al.*, 2020; Meisler *et al.*, 2017). Job insecurity is a perception that the current job might be lost, and this perception increases distress and reduces job satisfaction (Witte, 1999). Job insecurity adversely impacts employee performance and increased counterproductive work behaviours (Chirumbolo *et al.*, 2020; Ma *et al.*, 2023). On the other hand, creativity is the ability to detect an unusual association between two or more concepts (Fodor and Greenier, 1995) and generate new ideas for problem-solving. It is a set of discretionary behaviours that include generating new ideas for solving work-related problems (Farmer *et al.*, 2003; Ostrye, 1989) and can be influenced by leaders (Hanaysha *et al.*, 2022; Suifan and Al-Janini, 2017).

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Some studies have found that abusive supervision's effect on employee outcomes depends on employee gender (Pradhan *et al.*, 2018; Zhou *et al.*, 2018). Gender is a socio-cultural concept that defines how individuals are expected to behave in a socially identified gender (Eagly, 1997; Eagly and Steffen, 1986). Some scholars found that the responses and behaviours related to aggressive behaviours were determined by the perpetrators' and victims' gender (Eagly and Steffen, 1986; Gilbert *et al.*, 2013; Salin and Hoel, 2013). Thus, gender might differentiate how individuals perceive abusive behaviours from supervisors, which consequently influences employee outcomes, including job insecurity.

The COR theory postulates that employees are motivated to protect, preserve and procure their resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). Individuals who experience potential threats to their resources (e.g. personal objects) will attempt to protect their remaining resources. In a condition where they cannot protect the remaining resources or prevent future resource loss, these individuals will experience stress, exhaustion and burnout (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). The main principle of the COR is that individuals will strive to protect their resources and prevent resource loss.

As mentioned above, secure employment is a resource that employees must protect and perhaps seek to ensure their resources in an organisation (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018; Westman *et al.*, 2004). Mistreatments and hostile behaviours perpetrated by supervisors could threaten the employee's condition, such as secure employment and a healthy workplace (Ahmad *et al.*, 2019; Tepper *et al.*, 2017; Yu *et al.*, 2023). Drawing from this COR perspective, frequent hostile behaviour from their supervisor will threaten the subordinate's remaining resources. Subordinates might develop insecure employment or job insecurity as they continuously receive abusive supervisory behaviours. Thus, the first hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Abusive supervision positively contributes to job insecurity.

Affective event theory proposes that individuals react emotionally to events in the workplace (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Adverse events cause more damage to an individual's body, emotions, cognition and social interactions than positive ones (Taylor, 1991). During the negative emotion episode, individuals might spend most of their resources to cope with their emotional reactions. At the same time, they also experience resource depletion and leave fewer resources to perform their job properly (Eluwole *et al.*, 2022; Lu *et al.*, 2022).

As discovered by some scholars, abusive supervision is an adverse event in the workplace (Hoobler and Hu, 2013; Oh and Farh, 2017; Tillman *et al.*, 2018; Wu and Hu, 2013). Perceiving abusive treatment from a supervisor can cause psychological resource depletion and emotional exhaustion (Akram *et al.*, 2019; Huang *et al.*, 2020). As a result, employees will not have enough resources to cope with performance-related stressors because their resources have been used to manage their emotional reactions to negative events. As resources are scarce, employees presumably cannot engage in creative and innovative performance. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. Abusive supervision negatively contributes to employee's creativity.

Feeling insecure about a job is a form of affective experience that might drain employees' resources (Shoss, 2017). Threats to the continuity and stability of a job result in negative work attitudes, including decreased effort, intention to leave and resistance to change (Jiang *et al.*, 2022; Rogers *et al.*, 2017; Shoss *et al.*, 2018). Effort and willingness to change are two important elements in generating creativity. Enough resources must support these extra efforts. Employees can only perform if they have enough resources to execute the task (Hobfoll and Freedy, 2017; Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Thus, job insecurity can prevent

employees from putting in extra effort as the threats to their future job drain their resources. The following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. Job insecurity is negatively related to employee's creativity

Abused subordinates might experience threats to their job, and these threats drain their psychological resources (Ahmad *et al.*, 2019; Yuan *et al.*, 2020). As their resources are scarce, they also reduce extra-role behaviours such as creative and innovative behaviours. Thus, the effect of abusive supervision on employees' creativity can be mediated by the role of job insecurity. Some scholars have investigated this mediation model and found that job insecurity mediated the relationship between workplace mistreatment and performance (Park and Ono, 2017; Shin and Hur, 2020; Wang *et al.*, 2019). This mediation model is hypothesised as follows:

H4. The effect of abusive supervision on employee's creativity is mediated by job insecurity.

The social role theory of sex differences proposes that the differences between men and women in a social context are a product of distributed social roles (Doherty and Eagly, 1989; Eagly, 1997). Human behaviours are formed and sustained through socialisation (Eagly and Wood, 2016; Schneider and Bos, 2019). According to the gender role theory, those who hold the traditional view of social roles believe that women are caregivers while men are providers (Ngo *et al.*, 2014; Rovira *et al.*, 2022; Sirror *et al.*, 2021).

Indonesia still holds traditional gender views (Bird *et al.*, 1984; Daraba *et al.*, 2021; Mintz and Mahalik, 1996). In the Indonesian context, while female employees are more responsible for family care, male employees are expected to secure their jobs to sustain income for the family (Daraba *et al.*, 2021). This social construct has influenced how females and males should react to their leader's mistreatment. Evidence suggested that subordinates' gender significantly influenced responses to their leaders (Daraba *et al.*, 2021; Ouyang *et al.*, 2015), whereas leaders' gender showed no significant effects on how they treat subordinates (Collins *et al.*, 2014; Eagly *et al.*, 2003; Laidoja *et al.*, 2022).

Male employees could experience job insecurity more than their female counterparts if they find threats to the stability of their job. As male employees receive maleficent treatment from their supervisors, they can experience threats to their job. As the providers, male employees should secure the sustainability and continuation of their job. A threat to the job could cause more insecure feelings for male than female employees:

H5. The effect of abusive supervision on job insecurity is moderated by the subordinate's gender, in which male employees show a higher impact of abusive supervision on job insecurity than their female counterparts.

Based on the COR perspectives, employees who encounter abusive supervision might experience threats to their job security (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018), and this job insecurity drains their resources, causing a negative impact on creativity (Teng *et al.*, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2019; Zhou and Long, 2011). Also, in the Indonesian context, men are the providers for the family and their job plays a vital role (Ngo *et al.*, 2014; Rovira *et al.*, 2022; Sirror *et al.*, 2021). Threats to the job can have a dramatic impact on their security and consequently drain their resources. As resources are scarce, there will be fewer resources to perform creativity. Drawing from the traditional gender views, male employees are more likely than their female counterparts to experience the positive effect of abusive supervision on their job insecurity. Thus, the final hypothesis is proposed:

H6. The indirect effect of abusive supervision on employee creativity via job insecurity is moderated by the subordinate's gender, in which male employees show a higher indirect impact of abusive supervision on employee creativity via job insecurity than their female counterparts.

Method

Participants and procedure

Participants were full-time Indonesian employees working in various sectors, 18 years old or older, directly supervised by a leader or manager and worked and lived in Indonesia for the past five years. In addition, this study specifically measured subordinates' perception of their direct supervisor or leader's abusive supervisory behaviours. These subordinates should only report one immediate leader, manager or supervisor they frequently interact with.

This study used a convenience sampling technique to recruit participants. Undergraduate students in one of the largest public universities in South Sulawesi assisted with the data collection. They were asked to recruit participants using an online advertisement in their social media networks. Students who could recruit at least 15 participants would earn 10% credit points for their research method class. In addition, all authors reached main alumni groups and networks from the three largest universities in Sulawesi, Indonesia. This recruitment method identified six alumni groups that agreed to participate in the study. Each group consisted of 220–542 alumni who had worked in various sectors.

To reduce a common method bias (MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012), participants were asked to complete the survey three times with a three-week gap. This study used an open-source online survey platform to collect data. In the first wave, participants completed questions about demographic variables (e.g. gender) and the Abusive Supervision Scale. After three weeks, participants who fully participated in the first wave received the second survey link containing the Job Insecurity Scale. Three weeks after the second wave, only those who completed the second survey received the last survey link containing Employee Creativity Scale. All participants were given a unique code (e.g. p0001) to match their responses from different data collection waves and to protect their identity. In total, 575 participants completed the three-wave data collection from 723 who initially registered for the study. However, 60 participants were dropped because they did not pass the attention check item (i.e. if you read and understand this statement, please select "agree"). In the end, there were 515 usable responses.

The number of male and female participants was nearly equal (female = 55%, male = 45%). More than half completed high school (56%), while some held college degrees (36%). Participants came from public services (45%), private/business enterprises (48%) and other non-governmental organisations (7%). Only 13% of participants had leadership positions (i.e. supervisor and manager). Participants ranged from 18 to 58 years old ($M = 25$, $SD = 7.5$), while their tenures varied from one to 34 years ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 4.58$).

Measures

All measures were adapted into Bahasa Indonesia (the official language of Indonesian) by following the language adaptation procedure (Brislin, 1970). The following explains more about the measures.

Abusive supervision scale. Participants' perceptions about their immediate leader or abusive supervisor behaviours were measured using a 15-item Abusive Supervision Scale (Tepper, 2000). The scale used a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5

(always). The scale was considered highly reliable in this study, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.94. "(My Boss) tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid" was one of the items.

Job insecurity scale. Job insecurity was measured using the Job Insecurity Scale from Vander Elst *et al.* (2014). This scale measured employees' perception of their job insecurity. This scale had four items and was administered using a five-point Likert-type scale with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale reliability was considered acceptable with Cronbach's alpha of 0.77. "I feel insecure about the future of my job" was one of the items.

Employee creativity scale. Employee creativity was measured using the Employee Creativity Scale developed by Farmer *et al.* (2003). This scale measured how likely employees can perform creative work behaviours within their workplace setting. The scale contained four items and was administered using a six-point Likert-type scale with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly disagree). Cronbach's alpha was 0.81, indicating a reliable measure for research. One of the items was "Seeks new ideas and ways to solve problems."

Results and discussion

Results

Measurement model analysis. Measurement model analysis was performed to provide evidence of the measurement validity. The results suggested that a three-factor solution (i.e. abusive supervision, job insecurity and employee creativity) yielded a good-fit measurement model (chi-square = 760.34, $p < 0.001$, chi-square/df = 3.35, RMSEA = 0.068, SRMR = 0.061, CFI = 0.92 and TLI = 0.91). The average variance extracted (AVE) for each measure also showed an acceptable result with 0.56, 0.46 and 0.55 for abusive supervision, job insecurity and employee creativity, respectively, with discriminant validity coefficients ranged from 0.68 (job insecurity) to 0.74 (abusive supervision and employee creativity). Harman's single factor test showed 39.03% extracted variance or less than 50%, indicating that common method bias was not an issue. These results suggested that the theoretical measurement model was confirmed. Considering the reliability coefficient from each measure and the results of measurement model analysis, the survey and measurement procedure were deemed reliable and valid.

Descriptive statistics and correlations. As seen in Table 1, abusive supervision was positively correlated with job insecurity (0.26, $p < 0.001$), whereas job insecurity was negatively

Variable	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	25.08 (7.51)	–							
2. Gender	0.44 (0.50)	0.04	–						
3. Education	1.8 (0.97)	0.34***	−0.10**	–					
4. Organisation types	1.62 (0.61)	−0.27***	−0.01	−0.21***	–				
5. Job levels	1.17 (0.49)	0.13**	0.05	0.05	0.08	–			
6. Abusive supervision	21.58 (10.53)	−0.06	0.02	−0.11*	0.06	0.01	(0.94)		
7. Job insecurity	7.77 (3.21)	−0.10*	0.07	−0.11*	0.08	−0.01	0.26***	(0.77)	
8. Employee creativity	19.49 (3.16)	0.03	−0.01	−0.02	−0.01	0.12**	0.01	−0.18***	(0.81)

Notes: $N = 515$, *$p < 0.05$. **$p < 0.01$. ***$p < 0.001$, gender (0 = female, 1 = male), education (1 = high school, 2 = diploma, 3 = bachelor's degree, 4 = postgraduate, 5 = doctoral degree), organisation types (1 = public, 2 = private, 3 = not-for-profit), Job Levels (1 = staff, 2 = supervisor and 3 = manager or higher). Cronbach's alpha for inter-item correlation is in the bracket
Source: Authors (2023)

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics
and bivariate
correlations

associated with employee creativity (-0.18, $p < 0.001$). Some demographic variables were significantly associated with abusive supervision, job insecurity and creativity.

Hypothesis testing using a moderated-mediation regression technique. Table 2 shows the results of Moderated-mediation regression analysis model 7 using PROCESS by Hayes (2013). The results suggested that abusive supervision positively influenced job insecurity ($\beta = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$), which supported *H1*. In contrast, abusive supervision did not significantly impact employees' creativity (*H2* was not supported). Job insecurity negatively predicted employees' creativity (-0.19, $p < 0.001$), supporting *H3*.

As abusive supervision directly predicted job insecurity and job insecurity negatively influenced employees' creativity, the effect of abusive supervision on employees' creativity was mediated by job insecurity (*H4* was supported). The results (Model 1) also found a significant moderating effect of gender (0.06, $p < 0.05$), where the effect of abusive supervision on job insecurity was stronger for males than for female employees (support for *H5*). This interaction can be seen in Figure 1. *H6* was also supported as the indirect effect of abusive supervision on employees' creativity was mediated by job insecurity, and the direct effect of abusive supervision on job insecurity depended on the employee's gender. Table 3 lists the indirect effects of abusive supervision on employees' creativity. Figure 2 illustrates this empirical study model.

Discussion

In line with the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018), the abused employees would experience high job insecurity as their immediate leaders displayed hostile behaviours. Unexpectedly, abusive supervision did not directly impact employees' creativity. Although abusive supervision is a negative experience (Liu *et al.*, 2020; Saleem *et al.*, 2021; Wu and Du, 2022) and usually causes damage to an individual's emotions, attitudes and behaviours (Ahmad and Begum, 2020; Bormann and Gellatly, 2022; Shah and Saeed Hashmi, 2019), being abused by leaders did not directly halt employees' creative work behaviours.

This study confirmed that job insecurity negatively affected creativity, and abusive supervision influenced employees' creativity via job insecurity. Based on resource investment principles (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018), employees can only display their extra-role behaviours, including creativity, if they have enough resources (Shen *et al.*, 2019; Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Feeling

Model 1	β	SE	LLCI	ULCI	R	R^2
AS	0.06***	0.02	0.03	0.09	0.28	0.08***
Gender	−0.81	0.64	−2.07	0.45		
AS × Gender	0.06*	0.03	0.00	0.11		
Outcome: Job insecurity						
Model 2						
AS	0.02	0.01	−0.01	0.05	0.19	0.04***
JI	−0.19***	0.04	−0.28	−0.11		
Outcome: Employee creativity						

Table 2.
Moderated-mediation model 7 using PROCESS by Hayes

Notes: AS = Abusive Supervision; JI = Job Insecurity; EC = Employee Creativity; SE = Standard Error; LLCI = Lower-level confidence interval; ULCI = Upper-level confidence interval; $N = 515$; *$p < 0.05$. **$p < 0.01$. ***$p < 0.001$
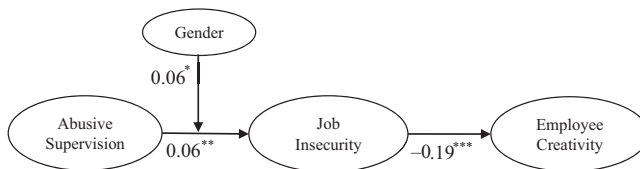**Source:** Authors (2023)
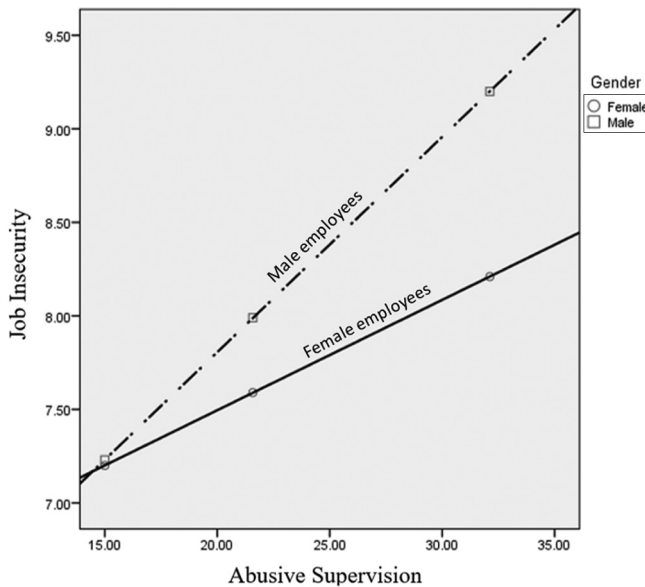
Source: Authors (2023)

Figure 1.
The moderating
effect of gender on
abusive supervision–
job insecurity
relationship

Gender	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Female	0.06	0.02	0.03	0.09
Male	0.11	0.02	0.07	0.16

Notes: SE = Standard Error; LLCI = Lower-level confidence interval; ULCI = Upper-level confidence interval; $N = 515$
Source: Authors (2023)

Source: Authors (2023)

Figure 2.
Empirical model

insecure could drain employees' cognitive resources, causing them difficulty generating creative ideas and showing creative work behaviours.

This study found that gender moderated the relationship between abusive supervision and job insecurity, and this moderation subsequently reduced creativity. The abuse of power perpetrated by leaders has been identified as a social interaction problem within the workplace context (Bhattacharjee and Sarkar, 2022; Gallegos *et al.*, 2022). However, this study revealed that the perception and consequences of abusive supervision were not equal

for men and women. The results suggested that male employees could have experienced the negative impacts of abusive supervision more than their female counterparts, leading to job insecurity.

The social role theory has highlighted that male and female expectations related to social roles are a product of socialisation (Eagly and Wood, 2016; Rovira *et al.*, 2022; Schneider and Bos, 2019). Considering the social roles where men are the "providers", job security becomes vital for them. Experiencing a threat from their immediate leaders could disturb the security of their social roles. Male employees, in this case, must invest resources and locate new resources to secure potential resource loss. Unlike males, female employees do not have this demand (i.e. providing income for the family).

Furthermore, this study emphasises the subsequent impact of abusive supervision and gender-role interaction on employees' performance, particularly their creativity. Gender roles define and guide an individual's reactions to a negative event in the workplace. Male employees might unwittingly reduce their creativity as they experience job insecurity. They might prefer to keep their regular work routines and avoid innovative and creative work behaviour to avoid the risk of performing wrong behaviours, which might attract more mistreatment from their leaders.

In the Indonesian context, men should have stable and secure jobs to support their families. Thus, when they experience a threat to their job security, they drain all resources to solve the problems, leaving less energy to perform creativity at work. It could be difficult for them to quit the job, but the exhausted male employees have few resources to engage in creative work. Female employees are more likely to quit their job as they encounter abusive supervision (Pradhan *et al.*, 2018) because society still offers social support to stay home and complete domestic work.

On the other hand, gender similarity between supervisors and subordinates potentially intensified the effect of abusive supervision on silence in South Korea (Joon Hyung Park *et al.*, 2018). The different effect of abusive supervision also occurs across cultures. For example, the mean of abusive supervision was higher in some Asian countries (e.g. China) than in the USA (Mackey *et al.*, 2017). This indicates that culture plays an important part in explaining the effect of abusive supervision.

Implications

Leaders should learn how to harness their powers, deliver impactful feedback and understand the consequences of their hostile behaviours on their follower's well-being. On the other hand, employees should also understand some challenging behaviours displayed by their leaders to help reduce insecurity.

Considering the moderating effect of gender, organisations should consider gender and its roles in designing leader-member interactions. Male employees are more likely to suffer from insecurity which eventually hinders their extra-role performance, such as creativity. Thus, countries that still nurture traditional gender views should encourage their organisations to provide support and resources fairly for both male and female employees. In Indonesian culture, some affirmative actions can be initiated to reduce threats to employees' security, safety and mental health. For example, organisations can train male employees to cope with abusive situations and overcome demanding tasks.

Limitations and future research directions

Firstly, this study recruited participants from various backgrounds to reduce biases caused by subgroup differences. However, given the number of Indonesia's population and islands, future studies should investigate how consistent the findings are in different areas of

Indonesia. Secondly, this study confirmed that employees' gender and leadership process are related. However, other gender-related factors might mitigate (or exacerbate) the effect of abusive supervision. There was still a potential gender dispute between male subordinates and their male supervisor or other gender-related conflicts that might increase the emergence of abusive supervision. Thus, future studies should examine this gender dispute between leader and follower. Thirdly, cultural dimensions (e.g. power distance) have not been fully discovered, and it might require a cross-cultural investigation to reveal how people in different cultures deal with abusive behaviours.

Conclusion

This study has supported the application of the COR theory, and some previous findings regarding the destructive effect of abusive supervision on job insecurity and employee creativity. However, the social and gender role theory and perspectives have emphasised the importance of culture and context in understanding the effect of abusive supervision. Gender roles influence how people behave in their workplace and shape their reactions to adverse events such as abusive behaviours. Male employees might suffer more than female employees when securing their job, as male employees are expected to secure jobs to support their families. This social expectation makes the threats from leaders more salient for the male than the female employees causing high job insecurity and, subsequently, low creativity.

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