

## THE EFFECT OF ABUSIVE SUPERVISION ON TURNOVER INTENTION WITH EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AS MEDIATION

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**ABSTRACT:** Supportive leadership enhances organizational performance, whereas abusive supervision undermines employee engagement and increases turnover intention. This study advances leadership and human resource research by applying Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory to clarify how employee engagement operates as both a psychological resource and a mediating mechanism under abusive supervisory conditions. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 195 nursing staff at Stella Maris Hospital Makassar through purposive sampling and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS 24. The results show that abusive supervision significantly elevates turnover intention while reducing employee engagement. Employee engagement directly lowers turnover intention and partially mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' intention to leave. These findings extend COR Theory by empirically demonstrating the resource-depleting role of destructive leadership in healthcare settings. Practically, the study highlights the importance of minimizing abusive supervisory behaviors and strengthening supportive leadership to preserve engagement and reduce nurse turnover.

**Keywords:** Abusive supervision; Supportive Leadership; Employee Engagement; Turnover Intention; Conservation of Resources Theory

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## INTRODUCTION

Nurses, as frontline healthcare providers, deliver continuous patient care from treatment initiation through recovery (Hasnah et al., 2023). Nurses constitute roughly 40-60% of hospital staff and are crucial in shaping the quality of healthcare services (Adityarini et al., 2020). Nonetheless, a significant challenge confronting hospital human resource management is the high prevalence of turnover intention among nurses, often preceding actual turnover (Falahat et al., 2019). Based on COR Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), Employee turnover intentions can be viewed as a defensive strategy workers employ to safeguard critical mental and emotional assets such as their self-esteem and social connections when faced with difficult or harmful conditions at work.

The concept of turnover intention reflects how strongly an employee is thinking about departing from their current organization (Ali et al., 2022), and elevated voluntary turnover rates are linked to suboptimal organizational performance. High nurse turnover adversely affects hospitals by causing workforce instability, increasing costs related to training existing staff, recruitment, and onboarding of new personnel, and ultimately compromising patient care quality (Kurniawaty & Tawil, 2023; Al Sabei et al., 2020).

Toxic leadership has been pinpointed as a major predictor of staff members' plans to resign, leading them to explore different career opportunities (Tepper et al., 2009). This phenomenon has become increasingly pervasive, affecting approximately 10-16% of employees across organizations (Lim et al., 2021; Tepper et al., 2004). Prior research by Özkan (2022) revealed that nurses in Turkish hospitals experience abusive supervision, which significantly influences their turnover intentions. According to COR Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), When workers are subjected to abusive management practices, their mental and emotional reserves are depleted, resulting in reduced an increased desire and workplace commitment to leave the organization as a defensive mechanism to preserve what psychological capacity they have left.

Social exchange theory further posits that interpersonal interactions operate on a resource exchange principle, with people weighing the advantages against the disadvantages within their relationships (Blau, 1964). Abusive supervision can disrupt this exchange, reducing increasing turnover intention and employee engagement.

Engagement among employees serves as an intervening factor that influences undesirable organizational effects such as turnover and burnout, alongside desirable behaviors including organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Ekawati & Tjahjono, 2019; Fulaedzah et al., 2022). From a conceptual standpoint, employee engagement represents a psychological phenomenon that improves workplace satisfaction through three key elements: energy, commitment, and immersion (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Martaningsih and Tjahjono (2022) further assert that engaged employees demonstrate not only commitment but also enthusiasm toward their work. This heightened engagement, particularly within healthcare environments, positively impacts the quality of nursing performance and contributes to increased retention rates among nursing staff.

Turnover is an expected phenomenon within hospital institutions, provided that its incidence remains within acceptable thresholds. Kim and Kim (2021) suggest that a turnover rate of approximately 10% is considered healthy for organizations. Nevertheless, empirical evidence indicates that turnover rates in hospital settings frequently exceed this benchmark. Data from NSI Nursing Solutions (2023) reveal that the global nurse turnover rate stands at 25.9%. Similarly, Indonesia experiences a notably high nurse turnover rate, estimated at 27.3% annually (Fitriasari, 2020), surpassing the normative 10% threshold. Dewi et al. (2020) highlight that elevated turnover rates in Indonesia are particularly prevalent among nurses employed in private hospitals. Such high turnover adversely affects the quality of patient care and subsequently diminishes patient satisfaction within hospital settings.

Stella Maris Makassar Hospital, a prominent private healthcare institution in Makassar City established in 1962 and managed by the Makassar Franciscan Sisters Congregation Foundation, aspires to be the preferred hospital for residents of South Sulawesi and neighboring regions by delivering high-quality health services. Despite its reputable standing and comprehensive facilities, the hospital confronts challenges related to employee retention, especially among nursing personnel. Evidence of turnover issues at Stella Maris Hospital is observable through nurse recruitment announcements disseminated via the hospital's official website and Instagram platform.

Research consistently demonstrates that abusive supervision by managers correlates with increased employee turnover intentions and negatively impacts worker engagement levels (Osei et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2022; Dhali et al., 2023; Rahman, 2023; Sun et al., 2022; Lyu et al., 2019; Baloch et al., 2023). Furthermore, studies indicate that when employees demonstrate greater engagement with their work, they are less likely to contemplate leaving their positions, thereby reducing organizational turnover rates (Bai et al., 2023; Santhanam & Srinivas, 2020; Wang et al., 2020).

The present research investigates how abusive supervision directly influences both employees' intentions and employee engagement to leave their organizations. Additionally, the study examines whether employee engagement serves as a mediating variable in the link between turnover intention and abusive supervision. The research builds upon the work conducted by Oliveira and Najnudel (2023), this research is situated within the local context of Makassar City and deliberately excludes the stress variable, which is deemed to have minimal relevance. By refining the existing research framework, this study offers a more focused and detailed investigation of the interrelations among turnover intention, employee engagement, and abusive supervision.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### *Abusive Supervision*

The concept of abusive supervision encompasses employees' subjective assessments of how regularly their supervisors demonstrate antagonistic or hostile actions, specifically excluding any physically aggressive behavior (Tepper, 2000). This definition underscores employees' sensitivity to the persistent exhibition of antagonistic conduct by supervisors and highlights the detrimental effects such behavior can have on both individual and organizational outcomes (Mackey et al., 2017). For instance, a manager may overtly deem an employee incompetent or critically evaluate the employee's thoughts and emotions (Gazali & Zainurrafiqi, 2023).

According to the Conservation of Resources theory developed (COR) by Hobfoll in 1989, people work to gain, keep, and defend the resources that matter to them. Stress occurs and personal well-being suffers when these resources are threatened, lost, or unattainable (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Within this framework, abusive supervision is understood to precipitate the loss of critical social support, such as self-esteem and employee resources (Tepper, 2000).

Scholars have utilized the Conservation of Resources framework to investigate how abusive leadership affects worker commitment and turnover intentions. Lyu et al. (2016) demonstrated that hostile supervision depletes vital employee assets like vitality and confidence, which in turn diminishes their workplace involvement. Similarly, Whitman et al. (2014) found that such negative supervisory behavior erodes workers' social connections and perceived autonomy, resulting in increased intentions to leave their jobs.

Abusive supervision encompasses nonphysical antagonistic behaviors that supervisors consistently direct toward their subordinates (Baloch et al., 2023). Employees subjected to such abuse tend to exhibit higher turnover rates and diminished trust in their supervisors, which correlates with elevated turnover intentions (Özkan, 2022) and reduced workplace engagement (Osei et al., 2022). According to Wulani et al. (2014), Abusive supervision can be categorized into three primary dimensions: (1) anger-active abuse, characterized by overt aggressive behaviors such as yelling, threatening, or manifest displays of anger; (2) humiliation-active abuse, involving actions that demean or humiliate subordinates, including public ridicule or unprofessional criticism; and (3) passive abuse, which entails neglectful behaviors that harm subordinates, such as withholding feedback or disregarding their contributions.

### *Employee Engagement*

Kahn introduced the idea of workplace engagement in 1990. Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as the degree to which workers dedicate their personal expression, feelings, and mental efforts toward performing their work duties and tasks. Engaged employees are thus inclined to exert additional effort in their work. Unlike transient moments or situational responses, engagement is understood as a more enduring and integrated psychological state, rather than a temporary focus on particular tasks or behaviors (Triharjanti & Tjahjono, 2023).

Factors that affect employee engagement at work according to Saks (2006) based on Kahn's research, are (1) the job characteristics model consists of five core elements: variety of skills, completeness of tasks, importance of tasks, independence, and performance feedback (Saks, 2006). (2) Recognition and rewards play a vital role in employee engagement. Workers tend to favor positions that offer meaningful acknowledgment and compensation for their contributions. When employee achievements go unrecognized, it often leads to diminished commitment to the organization (Saks, 2006). (3) Organizational Support: Employee perspectives on whether the organization acknowledges their work and prioritizes their overall health and happiness (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). (4) Supervisor Support: Workers often perceive their immediate manager as a representation of how much support and care the organization as a whole provides to them (Saks, 2006), supervisors are considered a crucial element in fostering employee engagement and are often identified as a primary driver of employee disengagement (Frank et al., 2004). (5) Organizations must maintain consistency and fairness when making decisions about employee actions and allocating rewards (Colquitt, 2001), where distribution relates to the fairness of decisions and procedures regarding methods of determining resources (Saks, 2006). Employee engagement describes a fulfilling and positive mental state toward one's work, marked by enthusiasm, commitment, and deep involvement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). According to Schaufeli et al. (2002) Three aspects can show employee engagement with their work, namely: Vigor: Work behavior marked by strong mental vitality and adaptability, dedication to exerting effort, sustained stamina, and persistence through challenges. Dedication: Characterized by discovering meaning, enthusiasm, and satisfaction in professional activities, accompanied by feelings of motivation and stimulation. People who score highly in this area have a strong connection to their work, viewing it as significant and engaging, while feeling energized and accomplished. Absorption: characterized by full concentration, happiness, a feeling of being immersed in the work, a feeling of time passing quickly, and difficulty stopping work.

#### *Turnover Intention*

Employee turnover intention has been defined by various scholars as the probability of workers leaving their organizations (Mobley et al., 1978). Ekhsan (2019) describes this concept as employees' desire to resign from their present workplace and seek employment elsewhere. According to Alblihed and Alzghaibi (2022), it represents a worker's deliberate decision to terminate their employment. The impact of staff turnover on organizational operations is significant, particularly in terms of financial implications (Mudiono et al., 2021). When employees choose to leave voluntarily, organizations face considerable expenses that include investment in recruitment processes, new employee training programs, operational disruptions, and the risk of losing clients (Oliveira & Najnudel, 2023). According to Na-Nan et al. (2020) State that turnover intention consists of three dimensions, namely: Turnover thinking: Describes feelings of boredom and dissatisfaction at work, as well as the desire to switch duties and consider quitting. Opportunities for new jobs: Concerns applying for new positions, going on interviews, and honing abilities in line with market demands. Intention to quit: Shows a firm determination to depart by a specific date and tender an instant resignation without first obtaining a new job or exploring alternative options.

#### *Hypothesis Development*

Abusive supervision refers to employees' perceptions of aggressive verbal and nonverbal actions displayed by their managers (Tepper, 2000). This type of supervisory behavior creates a hostile and stressful workplace atmosphere for staff members. According to Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, employees experience a loss of valuable resources—such as self-worth, collegial support, and workplace autonomy (Harris et al., 2007)—exerts considerable strain on individuals (Yu et al., 2023). Such treatment prompts workers to contemplate leaving their positions. Studies repeatedly show that subordinates are more inclined to intend to leave the organization when their managers display abusive conduct (Özkan, 2022; Rahman, 2023), with this pattern evident in service industries like nursing (Lyu et al., 2019). Studies by Dhali et al. (2023) and Ali et al. (2022) corroborate these findings, demonstrating that aggressive and mistreating leadership behaviors significantly heighten employees' intentions to pursue employment opportunities with other organizations.

*H1: Abusive supervision has a positive effect on turnover intention.*

Hostile leadership practices involve supervisors engaging in damaging behaviors such as publicly criticizing team members or disregarding their viewpoints and feelings (Gazali & Zainurrafiqi, 2023; Tepper, 2000). According to Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) framework, such detrimental managerial actions deplete employees' mental reserves and diminish their self-esteem, ultimately weakening their commitment to their work (Lyu et al., 2016). Employee engagement reflects an affirmative psychological condition characterized by vitality, absorption and dedication in professional duties (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Sustaining robust engagement requires workers to allocate their personal psychological capital (Yu et al., 2023). Saks (2006) identifies various factors influencing employee engagement, including work characteristics, reward mechanisms, institutional support, supervisory assistance, and equity in procedures and allocation of resources. Destructive management approaches undermine these essential factors, inhibiting the development of meaningful work engagement among staff. Empirical findings repeatedly demonstrate that toxic leadership diminishes employee engagement across varied organizational settings (Baloch et al., 2023; Kirrane et al., 2019), including within nursing contexts (Sun et al., 2022). Further investigations conducted by Oliveira and Najnudel (2023) and Osei et al. (2022) substantiate that detrimental supervisory behavior reduces workforce engagement across multiple organizational types.

*H2: Abusive supervision has a negative effect on employee engagement.*

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), employee engagement represents a positive mental and emotional state connected to one's professional role, marked by enthusiasm, dedication, and active participation. Workers with strong engagement levels generally display high energy, motivation, and concentration in their responsibilities, accompanied by feelings of accomplishment and a belief that their contributions are significant (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Maintaining robust employee engagement plays a vital role in decreasing turnover intentions among staff members, which helps lower overall employee departure rates within organizations. Studies have repeatedly demonstrated a negative correlation between employee engagement and the desire to leave one's job (Bai et al., 2023; S & M M, 2021; Santhanam & Srinivas, 2020; Wang et al., 2020).

*H3: Employee engagement has a negative effect on turnover intention.*

Drawing from Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory and the current research findings, this study suggests a mediation model in which abusive supervision influences turnover intention through both direct and indirect mechanisms. The indirect mechanism operates by reducing employees' engagement with their work. This conceptual model aligns with previous research by Oliveira and Najnudel (2023). The findings revealed that employee engagement functions as a psychological process through which abusive supervision leads to increased turnover intentions among workers.

*H4: The relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention is mediated by employee engagement.*

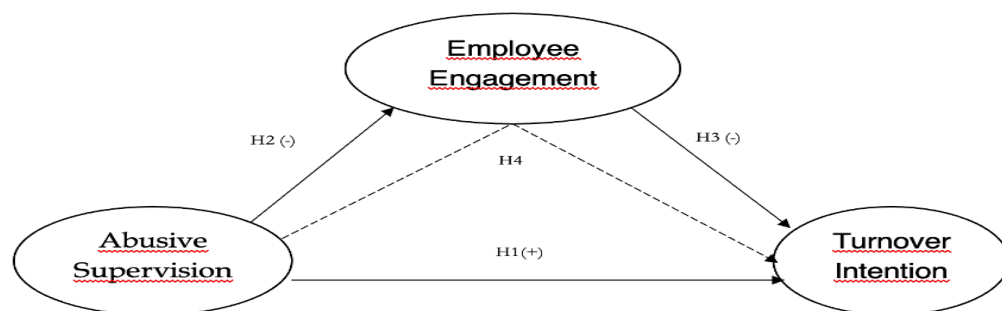


Figure 1. Research Model

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a quantitative approach, gathering primary information via survey questionnaires. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2017), quantitative methodology focuses on

examining numerical information from participants, which is then analyzed through statistical techniques. The investigation took place at Stella Maris Hospital in Makassar City, aiming to explore how abusive supervision influences employees' intention to leave, with employee engagement serving as a mediating variable.

This research included all nursing staff working at Stella Maris Hospital in Makassar. Participants were chosen using a purposive sampling method. As defined by Sekaran and Bougie (2017), this sampling approach involves deliberately choosing participants who possess particular attributes that make them capable of contributing pertinent information either due to their specialized knowledge or their alignment with established inclusion criteria.

In this study, the inclusion criteria were nurses who work under supervision and have a tenure exceeding one year. The rationale for selecting nurses with more than one year of service is that they are presumed to have surpassed the initial adaptation phase and possess sufficient work experience to critically assess the hospital's supervisory system.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire developed using Google Forms. The survey contained items measuring abusive leadership practices, employee engagement, and turnover intentions. Participants rated each statement on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The assessment of abusive supervision drew upon the framework by Wulani et al. (2014), which comprised three components: anger-driven active abuse, humiliation-driven active abuse, and passive abuse, totalling 16 measurement items. Work engagement was evaluated using Schaufeli et al.'s (2006) instrument, featuring three dimensions: absorption, vigor, and dedication across 9 items. The turnover intention scale by Na-Nan et al. (2020) was employed, capturing three aspects: thoughts about leaving, perceived alternative job prospects, and quitting intentions, with 10 items in total.

The research instrument underwent validity testing through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ensure convergent validity, with standardized loading factor values required to be  $\geq 0.50$ . Reliability was assessed using Construct Reliability (CR), with a threshold of  $\geq 0.70$  (Ghozali, 2017). The researchers utilized AMOS 24 software to conduct Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for data analysis. SEM-AMOS was selected due to the confirmatory nature of the research, which necessitates testing theoretical models and examining causal relationships among variables. Even though the sample size is relatively small, SEM-AMOS is still relevant to use because the sample meets the minimum rule of 100-200m (Tjahjono et al., 2021) with the ratio of the number of indicators to respondents.

## RESULTS

### *Description of Respondent Characteristics*

This research involved nursing personnel at Stella Maris Hospital, where participants needed to work under supervision and have at least one year of employment. The study enrolled 195 participants, meeting the minimum sample size needed for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), calculated as five to ten times the number of indicators (Tjahjono et al., 2021). Table 1 shows that female participants comprised the majority (89.2%). Most respondents fell within the 21-35 age range (67.2%). A bachelor's degree was the most common educational level (65.1%). Regarding employment type, permanent staff made up the largest group (73.3%). In terms of work experience, the majority had served between six and ten years (51.8%).

Table 1 Respondent Profile Data

Characteristic	Description	Total	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	21	10.8%
	Female	174	89.2%
Age	21-35 years	131	67.2%
	36-50 years	61	31.3%
	>50 years	3	1.5%
	Voc. School 3 <sup>rd</sup>	68	34.9%
Education	S1	127	65.1%
Employment status	Contract	52	26.7%
	Permanent	143	73.3%

Working period	1-5 years	69	35.4%
	6-10 years	101	51.8%
	11-15 years	25	12.8%

Source: data processed (2024)

#### *Validity Test*

The researchers conducted validity tests to confirm that every indicator in the study accurately captured the variable it was designed to measure. According to the standards established by Ghozali (2017), an instrument is considered valid if its loading factor exceeds 0.5. The testing process was carried out repeatedly, eliminating indicators with loading factors under 0.5 at each stage. Table 2 displays the final validity test results, showing that all retained indicators meet the validity threshold with loading factors of 0.5 or higher.

Table 2. Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Standardized Loading	Reliability
Abusive Supervision	AS1	0.702	0.905
	AS2	0.704	
	AS3	0.673	
	AS4	0.654	
	AS5	0.722	
	AS6	0.765	
	AS7	0.735	
	AS8	0.595	
	AS9	0.545	
	AS11	0.593	
	AS12	0.572	
	AS13	0.564	
	AS15	0.631	
	EE1	0.733	
	EE2	0.625	
Employee Engagement	EE3	0.530	0.841
	EE4	0.757	
	EE5	0.642	
	EE6	0.602	
	EE8	0.622	
	EE9	0.518	
	TI1	0.606	
Turnover Intention	TI2	0.670	0.891
	TI3	0.639	
	TI5	0.661	
	TI6	0.712	
	TI7	0.742	
	TI8	0.724	
	TI9	0.746	
	TI10	0.703	

Source: data processed (2024)

#### *Statistical Test of Variable Description*

The descriptive statistical analysis presented in Table 4 indicates that the abusive supervision variable exhibits a very low mean score, with the highest-rated item being "My supervisor does not provide important information to me, related to the completion of tasks" (mean = 1.72). Conversely, the employee engagement variable demonstrates a high mean score, with the item "I am proud of the work I do" receiving the highest rating (mean = 4.32). Additionally, the turnover intention variable shows a very low mean score, with the item "I consider changing tasks

or looking for a new job" having the highest mean value (1.75). Table 4 accumulates the fit index in as necessitated in the CB-SEM.

Table 3. Indicator Measurements

Variable	Indicator	Mean
Abusive Supervision	My supervisor said something rude to me	1.41
	My supervisor got angry with me in a loud voice	1.42
	My supervisor got angry with me but never explained what I should do	1.42
	My supervisor reprimands me in front of others	1.58
	My supervisor mocked me	1.35
	My supervisor intimidated me	1.34
	My supervisor hits the table hard when he is angry with me	1.37
	My supervisor gives the impression that success is due to his efforts, not mine	1.54
	My supervisor gives orders without understanding my difficulties	1.47
	My supervisor did not keep his promise to me	1.67
	My supervisor does not appreciate my hard work	1.63
	My supervisor does not provide important information related to task completion	1.72
	My supervisor forces me to keep working even during breaks	1.64
	Overall Mean	1.5
Employee Engagement	At work, I feel full of energy	3.92
	In my work, I feel strong and energized	4
	When I wake up in the morning, I feel like going to work	3.8
	I am enthusiastic about my work	4.1
	My work inspires me	4.19
	I am proud of the work I do	4.32
	I feel happy when I work intensely	3.97
	I get carried away while working	3.73
	Overall Mean	4
Turnover Intention	My work is unchallenging, repetitive, and uninteresting	1.69
	I am not happy with my job responsibilities	1.67
	I am considering changing tasks or looking for a new job	1.75
	In the past six months, I have applied for a new job	1.74
	In the past six months, I have attended job interviews	1.7
	In the past six months, I have developed skills for a desired job	1.69
	I do not want to devote full effort because I intend to leave	1.66
	I intend to resign from this job this year	1.59
	I intend to quit even without securing a new job	1.53
	Overall Mean	1.67

Source: data processed (2024)

Table 4. Goodness of Fit Test Results

Fit Index	Recommended Cut-off	Model Value	Assessment
Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ )	< 449.749	589.24	Marginal
Probability (p-value)	$\geq 0.05$	0	Poor
CMIN/DF	$\leq 2.00$	1.466	Good
GFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.829	Marginal
AGFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.802	Marginal
TLI	$\geq 0.90$	0.915	Good
CFI	$\geq 0.95$	0.921	Acceptable
RMSEA	$\leq 0.08$	0.049	Good

Source: data processed (2024)

Note: Although the chi-square statistic and absolute fit indices (GFI, AGFI) indicate marginal fit, the incremental fit indices (TLI, CFI) and parsimony-adjusted measures (CMIN/DF, RMSEA) demonstrate an overall acceptable model fit, consistent with SEM recommendations for complex models.

Table 5 indicates that the overall research model demonstrates an acceptable fit. Although chi-square value exceeds 495,350 with a probability of 0 ( $p < 0.05$ ), the CMIN/DF, TLI, and



RMSEA indices satisfy the recommended thresholds. Conversely, the GFI, AGFI, and CFI values fall slightly below the suggested benchmarks, placing them within the marginal fit category. This classification implies that while the model is not optimal, it remains acceptable. Consistent with Hair Jr. et al. (2018), evaluating three or four fit indices is considered sufficient for determining the model's adequacy as in the model structure in the Table 4. For a hypothesis to be accepted in statistical testing, two requirements must be met: the critical ratio must be greater than 1.96, and the p-value must be less than 0.05.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis & Structural Path	Estimate	p-value	Result
H1: Abusive Supervision → Turnover Intention	0.344	< 0.001	Supported
H2: Abusive Supervision → Employee Engagement	-0.457	< 0.001	Supported
H3: Employee Engagement → Turnover Intention	-0.258	< 0.001	Supported

Source: data processed (2024)

This research examined the mediating role through the Sobel test, originally developed by Sobel (1982). The test determines whether the indirect pathway from the independent variable (X) to the dependent variable (Y) through the mediator (M) is statistically significant (Tjahjono et al., 2021). In particular, this study utilized the Sobel test to examine if employee engagement functions as a meaningful intermediary between abusive supervision and turnover intention.

$$sab = \sqrt{b^2sa^2 + a^2sb^2 + sa^2sb^2} \quad \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$sab = 0,04309713$$

$$t = \frac{ab}{sab}$$

$$t = 2,73582023$$

Description:

- a : Coefficient X → M -0,457
- b : Coefficient M → Y -0,258
- sa : S.E. X → M 0,110
- sb : S.E. M → Y 0,069

The Sobel test results reveal a t-value of 2.7358, which surpasses the threshold of 1.96, providing evidence in favor of hypothesis H4. Since abusive supervision continues to demonstrate a significant direct influence on turnover intention, employee engagement serves as a partial mediator rather than a complete mediator in this association.

## DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that abusive supervision, even when reported at relatively low levels, exerts a meaningful influence on nurses' turnover intention and employee engagement at Stella Maris Hospital Makassar. This suggests that employees' withdrawal cognitions are not driven solely by the intensity or frequency of abusive behaviors but by how such behaviors signal disrespect, neglect, or poor communication within the workplace. Deficiencies in supervisory communication, particularly the failure to provide task-related information, appear especially salient in shaping negative workplace perceptions. These results corroborate prior studies showing that abusive supervision consistently heightens turnover intention across organizational contexts (Rahman, 2023; Dhali et al., 2023; Lyu et al., 2019; Ali et al., 2022; Özkan, 2022). Thus, even isolated incidents of supervisory mistreatment may carry disproportionate psychological weight, influencing nurses' decisions to consider alternative employment.

From a theoretical perspective, the negative relationship between abusive supervision and employee engagement aligns strongly with Conservation of Resources theory, which posits that stressors deplete individuals' psychological and emotional resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Although nurses in this study generally reported high engagement and pride in their work, abusive supervisory behaviors still significantly undermined engagement levels. This finding is consistent with empirical

evidence demonstrating that abusive supervision erodes engagement by diminishing employees' sense of support, self-worth, and meaning at work (Oliveira & Najnudel, 2023; Osei et al., 2022; Baloch et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2022). Engagement, in contrast, emerges as a critical resource that suppresses turnover intention, echoing earlier research showing that engaged employees are less likely to disengage psychologically or seek exit options (Wang et al., 2020; Bai et al., 2023; Santhanam & Srinivas, 2020; Sandhya & Sulphey, 2020). The high engagement observed among nurses therefore reflects a valuable organizational asset that offsets withdrawal tendencies.

More importantly, the mediating role of employee engagement clarifies the mechanism through which abusive supervision translates into turnover intention. Abusive supervision undermines engagement first, weakening employees' emotional attachment and motivation, which in turn increases their intention to leave (Tepper et al., 2017; Saks, 2006; Oliveira & Najnudel, 2023). This mediating process highlights engagement as a protective buffer rather than a passive outcome, reinforcing its strategic importance in healthcare organizations. Practically, the findings imply that hospital management should not only prevent abusive supervisory practices but also actively invest in engagement-enhancing strategies, including supportive leadership development, transparent communication, fair recognition systems, and career development opportunities. Strengthening employee engagement offers a sustainable pathway to mitigating the harmful effects of abusive supervision and retaining skilled nursing personnel in demanding healthcare environments.

## CONCLUSION AND FURTHER STUDY

This study demonstrates that abusive supervision significantly increases nurses' turnover intention while simultaneously undermining employee engagement, with engagement serving as a key mediating mechanism in the relationship between destructive leadership and the intention to leave. By confirming employee engagement as a critical psychological resource, the findings extend leadership research in healthcare contexts. Practically, the results imply that hospitals should actively minimize abusive supervisory behaviors and strengthen supportive leadership through recognition, fair rewards, mentoring, and career development programs to sustain engagement and reduce nurse attrition. However, this study is limited by its single-organization setting and cross-sectional design, which may constrain causal inference and generalizability. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, larger and more diverse samples, and examine moderating variables such as individual resilience, organizational culture, or leadership climate to deepen understanding of how leadership dynamics shape engagement and turnover intention.

## ETHICAL DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were strictly maintained, and all data were used solely for academic purposes.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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