



Emotional Exhaustion And Turnover Intention As Mediators Between Abusive Supervision And Workplace Deviant Behavior Among Nurses In Private Hospitals In Bangladesh

Rashed Mahmud Shakil*

Assistant Professor,
Uttara University,
Dhaka,
Bangladesh.

Md Raisul Islam

Researcher,
Uttara University,
Dhaka,
Bangladesh.

Md. Masum Miah

Researcher,
Uttara University,
Dhaka,
Bangladesh.

Sheikh Azmir Farhan

Researcher,
Uttara University,
Dhaka,
Bangladesh.

Abstract:

This study is designed to explore the association between abusive supervision (AS) and workplace deviant behavior (WDB) of the registered nurse in private hospitals of Bangladesh. This study examines the mediating effects of emotional exhaustion (EE) and turnover intention (TI) on explaining psychological and behavioral pathways of how abusive supervisory practices relate to nurses' workplace behaviors. The method used was quantitative research based on survey data obtained from 355 registered nurses working in private hospitals of Bangladesh. The data were obtained from a structured questionnaire containing validated measurement scales. The proposed model is tested by using partial least squares approach with SPSS to test the direct and indirect relationship among study variables. The results indicated that the effects of AS on nurses' EE and TI were significant and positive. EE and TI were both shown to have positive influences on WDB. Additionally, the study findings confirmed that EE and TI significantly mediate the relationship between AS and WDB, suggesting two distinct paths by which supervisory mistreatment affects nurses' behaviors. The study gives significant implications for hospital administrators, human resource managers, healthcare practitioners and policymakers. The results can help inform the creation of positive leadership practices, non-abusive supervision policies, employee wellness programs, and retention systems. These interventions can potentially reduce

*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Rashed Mahmud Shakil, Assistant Professor, Uttara University, Dhaka, Bangladesh E-mail: rs.shakil1310@gmail.com

WDB, improve nurses' psychological health and service quality in private healthcare providers. The purpose of this study is to develop and empirically test a dual-mediation analysis of how AS results in WDB via psychological depletion and withdrawal intentions. The research combines Social Exchange Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory to advance the knowledge on the outcomes of AS in the under-researched setting of private hospitals in Bangladesh.

Keywords: *Abusive supervision, workplace deviant behavior, emotional exhaustion, turnover intention, PLS-SEM, Bangladesh.*

Received: 21 July 2026; **Accepted:** 08 August 2026; **Published:** 19 August 2026

INTRODUCTION

In healthcare, the quality of supervisory relationships has one of the greatest impacts on the wellbeing of healthcare workers, organizational commitment, and patient outcome, and is also one of the most challenging and emotionally demanding work environments in the world (Zou et al., 2025). The private hospital sector in Bangladesh has expanded rapidly during the past two decades and accounts for an important proportion of the total health service provision in the country. Despite all these growths, there are some major problems in the health care field in terms of staff recruitment and retention, low staff morale, and higher rates of counterproductive workplace behaviours among nurses (Faheem, Ali, Akhtar, & Asrar-ul Haq, 2023; Malik, Jawad, Shahzad, & Waheed, 2023). The nurses are considered as the backbone of the service delivery in hospital and work under high stress with overload, emotional stress, and power imbalance that make nurses more vulnerable to negative hospital supervisory practices (Hong, Chen, Chen, & Qiu, 2024). Abusive supervision (AS) is defined by the constant presence of negative verbal and nonverbal actions from supervisor(s) without any physical contact (Tepper, 2000), and is considered a serious occupational risk factor and a large determinant that can negatively impact psychological well-being and workplace performance (Ilyas, Gulraiz, Zubair, Khan, & Munir, 2025). AS has been linked to lower job satisfaction, higher emotional exhaustion (EE) and increased intentions to leave the workplace, as well as higher workplace deviant behaviour (WDB) in a global context (Ahmed, Atta, El-Monshed, & Mohamed, 2024; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). There are gaps that have been identified in the study context, such as, although several studies have been carried out in various parts of the world, empirical evidence on this issue in the context of Bangladesh is lacking, especially for the nurses in private hospitals.

Despite the increasing number of academic studies related to AS and the implications for organizational research, a lot of questions still remain unanswered, and systematic and scholarly research is needed (Farrukh, Abas, Ghazzawi, & Rafiq, 2025). While previous studies have explored the relationship among AS, EE, WDB, and turnover intention (TI), only few studies have explored AS and TI as mediators between EE and WDB, and only one of them was conducted in a developing economy, namely, in a healthcare context. Existing research has been conducted in Western or East Asian organizational settings; applying the results of such studies to the Bangladeshi healthcare context without empirical evidence is risky, given its distinct socio-cultural, institutional, and professional characteristics. Moreover, the nursing profession in Bangladesh is a highly institutionalized and hierarchical workplace where distance and subordination are evident and pronounced, which may exacerbate the psychological impact of unprofessional supervisors beyond what existing western models suggest. As such, this study is believed to fill gaps in the empirical and theoretical literature by introducing a dual mediation model that sequentially links AS to EE and TI to WDB among Bangladeshi nurses.

Objectives of the Study

There are four specific objectives for this study. Firstly, it investigates the effects of AS on EE and TI among nurses in private hospitals in Bangladesh. Secondly, it examines the relationship between EE and TI with regard to deviant behavior in the workplace. Third, it introduces EE as a mediator between AS and WDB. Fourth, it investigates the mediating effect of TI between the relationship of AS and WDB. These objectives, taken together, aim to create a theoretically informed and empirically sound explanation for why the supervisory abuse–psychological and behavioral linkage leads to the final outcomes, which are deviant workplace experiences, among nurses within a Bangladeshi context.

Novel Contribution

The results of our research have important practical and theoretical consequences for human resource management, organizational behavior and health administration. It provides an integrative dual-mediation model, proposed and tested here, that goes beyond the simple single-mediator approaches found in the existing literature on AS, and this research makes key contributions to the AS literature in that regard. Our study examines AS-induced resource depletion as a sequential psychological response that leads to EE and TI, respectively, which are precursors to WDB, and is based on Conservation of Resources Theory. Moreover, this study contributes to the cross-cultural generalizability of AS theory by addressing the questions about empirical evidence from an underrepresented setting: private hospitals in Bangladesh. From a practical perspective, the results provide recommendations for supervisory training curricula, enhanced anti-harassment policies, and nurse well-being initiatives to reduce EE, TI, and overall WDB in Bangladesh's private healthcare sector, covering both operational and patient-care quality aspects.

Structure of the Paper

The rest of this paper will be organized as follows. A thorough literature analysis on AS, EE, TI, and WDB is presented in Section 2, which resulted in the conceptual framework and research hypotheses. The research design, sampling, data collection and data analysis are discussed in Section 3. The PLS-SEM results are presented in Section 4. The findings are presented in relation to existing theory and empirical evidence in Section 5. Lastly, Section 6 offers the conclusions, theoretical and practical implications, limitations and recommendations for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Theoretically, this study is based on a combination of Social Exchange Theory by [Blau \(1964\)](#) and Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by [Hobfoll \(1989\)](#), which explains the mechanisms by which abusive supervision (AS) can affect workplace deviant behaviour (WDB) among nurses in Bangladeshi private hospitals. COR Theory suggests that a key motivation for people is to gain, acquire, and maintain personal resources they covet, and that the loss of these resources causes considerable psychological stress ([Mahmood, Seth, Srivastava, Jain, & Laaser, 2024](#)). In the current study, the COR Theory provides a precise description of the systematic depletion of nurses' emotional resources during AS, leading to EE, which, in turn, is a maladaptive coping strategy that can be observed as workplace deviant behaviour (WDB). By contrast, Social Exchange Theory (SET), which draws upon [Blau \(1964\)](#) seminal work, posits that workers' actions are the outcome of norms of reciprocity, if they receive negative treatment, they will withhold positive actions or retaliate in some way. Thus, the conceptual model of SET offers an explanation of how the relationship between AS and the nurses' expectations for a fair exchange at work and withdrawal response (TI) can result in WDB. Furthermore, COR Theory and SET provide a mutually reinforcing and coherent dual-theory explanation that can account for both the psychological and relational processes that result in WDB among nursing professionals, and can account for the full mechanism that causes WDB in the context of AS.

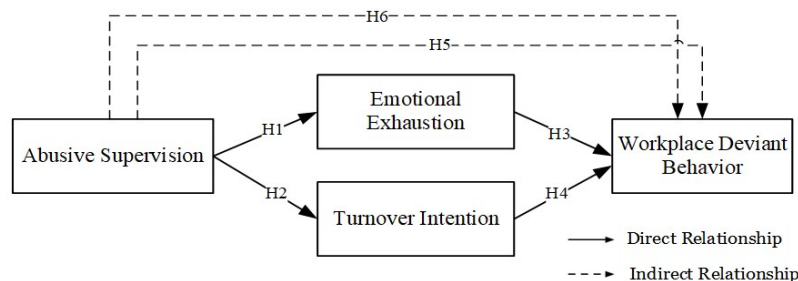


Figure 1 Hypothesized Links Among the Study Constructs

Development of Hypotheses

Abusive Supervision and Emotional Exhaustion: Abusive supervision (AS) refers to subordinate's perception of long-standing antagonistic verbal and nonverbal (NV) behaviors by managers, in absence of physical contact ([Tepper,](#)

2000; Hong et al., 2024). Supervisory harassment and abuse are constant occurrences at the work place, taking the form of humiliating, criticizing, ridiculing, and deliberately excluding nurses, all of which further undermines their professional dignity, mental health and psychological stability in a challenging healthcare profession (Malik et al., 2023). This constant exposure to supervisory hostility has gradually eroded the capacity of nurses to manage their emotional responses, leading to a feeling of being emotionally drained, psychologically depleted, and fatigued from work – the hallmarks of emotional exhaustion (EE) (Farrukh et al., 2025; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). This negative correlation is supported in practice, as Tepper (2000) has found that there is a significant negative correlation between AS and EE, Ilyas et al. (2025) identified that EE scores were found to be significantly lower in nurses who were exposed to AS, and Ahmad and Begum (2023) found that nurses who were exposed to AS had significantly higher EE scores. Theoretically, the potential relationship between AS and EE was suggested by the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which suggests that the AS is a persistent threat to nurses' important emotional/psychological resources that spirals down toward EE. The above suggests the following hypothesis:

H1: AS is positively correlated with EE.

Abusive Supervision and Turnover Intention: Abusive supervision (AS) has been documented as a highly stressful and harmful type of supervision on employees' psychological and behavioral responses in the workplace, particularly in high demand occupations such as healthcare (Mahmood et al., 2024). Nurses who are routinely exposed to negative non-verbal and verbal interactions from their supervisor(s) are more likely to suffer from emotional stress, decreased job satisfaction, and an increased likelihood of quitting their organization (Hong et al., 2024). This type of supervision can create feeling of undervalued, undermined and low morale among employees, causing them to eventually become motivated to leave from the organization establishing an unhealthy working environment. Previous empirical research has revealed a positive association between AS and turnover intention (TI) (Singh, Deonaraine, Balwant, & Ramdeo, 2024; Tepper, 2000); employees desire to leave a job if they feel they lack control in their working conditions and they desire to recover from the negative consequences of the job. The effect is even stronger in the nursing environment because of job demands and emotional labour requirements, which increase the likelihood that a nurse will contemplate turnover when there is ongoing supervisory abuse (Yasmeen, Khan, & Ahmed, 2024). According to Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), when one party in a relationship provides a benefit for the other, the other party is expected to provide a return to the first party. When AS is provided, the norm of reciprocity is breached, and nurses feel that the work relationship has become unbalanced, thereby reducing their organizational commitment and increasing TI (Rahman, 2024). As a consequence, nurses are more likely to form intentions to leave when their supervisors engage in abusive behaviors as part of an attempt to restore balance in the exchange relationship.

H2: AS is positively associated with TI.

Emotional Exhaustion and Workplace Deviant Behavior: Emotional exhaustion (EE) is a state of chronic depletion of a person's emotional and psychological resources resulting from prolonged exposure to demanding workplace stressors (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). EE is associated with decreased self-regulatory capacity, reduced organizational commitment, and increased frustration among nurses, all of which can increase the likelihood of engaging in workplace deviant behavior (WDB) (Ahmed et al., 2024). Nurses who are chronically emotionally depleted tend to become less professional in their behavior, resulting in interpersonal aggression, intentional neglect of duties, and breach of workplace norms (Endratno, Adawiyah, & Purnomo, 2023). The relationship has been substantiated by empirical evidence, such as that of (Madan, Srivastava, & Gupta, 2026), who found that the level of EE is a systematic predictor of motivation to deviate from organizational norms, and Aljaier, Alzubi, Khadem, and Iyiola (2025), who confirmed that EE is significantly related to the likelihood of retaliatory deviant acts. Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) predicts that if nurses are emotionally exhausted, they are deprived of important psychological resources and engage in WDB as a maladaptive coping strategy to restore their perceived balance of resources. Accordingly, a new hypothesis is suggested:

H3: EE has a positive correlation with WDB.

Turnover Intention and Workplace Deviant Behavior Turnover intention (TI) refers to the employees overt, deliberate decision to leave the organization, which is often a psychological withdrawal that takes place before the actual turnover behavior (Qi, Chaudhary, Yao, Mirza, & Khalid, 2022). High levels of TI correlate with higher levels of job dissatisfaction, lower levels of discretionary effort, and lower levels of organizational norm compliance among nurses in high-demand work environments like private hospitals (Faheem et al., 2023). This cognitive disconnection can result in less support for professional standards and increased prevalence of behaviors inconsistent with workplace norms, which in turn can increase workplace deviant behavior (WDB). In addition, research indicates that workers who consider quitting are more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors, such as shoddy performance and lack of cooperation with coworkers (Déprez, Battistelli, & Vandenberghe, 2024; Korir, Kemboi, & Bonuke, 2022). Such tendencies can have a profound impact on the functioning of an organization in nursing settings, where emotional labor and constant patient care are integral parts of the job (Zou et al., 2025). Conservation of Resources theory views TI as the depletion of psychological resources, and employees try to conserve the remaining resources by distancing themselves from organizational expectations, which can indirectly lead to the emergence of WDB as a coping strategy (Hobfoll, 1989). Likewise, Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) holds that a lack of attachment to the organization reduces the employee's normative obligation to it, thereby increasing the likelihood of deviant responses at work.

H4: TI is positively associated with WDB.

Mediating Influence of Emotional Exhaustion: Given the influence of abusive supervision (AS) on workplace deviant behaviour (WDB) – and the fact that there exist direct relationships among all three – it is theoretically interesting to explore emotional exhaustion (EE) as a significant psychological mediator in the AS–WDB relationship. Emotional resources are gradually depleted when a nurse is persistently supervised by unkind nurses, as evidenced by chronic exhaustion, reduced ability to control professional behaviour, and decreased ability to resist deviant behavioral impulses (Malik et al., 2023; Tepper, 2000). The more emotionally drained a nurse is, the more likely she is to engage in interpersonal aggression, intentional neglect, and norm violation as coping mechanisms for the build-up of psychological stress (Endratno et al., 2023). This is supported by empirical evidence, as Ahmed et al. (2024) reported that EE acts as a mediator in the link between toxic leadership and WDB. Theoretically, the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) can explain this mediation by explaining that AS leads to a resource depletion spiral including EE, which, in turn, is resolved through deviant workplace behaviour, a maladaptive solution. It is therefore hypothesized that:

H5: EE positively mediates the association between AS and WDB.

Mediating Influence of Turnover Intention: One of the most important stressors in the workplace, abusive supervision (AS), defined as persistent negative verbal and non-verbal behavior by supervisors (Ilyas et al., 2025; Yasmeen et al., 2024), is one area that negatively impacts nurses' psychological health in challenging health care settings. Exposure to such supervisory mistreatment raises perceptions of injustice, emotional strain, and psychological insecurity, which, over time, lead to reduced attachment to the workplace (Singh et al., 2024). Repeated exposure to abusive behaviors, as experienced by nurses, will heighten the desire to leave the organization as a coping mechanism to alleviate the stress of such behaviors and to return to a state of psychological balance (Hong et al., 2024). Previous research (Mahmood et al., 2024; Tepper, 2000) has indicated that AS is an important determinant of turnover intention (TI) as individuals want to leave undesirable and resource-consuming work environments. This effect is greater in contexts involving emotional labor and high workload, such as nursing. Hobfoll (1989) Conservation of Resources theory and Mitchell and Ambrose (2007) suggest that AS reduces emotional and psychological resources, which can increase employees' need to save what little they have left by developing withdrawal intentions (e.g., TI), which may also reduce self-regulation and result in deviant behaviors. In the same way, Blau (1964) Social Exchange Theory has been proposed to explain how AS undermines norms of reciprocity, ultimately harming the employment relationship and raising TI. The withdrawal cognition, in turn, enables workplace deviant behavior (WDB) by prompting employees to abandon their obligations to the organization.

H6: TI positively mediates the association between AS and WDB.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

The study population comprises registered nurses working in private hospitals in Bangladesh. Since most private healthcare facilities were found in the districts of Dhaka and Chittagong, these districts were purposively chosen as the study area. The non-probability sampling, in particular purposive sampling method is applied in our study, in which respondents were carefully chosen on the basis of specific criteria related to the study objectives (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). The purpose of purposive sampling is to select people with the contextual knowledge and professional experience needed to provide meaningful, reliable answers to the study's constructs, as in this study. Only formally registered nurses, that is, part-time and intern nurses, were not included, and only nurses with at least three years of professional experience in the private healthcare sector were considered eligible for inclusion in the study.

It was believed that a sample size of 355 was sufficient to conduct this cross-sectional survey since it is larger than the minimum sample size produced by G* power, and the standard recommendation of PLS-SEM. The G* power tool was used to estimate the minimum sample size at 150 using a statistical power of 0.90, an effect size of 0.05, and one-tailed paths to endogenous constructs (Sarstedt, Ringle, & Hair, 2017). This computation implies that 150 responses or more were required to identify statistically significant relationships between the variables of the study. Moreover, existing methodological evidence indicates that a sample size of nearly 100 to 150 participants is usually adequate in obtaining strong estimates in PLS-SEM (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). The final sample size of 355 registered nurses therefore far surpassed these minimum requirements, thus providing a sufficient sample size for reliable and valid model estimates.

Data Collection

The study was conducted using a systematic approach for data collection that facilitated the credibility and participation of the respondents. In the first phase, the discussion took place through personal/professional contacts with the top management of private hospitals in Bangladesh, while authorization letters were secured from the top management of hospitals to gain formal access to the registered nursing staff and to enable institutional collaboration. The questionnaires were then mailed to the registered nurses with the support of the heads of the nursing departments and ward supervisors and delivery and collection were quite easy and coordinated within the institution. To ensure clarity, accessibility and comprehensiveness, the questionnaire was designed in English and then translated into Bengali for nursing respondents to make it accessible and understandable. Moreover, a cover letter was included at the start of each questionnaire that included an explanation of the objective of the study, details that participation was voluntary, and information regarding the strict confidentiality and data protection. This institutionalized and coordinated approach not only helped to build trust with the nurse respondents but also helped to collect reliable and representative data from the private hospitals in Dhaka and Chittagong districts in Bangladesh.

In this study, both procedural and statistical strategies were employed to minimize the possibility of common method bias (CMB). To mitigate potential apprehension about evaluation and social desirability bias, respondents were guaranteed anonymity as part of the procedure. Furthermore, the questionnaire was well-structured, with clear, neutral language, free of acquiescence bias and measurement error. A one-factor Harman test was conducted to assess whether CMB was a problem, and the findings implied that no single factor accounted for most of the variance, so the problem with CMB was absent.

Measurement

The instrument was broken down into three sections. The first part included specific directions about how to conduct the survey. The second part covered the measurement constructs and their corresponding indicator items, with participants choosing the most appropriate answer. The last section collected data on demographic variables, including age, gender, level of education, and total work experience. All responses were on a 5-point Likert scale centered on the literature, and the responses were rated from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5).

The questionnaire consists of 30 items that explored Abusive Supervision (AS), Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Turnover Intention (TI), and Workplace Deviant Behavior (WDB). The instrument used to measure the constructs was derived from those tested in previous studies. AS was assessed applying the five-item version of the AS scale, formulated by Mitchell and Ambrose (2007) and derived from the original scale of Tepper (2000). Second, the measurement of EE was employed with the 9-item EE subscale from the Maslach Burnout Inventory, as introduced

by Maslach and Jackson (1981). Next, a set of 6 questions was adapted from the scale used by Michaels and Spector (1982) to evaluate TI. Lastly, a 10-item scale was developed based on Penney and Spector (2005) to measure WDB.

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this research used SPSS analysis and structural equation modelling-partial least squares (PLS-SEM). Data processing was conducted for the first time using SPSS, and then data cleaning, descriptive statistics, reliability, and correlation analyses were conducted to assess data quality and consistency. The measurement and structural models are assessed using PLS-SEM to examine the hypothesized relationships among the constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2017). The use of PLS-SEM is justified because it can be applied to prediction-oriented research, accommodates multiple mediators, is robust to non-normal data distributions, and is suitable for relatively small sample sizes (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). This method is particularly suitable if the research concerns latent variables like the development of human capital, the capacity for innovation, the capacity for organizational learning, sustainability, etc.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Respondents' Demographic Details

Table 1 shows a summary of the demographic profile of the respondents participating in the survey. The demographic data reveal that 65% of respondents are male and 35% are female. The majority of the respondents were aged between 36 and 40 (49%), with a considerable proportion holding a Master's (53%). The descriptive analysis indicated that 31% of participants had 5-9 years' experience in the healthcare field.

Table 1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Characteristics	N	%
Level of Age		
Below 35 years	110	31
36 – 40 years	175	49
41 years or above	70	20
Gender		
Female	124	35
Male	231	65
Level of Education		
Higher Secondary degree	45	13
Bachelor degree	120	34
Masters	190	53
Length of professional experience in the healthcare field		
Below 5 years	62	18
5 – 9 years	111	31
10 – 14 years	94	26
15 years or more	88	25
Total	355	100.0

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Model Assessment

Data analysis was performed using the Software SmartPLS version 4 by applying the structural equation modelling-partial least squares (PLS-SEM). The primary strength of this methodology is that it helps to explain a larger proportion of the variation in endogenous variables, the second strength is the estimation of formative and reflective models, and the third is the ease of assessing complex models (Hair et al., 2017). To investigate the hypothesized relationships, a two-step analysis was conducted (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Firstly, the reliability and validity of the measurement model was tested, then the analysis for the structural model was conducted to examine the hypothesis relationships assumed in this research (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016). In addition, the importance of the path coefficients and

loadings were tested using the bootstrapping method with 5000 resamples (Hair et al., 2017).

Measurement Model Assessment

Based on the recommendations of Henseler et al. (2016), the relationship between these variables was measured on the measurement scale and was assessed through the Internal Consistency analysis, Discriminant analysis and Convergent validity analysis and Indicator reliability. In the first step of the analysis, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the Composite reliability (CR), and Factor loadings were examined (Ringle, Sarstedt, & Straub, 2012). The resulting values were found to be higher than the recommended values reported in literature, as seen in Table 2. The reliability of the measurement model was indicated by the factor loadings > 0.50, CR values > 0.8, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient values > 0.7, as suggested by various researchers (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014).

Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted, according to the recommendations of Henseler et al. (2016). All the constructs achieved AVE values greater than the recommended cut-off value of 0.50, which proved to have convergent validity (see Table 2).

Table 2 EVALUATION OF THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

Variables	Items	Loadings (> 0.5)	AVE (> 0.5)	CR (> 0.8)	Cronbach's Alpha (> 0.7)
Abusive Supervision	AS1	0.782	0.576	0.872	0.852
	AS2	0.846			
	AS3	0.638			
	AS4	0.759			
	AS5	0.624			
Emotional Exhaustion	EE1	0.814	0.553	0.912	0.845
	EE2	0.742			
	EE3	0.827			
	EE4	0.661			
	EE5	0.783			
	EE6	0.617			
	EE7	0.835			
	EE8	0.792			
	EE9	0.657			
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.681	0.538	0.853	0.791
	TI2	0.852			
	TI3	0.686			
	TI4	0.789			
	TI5	0.658			
	TI6	0.792			
Workplace Deviant Behavior	WDB1	0.782	0.592	0.891	0.845
	WDB2	0.846			
	WDB3	0.638			
	WDB4	0.759			
	WDB5	0.624			
	WDB6	0.814			
	WDB7	0.843			
	WDB8	0.827			
	WDB9	0.761			
	WDB10	0.683			

Note: CR=Composite Reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted

Source: Prepared by the authors

Following that, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio procedure was used to evaluate the discriminant validity of the constructs as suggested by Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015). According to Henseler et al. (2015), the criterion

for adequate discriminant validity is that HTMT ratios should not exceed 0.85. As shown in Table 3, all HTMT ratios were lower than the normal cut-off value of 0.85, indicating the constructs' discriminant validity.

Table 3 *THE HTMT PROCEDURE*

Constructs	1	2	3	4
1. Abusive Supervision				
2. Emotional Exhaustion	0.517			
3. Turnover Intention	0.625	0.461		
4. Workplace Deviant Behavior	0.592	0.513	0.421	

Source: Prepared by the authors

Structural Model Assessment

The reliability and validity of the measurement model were then tested and subsequently the structural model was tested. We used the recommendations of [Hair et al. \(2017\)](#) and applied PLS bootstrapping with 5,000 bootstrap samples to the entire model to obtain the path coefficients and t-values corresponding to each path. The hypotheses were directional, and we used a one-tailed test.

As shown in Table 4, AS has a significant positive effect on EE ($b = 0.292$, $t = 3.562$, $p < 0.01$) and TI ($b = 0.316$, $t = 4.384$, $p < 0.01$), supporting hypotheses H1 and H2. Furthermore, EE ($b = 0.288$, $t = 3.268$, $P < 0.01$) and TI ($b = 0.342$, $t = 4.681$, $P < 0.01$) had positive and significant effects on WDB, thus supporting hypotheses H3 and H4.

Table 4 *THE OUTCOMES OF THE HYPOTHESIS TESTS*

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta	t-value	Confidence interval (LL, UL)	Decision
H1	AS → EE	0.292	3.562	0.153, 0.440	Supported
H2	AS → TI	0.316	4.384	0.213, 0.462	Supported
H3	EE → WDB	0.288	3.268	0.148, 0.421	Supported
H4	TI → WDB	0.342	4.681	0.227, 0.494	Supported
H5	AS → EE → WDB	0.347	7.312	0.252, 0.441	Supported
H6	AS → TI → WDB	0.321	6.763	0.234, 0.417	Supported

Note: AS = Abusive Supervision, TI = Turnover Intention, EE = Emotional Exhaustion, WDB = Workplace Deviant Behavior

Source: Prepared by the authors

The present research applied a bootstrapping technique with 5,000 resamples, similar to that used by [Preacher and Hayes \(2008\)](#). The results of the bootstrapping analyses, as shown in Table 4, confirm hypothesis H5 that the relationship between AS and WDB is significantly mediated by EE ($b = 0.347$, $t = 7.312$, $p < 0.01$) and hypothesis H6 that the relationship between AS and WDB is significantly mediated by TI ($b = 0.321$, $t = 6.763$, $p < 0.01$).

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The findings showed that H1 was supported, and a significant and positive association between abusive supervision (AS) and emotional exhaustion (EE) was found among the registered nurses of private hospitals of Bangladesh. Relatedly, research by [Ahmad and Begum \(2023\)](#) reveals that supervisors who exhibit negative nonverbal and verbal behaviors, including humiliation, excessive criticism, and unfair treatment, are a constant source of workplace stress. This constant exposure leads to a depletion of employees' emotional and psychological resources, leading to higher rates of emotional fatigue, helplessness, and EE ([Farrukh et al., 2025](#); [Malik et al., 2023](#)). Empirical evidence also supports this conclusion in manufacturing industries, as found by [Ilyas et al. \(2025\)](#) where they found lower emotional resilience, higher strain, and inability to meet the demands of the job among those in AS. Such chronic stress may, over time, result in withdrawal and reduced organizational commitment as workers strive to maintain their health in the context of all the stress they face in their supervisory role ([Hong et al., 2024](#)). Furthermore, in the theoretical

framework, the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) provides explanations that AS is a significant threat to valuable personal resources including emotional stability and self-worth. They are constantly being used without regeneration mechanisms and the employee ends up emotionally exhausted.

Similarly, Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) proposes that the abusive treatment of the supervisor is a violation of the norm of reciprocal respect and support that employees expect from their supervisor, resulting in emotional stressors and intensifying the psychological reaction of feeling exhausted. Another study revealed that AS is positively associated with turnover intention (TI) among nurses in the private health care sector in Bangladesh, consistent with the existing body of evidence. This discovery aligns with Tepper (2000) pioneering research, which found that subordinates treated negatively by a supervisor reported a higher intention to leave, and is supported by research specific to nurses, including Hong et al. (2024) in clinical environments. This convergence is found in the healthcare system; Yasmeen et al. (2024) also reported a relationship between hostile supervisory behaviors and the intention to quit among Pakistani nurses, emphasizing its strength. Based on a COR perspective (Hobfoll, 1989), AS drains emotional and psychological resources from nurses, which triggers an intention to turn over as a protective withdrawal strategy to maintain the resources that remain (Mahmood et al., 2024). In addition to this, the SET (Blau, 1964) and the view of Singh et al. (2024) could be used as a complementary explanation: nurses feel that they are being mistreated in this supervisor-subordinate relationship, and by reciprocating this perceived injustice, they psychologically and physically distance themselves from the relationship, which can manifest as an intention to leave. Therefore, empirical evidence and theoretical arguments support the hypothesized relationship.

The findings supported H3: a significant positive relationship between EE and workplace deviant behaviour (WDB) among registered nurses in private hospitals in Bangladesh. This result parallels both those of Ahmed et al. (2024), who showed that EE systematically reduces employees' motivation to conform to organizational norms, and of Madan et al. (2026), who found that emotionally exhausted employees are significantly more likely to exhibit retaliatory and counterproductive work behaviours. Additionally, Endratno et al. (2023) confirmed that this correlation exists by defining the choice of interpersonal aggression, intentional negligence, and violation of norms as maladaptive responses to the buildup of psychological stress. The relationship was not significant for Aljaier et al. (2025), which may be due to differences in the context of their work and culture. Emotionally exhausted nurses adopt deviant workplace behaviours as a maladaptive coping response to restore a sense of resource equilibrium, according to the COR Theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Hence, EE is more likely to worsen WDB among nursing staff in the specific setting of a private hospital in Bangladesh, where nursing workload is very high. This is similar to the results of the previous study where it was concluded that there is a relationship between TI and WDB (Faheem et al., 2023; Qi et al., 2022). The literature on organizational behavior indicates that the stronger the intention to leave of organizational members, the more likely they are to detach psychologically from the organization, which can cause them to lose organizational alignment, and subsequently disengagement from normative work behaviours (Déprez et al., 2024). The more people are committed, the more likely they are to disregard organizational rules, reduce their discretionary effort, and engage in negative behavior, including withdrawal, neglect of duties, or minor incidents of misconduct (Korir et al., 2022). Similarly, empirical evidence from Zou et al. (2025) in the healthcare industry shows that employees with a high intention to quit are less likely to maintain organizational standards because they see few rewards for their continued work. COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) is a theoretical explanation of this relationship: when employees intend to leave, they strive to conserve the resources they have left, which can take the form of WDB. In the same vein, the SET (Blau, 1964) proposes that when employees feel that work is not a mutually beneficial relationship, they are less committed to and less likely to contribute to the company, leading to an increase in WDB as a form of withdrawal.

The findings supported H5, which states that EE positively and significantly mediates the relationship between AS and WDB among registered nurses working in private hospitals in Bangladesh. The result is consistent with Endratno et al. (2023), who found that EE is a key psychological mechanism linking supervisor hostility to counterproductive work behaviors, and with Ahmed et al. (2024), who found that EE mediates the relationship between AS and WDB in a healthcare context. Furthermore, Madan et al. (2026) supported this mediation route by showing that resource depletion, followed by psychological exhaustion, led to deviant behavioural reactions among employees operating in challenging work contexts. However, Aljaier et al. (2025) reported no mediation, which may be due to differences in occupational context and sampling characteristics. COR Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) supports this mediation by suggesting that AS leads to a cascade of resource depletion, and that nurses then act out inappropriately as an adaptive response to recover lost psychological resources, resulting in EE. In the specific context of private hospitals in Bangladesh, this

mediation route is likely further accentuated by the emotional burden of nursing and the hierarchical relationships within supervisory systems. The result is in conformity with earlier studies, which found that AS is a sequential cause that raises employees' TI, thereby increasing deviant behavior in the workplace. Research by Mahmood et al. (2024) on organizational behavior indicates that employees do not feel psychologically attached to an organization when they perceive hostility from their supervisors, leading them to desire to leave the company. This withdrawal cognition, however, may manifest as behavioral disengagement when actual exit is limited, such as by fewer conformities to organizational rules and greater WDB (Korir et al., 2022). Empirical studies (Faheem et al., 2023; Qi et al., 2022) also indicate that TI is a key cognitive mechanism linking negative supervisory experiences to negative outcomes such as WDB, especially in high-stress service contexts, such as healthcare. COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) posits that AS may drain employees' emotional and psychological resources, thereby contributing to their intention to leave as a self-protective mechanism. When the loss of resources continues, and employees do not have an immediate exit, they try to use up the remaining resources by avoiding responsibilities at work, a pattern expressed as WDB (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Similarly, SET (Blau, 1964) suggests that one consequence of AS is a disruption of the reciprocal relationship, which can trigger employee withdrawal, commitment, and negative reciprocation, with TI as a transitional step that can convert the perceived relational disintegration into WDB.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes significantly to the theoretical literature on abusive supervision (AS), healthcare management, and organizational behaviour through several crucial insights. Second, this study is important because it extends Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) beyond their traditional organizational setting in the Western world and illustrates the theoretical applicability of the two theories in the context of unique socio-cultural and institutional settings in the South Asian health care sector. Third, this study provides empirical support for the links between emotional exhaustion (EE) and workplace deviant behaviour (WDB), and between turnover intention (TI) and WDB, as both are positively associated with WDB. From an empirical perspective, our research also makes contributions to the scholarly literature by offering empirical evidence that EE and TI are two theoretically distinct but equally significant pathways through which psychological and behavioral deterioration can occur among nurses. Third, this study extends COR Theory by showing that EE is an important intervening mechanism between AS and WDB, as resource depletion was found to be a critical step in the process of how supervisory hostility leads to deviant behavioral outcomes. Fourth, the present research provides support empirically for the advocated dual-mediation model by showing that reciprocity violation is a sequential mediator between motivation to leave and WDB, thereby adding substantially to the AS literature in a theoretically integrative and empirically sound way.

Practical Implications

The results indicate the positive relationship between abusive supervision (AS) and both emotional exhaustion (EE) and turnover intention (TI) of registered nurses in Bangladeshi private hospitals has practical implications for hospital administration and human resource practitioners. The findings of these studies suggest that supervisory behavior plays an important role in the study of the psychological health of nurses and their commitment to their institutions and that immediate institutional action is required at this level. For this reason, it is desirable that the hospital administration put in place and implement comprehensive training programs for supervisors that enable supervisors to act with respect, empathy and support in their respective wards. Next, private hospitals should have robust anti-abusive supervision policies, formal complaints processes, and anonymous reporting systems, so that any negative supervisory behaviour can be reported to a safe venue without the nurse facing any consequences. In addition, HR departments should periodically audit supervisory behaviour to proactively identify and resolve any supervisory behaviours that have the potential to become abusive before they result in negative organizational outcomes, including nurse turnover and staff wellness problems. The findings indicated that EE and TI were found to have a positive correlation with WDB among nurses, and both were found to be equally growing concern among private hospitals in Bangladesh. To prevent chronic EE from progressing to WDB, hospital administrators need to invest judiciously in nurse well-being interventions, such as stress management training, peer support groups, employee assistance programs, and workload reallocation strategies. At the same time, HR managers need to take proactive measures to prevent nurse attrition by using strategies such as job incentives, clear promotion plans, and reward initiatives to curb the intent to leave and prospective retaliatory deviant behaviours associated with nurses' perceptions of inequity and disengagement. The combination of EE and TI

interventions together is the most efficient strategy to reduce WDB in private healthcare environments.

These results confirm that EE and TI act as significant mediators in the relationship between AS and WDB; thus, reducing AS at its source would be the most strategically powerful action for private hospital administrators in Bangladesh. EE and intention to leave are organizational issues; hospital leadership must identify them as representative psychological and behavioral effects of more serious supervisory dysfunction that require structural address. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh also should establish further national regulations and standards for healthcare workplace conduct that explicitly prohibit abusive supervisory behavior, include supervisory accountability mechanisms, and provide nursing professionals with protection against workplace harassment, which will create safe, supportive, and sustainable working conditions for nursing professionals in Bangladesh's growing private hospital sector.

CONCLUSION

Our research extends the present knowledge of the dynamics of workplace stress in healthcare by identifying abusive supervision (AS) as a significant organizational stressor threatening the psychological health and professional behavior of registered nurses in private hospitals in Bangladesh via two theoretically different but empirically sound pathways. This study is centered on the Social Exchange Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory and has theoretical coherence in understanding the consequences of AS. The results indicated that AS directly reduces nurses' emotional resources, thereby infringing on the principle of reciprocal exchange and leading to emotional exhaustion and turnover intention among nurses. Most importantly, both mechanisms further describe the pathway to workplace deviant behaviour, revealing a vicious circle that Bangladeshi private hospitals cannot ignore. The study not only contributes to the academic world in terms of theory but also offers practical and relevant implications for healthcare administrators, HR managers, and healthcare policymakers aiming to create psychologically safe, work-loving, and humane nursing environments in the rapidly expanding private healthcare sector of Bangladesh.

LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARD

Despite its contributions together with empirical and theoretical findings, the present study has limitations, which are acknowledged and accompanied by suggestions for future studies. Second, the focus of the study was on registered nurses working in private hospitals in Bangladesh, limiting the findings' generalizability to other types of organizations, such as public hospitals, and other allied health professions, as well as to other cultural contexts; future studies are encouraged to replicate the study in public hospitals, in other allied health professions, and in other cultural contexts to extend the external validity of the proposed model. Second, because this research applied a cross-sectional study design, it cannot definitively establish causal relationships among the constructs studied, as they were all assessed at a single-point in time; future scholars should apply a more longitudinal or experimental design to draw more causal and temporally informed conclusions. Third, from a theoretical perspective and based on empirical findings, emotional exhaustion and turnover intention were considered both theoretical and empirical mediators; however, other psychological and occupational mechanisms could explain the relationship between abusive supervision (AS) and workplace deviant behaviour (WDB), which could be further explored in future studies. Fourth, this study was exclusively quantitative, which limits the contextual understanding achievable, suggesting that future research should use qualitative or mixed methods to gain a deeper understanding of nursing professionals' experiences. Lastly, because of the paucity of empirical research in non-Western cultural settings, systematic cross-cultural comparative research across Western and non-Western healthcare environments could help determine whether cultural boundary conditions influence the relationship between AS and WDB.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the Department of Business Administration, Uttara University for their support and facilities in doing this research work.

Financial Support

The authors did not receive any funds from any sources for the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Declaration of Interest

The authors have no competing financial or other interests that could be perceived as influencing the work reported in this paper.

Author Contributions

All authors have made substantial contributions to the work, notably in the conceptualization, methodology and analysis of data. The manuscript has been read and accepted by all the authors.

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