

Abusive Supervision and Social Capital: A Study of SMEs

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Sustaining a social network with synergy, mutual sympathy, and trust within a workplace is a precondition for SMEs sustainability. SMEs are facing challenges of negative individual characteristics of owner/managers, low patronage, and preservation of a synchronised workforce. This cross sectional study examines the effect of abusive supervision on social capital among 365 owner/managers, supervisors and employees of SMEs in the liquefied petroleum gas sub sector in Lagos State. Stratified proportionate sampling was used to select the respondents. The findings revealed that abusive supervision in form display of power, hostile attitude, intimidation, and public criticism predicted social capital. The study recommended that owner/managers should create social networking opportunities for employees through social support, effective communication among stakeholders, and exemplary leadership.

Keywords:

Abusive supervision,
Liquefied petroleum gas, Precarious employment, SMEs sustainability, Social capital.

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Background to the Study

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are acknowledged as catalysts and platforms for employment generation, local resource utilization and poverty alleviation (Asikhia, 2010). Also, most developing and developed economies predominantly depend on SMEs for sustainable development (Makinde & Asikhia, 2017). For this reason, it is expedient to harness every available intangible organisational resources such as social capital. Social networks and norms of reciprocity that set in from social interactions are essential for SMEs sustainability (Putnam, 2000). Trustworthiness, norms, and information flow capacity create social bonding and bridging ties needed for knowledge sharing and innovation, which are foremost drivers for competitiveness and market success (Schiliro, 2015). Conversely, in recent years, disquiets have been raised by scholars about a decline in social capital and its related negative consequences for businesses (Clark, 2015).

Abatement in workplace social cohesion could manifest as a result of destructive deviant behaviour such as abusive supervision. To buttress this, Priesemuth, Schminke, Ambrose, and Folger (2014) found that abusive supervision climate adversely affect social and task-related group. Likewise, business owners negative behaviours such as abusive supervision towards employees impede the growth of SMEs (Arthur-Aidoo, Aigbavboa, & Thwala, 2016), and serve as a catalysts for the failure of Nigerian SMEs a few years after inception (Fajuyigbe, 2016). Hence, SMEs sustainability is apparently predicated on either the constructive or destructive deviant behaviours of its collective social skills, knowledge, and competency.

The basic business problem is that Nigerian SMEs inclusive of those in Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) sub sector in Lagos State are facing various challenges namely limited growth opportunities, stiff competition, and negative individual characteristics of owner/managers. To underpin this assertion, scholars have argued that most SMEs have neither performed well, nor exhibited the expected critical and vibrant role in economic growth and sustainable development and this has led to an increase in business failure (Gbolagade, Adesola, & Oyewale, 2013; Oladele, 2014). Extensive research has revealed a very low per-capita usage of LPG in Nigeria compared with neighbouring countries such as Ghana and Cameroon (World Bank/ Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme, 2007). Various reasons have been adduced for the low usage of LPG in Nigeria such as, proliferation of the sale of LPG products by mediocre elements (Ogbuanu, 2014); insufficient public awareness on safety, inadequate distributive outlets such as refilling plants and high cost of LPG cylinders (Obi, 2015); inconsistent Nigerian government policies on value added tax and duty (Kalejaye, 2013; Ogbuanu, 2016), chronic logistics challenges in cooking gas supply (Alike, 2017), inadequate infrastructure such as gas cylinders and tankers, sharp practices and redtapism in the ports, deficient in crucial marketing knowledge, skills, and competency needed to recognise customers' needs and establish important interpersonal relations with them (Asikhia, 2010), and inadequate qualified and experience human capital among others.

The general problem is that laid-back government constraints, environmental and personal dimensions exclusive to small business setting and the individual characteristics of owner-mangers that typify many SMEs may allow a level of abusive behaviour that goes undocumented and understudied (Meglich & Eesley, 2011). Likewise, abusive supervision a form of antagonism and resentment has been attributed as one of the salient reasons why Nigerian SMEs hardly survive after five years of commencement of business (Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa, & Nwankwere, 2011). Accordingly, abusive supervision may hinder formal and informal social networks that permit SMEs to generate social capital by building network ties, trust, and common vision among stakeholders, and enabling them to obtain necessary resources, support, information, and knowledge (Saha & Banerjee, 2015).

Studies have shown that lack of support, particularly from supervisors' diminish employees' ability to cope with their jobs and increase the propensity of them to quit (Bilau, Sholanke, & Sani, 2015). Perhaps, precarious employment and increasing unemployment situation in the formal and informal sector of Nigeria may have created a power distant between employers and employees, which is being exploited at the detriment of the employees. As a result, this may lead to hostility and incessant psychological emasculation of employees through abusive supervision and other counterproductive workplace behaviours that tend to create a chaotic work environment.

Furthermore, the outcome of abusive supervision is not often physically harmful but it is also capable of inflicting an indelible psychological mark on victims (Harris, Harvey, Harris, & Cast, 2012). More so, subordinates who detect supervisory abuse exhibit lower levels of job performance (Xu, Huang, Lam, & Miao, 2012), are assessed more inadequately on prescribed performance appraisals (Harris, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2007), and may engage less in networking among co-workers within the organisation. Consequently, abusive supervision may create a hostile workplace which could make it difficult for SMEs to harness a social network of interpersonal relationships within a workplace for effective achievement of collective goals.

The most common expression of abusive supervisor behaviour involves nonphysical actions such as angry outbursts, public ridiculing, taking credit for subordinates' successes, and scapegoating subordinates (Keashly, Trott, & MacLean, 1994) as cited in (Tepper, 2007). An approximated 13.6% of U.S workers are affected by abusive supervision which occur on a regular basis and this destructive behaviour comes with considerable costs such as diminished well-being and low quality of work life that could spill over to their lives away from work (Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006; Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler, & Ensley, 2004). Abusive supervision cost to U.S. corporations in terms of absenteeism, health care costs, law suits and lost productivity has been approximated at \$23.8 billion annually (Tepper, Simon, & Park, 2017). Albeit, this is a rough estimate of spot on organisational cost of abusive supervision (Martinko, Harvey, Brees, & Mackey, 2013), it only show the frequency and exigency of the organisational problem (Michel, Newness, & Duniewicz, 2015).

Abusive supervision has been widely covered in the literature and has negative effects on employees, such as psychology disorder (Tepper, 2000), obnoxious psychological climate (Kernan, Racicot, & Fisher, 2016), employee deviance (Brees, Mackey, Martinko, & Harvey, 2014; Lian, Ferris, & Brown, 2012), work group deviance (Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne, & Marinova, 2012), job tension (Breux, Perrewé, Hall, Frink, & Hochwarter, 2008; Khan *et al.*, 2010), and turnover intention (Harvey *et al.*, 2007; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Khan, Qureshi, & Ahmad, 2010).

Several scholars such as Tepper (2007) and Martinko, Harvey, Brees, and Mackey (2013) conducted qualitative reviews on abusive supervision and reported existence of an inundation of studies dominated by investigations on consequences of abusive supervision. Accordingly, the recent studies on abusive supervision have improved knowledge on the harmful effects that abusive supervision exercise on subordinates and organisations. Conversely, such copious studies were conducted in foreign countries, and quantitative and comprehensive literature is still sparse to paint a more systematic picture of abusive supervision consequences on social capital of SMEs in Nigeria. This is one of the gaps this study is trying to fill. Thus, this study will examine the effect of abusive supervision on social capital of SMEs in the LPG sub sector in Lagos State.

Theoretical Foundation

Social Exchange Theory

This study is majorly anchored on the social exchange theory largely due to its efficacy as a starting point for stimulating pro-social behaviour at the workplace. Homans (1958) postulated the social exchange theory broadly to help elucidate and envisage how persons and social groups relate with one another when exchanging goods or services. Schwab, Dustin, and Bricker (2017) posit that the theory is often utilized to explain human exchanges, predominantly those in which individuals seek to gain something from the association. Further, the authors submit that the theory outlines how human interactions must be helpful and reciprocal in order to work and be sustainable. As a way of reinforcement, Crossman (2018) noted that human interactions are determined by the rewards or punishments that are anticipated from an exchange, which is appraised by means of a cost-benefit analysis model (whether intentionally or subconsciously).

In the context of this study, the social exchange process commences when owner/managers of SMEs or supervisors treat an employee in a constructive or negative manner. Constructive workplace behaviours such as organisational support and collective decision making, could elicit positive reciprocating responses such as whistle blowing, social capital, increased productivity, work engagement, innovation and creativity from the employees that is essential for SMEs sustainability. Conversely, negative or destructive workplace behaviours such as abusive supervision could provoke negative outcomes like theft, fraud, sabotage, espionage, employee silence, absenteeism, psychological trauma, depression, work life conflict, and a decline in service delivery.

Employees who are working in SMEs in the LPG sub sector would prefer to be in a work arrangement that exhaust their possibilities for career advancement, adequate remuneration, self-actualisation, health, safety, and wellness. Further, these employees would prefer to avoid industrial accidents such as slips, trips and falls, leakage of gases, inhalation of sulphuric acid, exposure to radioactive element, that may occur due to lack of adequate training and negligence on the part of management of the SMEs, in terms of adherence to safety rules and regulations. Also, employees would prefer to avoid industrial relations and interpersonal relations issues that may arise as a result of high power distance display of owner/managers of SMEs who have the propensity to indulge in precarious employment.

Research Question Development

Abusive Supervision

Abusive supervision in the management and industrial/organisational psychology literatures, symbolizes the convergence of two distinct research areas: destructive leadership and workplace mistreatment (Kemper, 2016). Destructive leadership describes a detrimental style of leadership that includes displaying negative personality traits such as narcissism and Machiavellianism (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) and exhibiting negative leader behaviours such as aggression (Schat, Desmarais, & Kelloway, 2006), bullying (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002), social undermining (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002), and abusive supervision (Krasikova, Green, & LeBreton, 2013; Tepper, 2000). Abusive supervision illustrates the hostile actions of supervisors toward their subordinates (Mary, 2012). Further, an avalanche of studies on abusive supervision, which refers to “subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178), have found a variety of its negative effects on employee outcomes, ranging from low morale, perceptions of injustice, negative work attitudes, and psychological distress to work-to-family conflict, turnover intentions, and workplace deviance (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007; Liu, Kwan, Wu, & Wu, 2010; Mitchell & Ambrose 2007; Tepper 2007; Wu, Yim, Kwan, & Zhang, 2012).

Previous studies on unproductive leadership have utilised diverse nomenclatures such as petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1994), toxic leaders (Lipman-Blumen, 2005), and abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000, 2007), to describe some negative counterproductive behaviours. Additionally, Tepper, Simon, and Park (2017) hinted that recently scholars have devoted time to comprehend leaders/supervisors whose behavioural stock of skills comprises of hostility against their subordinates, and proffer curative measures to the causes and consequences of subordinate-targeted behaviours. Consequently, subordinates who detect their supervisors are abusive are more likely to engage in workplace counterproductive behaviours that is both harmful to their supervisors and the organisation (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Restubog, Scott, & Zagenczyk, 2011). These workplace counterproductive behaviours in the guise of abusive supervision are inclusive of unrestrained outbursts, improper blaming, and public ridicule.

In furtherance to this, other researchers have noted that perceptions of abusive supervision are related with a wide array of negative organisational outcomes such as emotional exhaustion (Wu & Cao, 2015), increasing work deviance (Wang & Jiang, 2014), declining social intelligence (Popp, 2017), declining pro social behaviour (Onyishi, 2012), and social deviance (Mackey, Frieder, Perrewe, Gallagher, & Brymer, 2015), which may impede social capital, a sine quo non for SMEs sustainability. Thus, it is likely owner/manager behaviours towards supervisors and employees significantly contribute the failure of SMEs.

In addition, considering that SMEs in Nigeria are expedient vehicles for the achievement of employment generation, poverty alleviation, entrepreneurial capabilities and are also major catalysts for socio-economic development (Asikhia, 2010), it is startling that investigation on abusive supervision in the SMEs LPG sub sector is evidently sparse. Hence, the research question: *To what extent does abusive supervision affect social capital of SMEs in the LPG sub sector in Lagos State?*

Abusive Supervision and Social Capital

Tepper, Simon, and Park (2017) meta-analysis on the causes and consequences of abusive supervision in work organisations, reported that although downward hostility may be useful in getting things done, majority of studies to date proposes that abusive supervision undercut individual unit, and organisational functioning. Similarly, another meta-analysis by Zhang & Liao (2015) on consequences of abusive supervision revealed manifestation of organisation- directed and employee-directed deviant behaviours due to abusive supervision. In a comparable study, Shoss, Eisenberger, Restubog, and Zagenczyk (2012) found that employees partially attribute abusive supervision to negative assessment by the organisation and, consequently, act negatively toward and withhold positive contributions to it. Thus, this may create a hostile workplace that makes it cumbersome for employees to unleash their potentials. In tandem with this assertion, research conducted by Liu, Liao, and Loi (2012) on the dark side of leadership demonstrated that team leader abusive supervision accounts for team member creativity.

Furthermore, Kim, Kim, and Yun (2015) work on knowledge sharing, abusive supervision, and support revealed that abused employees do not share their knowledge and creativity. To support this, Liu and Wang (2012) survey demonstrated that abusive supervision is positively related to subordinates' organisational citizenship behaviours towards fellow employees. More so, Hon and Lu (2016) found that abused subordinate behaviour negatively predicts service performance. Additionally, Zhang and Liao (2015) study on the consequences of abusive supervision found that abusive supervision is related to subordinate attitudes, well beings, organisational justice perceptions, workplace behaviours, performance, and family related outcomes. Correspondingly, a survey by Priesemuth, Schminke, Ambrose, and Folger (2014) revealed that abusive supervision climate affect social and task-related group. Thus, abusive supervision may affect social capital which entails creating social networks based on reciprocity, reliance, and collaboration to produce economic and cultural capital, and is essential for business sustainability.

Wheeler, Halbesleben, and Whitman (2013) demonstrated in a study that subordinates' perceptions of abusive supervision are associated with increased strain emotional exhaustion. In tandem with this assertion, Wu and Hu (2009) survey reported that abusive supervision is positively linked to emotional exhaustion. This shows that such outcome may have health consequences for employees and cause unproductive distraction. Similarly, Kerman, Watson, Chen, and Kim (2011) study revealed that subordinate perceptions of abusive supervision affect employee well-being and job satisfaction, which could lead to decline in performance. Likewise, Lian, Ferris, and Brown (2012) concluded in their survey that abusive supervision ensures low-quality interpersonal exchanges and leader-member exchange. To underpin this, Akhavan and Hosseini (2015) survey revealed that social interaction links such as trust, mutuality, and team empathy are considerably associated with knowledge sharing intention which in turn, is significantly linked with knowledge behaviours such as knowledge collecting and knowledge donating. Consequently, social capital which involves harnessing and synergising the human capital within a workplace could negatively be affected by abusive supervision. As such, high quality and creative human capital are essentially the bedrock of any organisation (Khalid, Irshad, & Mahmood, 2012).

Method

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design which is ideal for collection of descriptive data one point in time across the selected SMEs. The target population is 1043 comprising owner/managers, supervisors, and employees working in the selected SMEs that are registered with Nigerian Association of Liquefied Petroleum Gas Marketers (NALPGAM) in Lagos State. A sample size of 281 was determined with a Rao soft sample size calculator. However, to compensate for non-response and for ambiguous filling of questionnaire, the sample was increased by 84 which is 30% of the calculated sample as recommended by Zikmund (2000). Therefore, the sample size of this study is 365.

Stratified random sampling was adopted for this study because Lagos State which is the focus of the study is stratified into 5 divisions according to the NALPGAM membership directory as at 2017, namely Badagry, Epe, Ikeja, Ikorodu, and Lagos Island. Proportionate distribution was adopted as it is essential to draw samples that represent larger groups in an acceptable manner and also because there are variations in the number of registered SME's in LPG sub sector in Lagos State divisions.

A self-structured questionnaire was used for this study to inculcate cultural exigencies, ensure adequate reliability and validity, enhance the enthusiasm of the respondents, mitigate respondent errors in understanding of the questions, and coding of answers. The self-designed questionnaire was generated after a review of relevant literature (Saha, & Banerjee, 2015; Samuel, Ansu-Mensah, & Adjei, 2013; Sanches, Gouveia-Pereira, Maroco, Gomes, & Roncon, 2016; Tepper, Simon, & Park, 2017). This was done by identifying the indices that has the ability to effortlessly measure each variable of the study. The questionnaire consists of closed-ended questions and different sections which

made it easier for generation of quick responses from respondents, in a six-point Likert scale ranging from various degrees of highness and lowness with scales such as very high, high, moderately high, moderately low, low, and very low.

The instrument was subjected to construct validity using various analytical tests to determine the ability of research instrument to measure abstract concepts and confirm the quality too. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was 0.821. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was utilized for this study. Descriptive analysis was carried out with the aid of percentage distribution, mean, and standard deviation arranged in tables while inferential analysis was carried out using simple linear regression to test the hypothesis. Simple linear regression was utilised to determine the effect of abusive supervision on social capital in the selected SMEs, at 95 percent confidence level (level of significance, $\alpha = 0.05$).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Abusive Supervision

Abusive Supervision	N = 365 (%)								
	VH	H	MH	ML	L	VL	MS	Mean	SD
Display of power	6.7	28.3	36.5	15.9	7.8	3.5	1.2	4.00	1.16
Intimidation	3.8	7.3	17.8	32.3	25.9	12.9	0.0	2.92	1.26
Aggressive eye contact	1.1	3.0	13.2	40.2	29.1	13.5	0.0	2.66	1.03
Hostile attitude	1.1	15.6	30.5	28.8	18.9	5.1	0.0	3.36	1.14
Public criticism	2.7	8.9	34.2	35.0	15.9	3.2	0.0	3.38	1.04
Silent treatment	3.5	5.9	22.1	46.6	17.5	4.3	0.0	3.18	1.04
Threats of job loss	14.8	21.0	26.7	28.0	7.0	2.4	0.0	4.01	1.26
Grand								3.36	.83

Source: Field Survey Results, 2019

Interpretation

Table 1 highlights the descriptive statistics of participants' perception to abusive supervision. Taking cognisance of the responses underneath very high, high, moderately high, moderately low, low, and very low, findings in Table 1 specified that 72.7% of the participants' perception were in tandem with the affirmation that display of power was in the range of very high to moderately high, with 6.7% indicating very high, 28.3% high and 36.5% on moderately high respectively. Also, 27.3% of the participants had alternative views, as 15.9% indicated moderately low, 7.8% indicated low, 3.5% indicated very low and 1.2% were observed as unfilled. On the average, the participants agreed that display of power is moderately high (mean = 4.00; SD= 1.16).

Further, 28.3% of the participants acknowledged a high element of intimidation in their workplaces, as 3.8% indicated very high, 7.3% indicated high and 17.8% indicated moderately high, while 71.1% of the participants deviated in their views, with 32.3% reporting moderately low, 25.9% low and 12.9% very low. On the average, the participants indicated that intimidation in their workplaces is moderately low and (mean=2.92, SD= 1.26). The result of the descriptive analysis also revealed, 17.3% of the

participants reported there is a hint of aggressive eye contact within the range of very high to moderately high, as 1.1% indicated very high, 3.0% indicated high and 13.2% indicated moderately high, while 82.7% of the participants held diverse opinions, with 40.2% signifying moderately low, 29.1% very low and 13.5% low. On the average, the participants agreed that aggressive eye contact is moderately low (mean=2.66, SD=1.03).

On hostile attitude, of the 47.2% participants who gave their opinions within the range of very high to moderately high, 1.1% specified very high, 15.6% high and 30.5% moderately high, whereas 52.8% of the participants had different estimations, with 28.8% indicating moderately low, 18.9% low and 5.1% very low. On the average, the participants indicated that hostile attitude is moderately low (mean = 3.36, SD= 1.14). The result of the descriptive analysis on public criticism revealed that 45.8% participants acknowledged an element of public criticism in their workplaces, with 2.7% specifying very high, 8.9% indicating high and 34.2% indicating moderately low, whereas the remaining 54.2% participants had contrary perception, as 35% reported moderately low, 15.9% indicated low and 3.2% indicated very low. On the average, the participants submitted that public criticism is moderately low (mean= 3.38, SD= 1.04).

Further, participants who admitted a considerable hint of silent treatment within the range of very high to moderately high are 31.5%, with 3.5% indicating very high, 5.9% indicating high and 22.1% indicating moderately high, although 68.5% of the participants disagreed with other views, with 46.6% reporting moderately low, 17.5% indicating low and 4.3% indicating very low. However, on the average participants agreed that silent treatment is moderately low (mean=3.18, SD=1.04). Finally, 62.5% of the participants pointed out a high existence of threats of job loss, as 14.8% indicated very high, 21% indicated high and 26.7% indicated moderately high, whereas 37.5% of the participants had divergent opinions, with 28% reporting moderately low, 7.0% indicating low and 2.4% specifying very low. On the average, the participants acknowledged that threats of job loss is moderately high (mean= 4.01, standard deviation= 1.26). Consequently, the grand mean of abusive supervision scale was 3.36 with implies that the participants opinions are anchored on moderately low and the standard deviation of 0.83 implied that the participants do not differ much in their views.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Social Capital

Social Capital	N = 365 (%)								
	VH	H	MH	ML	L	VL	M S	Mea n	SD
Norms of trust and reciprocity among network member	7.8	24.8	35.8	21.6	6.7	1.6	1.6	3.99	1.10
Endowments of individuals in the form of skills	3.0	17.0	35.0	22.9	17.5	4.6	0.0	3.51	1.18
Social integration activities	6.5	20.2	39.4	22.4	9.4	2.2	0.0	3.85	1.11
Network-based approach in problem solving.	4.0	17.0	36.9	30.7	9.2	2.2	0.0	3.70	1.05
Purposive actions	3.2	17.5	32.6	34.5	8.9	3.2	0.0	3.62	1.07
Collective decision making	0.5	1.9	13.2	39.4	21.3	23.7	0.0	2.50	1.08
Effective dissemination of information	16.2	21.8	38.5	18.6	4.0	0.8	0.0	4.25	1.11
Grand								3.63	.89

Source: Field Survey Results, 2019

Interpretation

Table 2 represents the descriptive statistics of participants' views to social capital. Taking note of the responses below the very high, high, moderately high, moderately low, low, and very low scale, outcomes in Table.2 stated that 46.1% of the participants agreed that there is norms of trust and reciprocity among network member at the workplaces, with 7.8% signifying very high, 24.8% high and 35.8% moderately high. Also, a larger 53.9% of the participants differed in their opinions, as 21.6 % indicated moderately low, 6.7% low, 1.6% very low, and 1.6% with no selection. On the average, the participants established that norms of trust and reciprocity is moderately high (mean = 3.99, SD= 1.10).

More so, 55% of the participants acknowledged endowments of individuals in the form of skills within the margin of very high to moderately high, with 3.0 % suggesting very high, 1.7% high and 3.5% moderately high, even though 45% of the participants varied in their opinions, with 22.9% reporting moderately low, 17.5% low and 4.6% very low. On the average, the participants agreed that endowment of individuals in form of skills is moderately high (mean= 3.51, SD=1.18). For the item on social integration activities, 66.1% of the participants acknowledged a high level of social integration activities in their workplaces, with 6.5% indicating very high, 20.2% high and 39.4% moderately high, while 33.9% of the participants differed in their opinions, with 22.4% indicating moderately low, 9.4% low and 2.2% very low. On the average, the participants agreed that social integration activities are moderately high (mean = 3.85, SD=1.11).

Furthermore, of the 57.9% participants who gave their views on network-based approach in problem solving within the very high to moderately range, 4.0% indicated very high, 17% indicated high and 36.9% indicated moderately high, whereas 42.1% differed in the views, with 30.7% indicating moderately low, 9.2% low and 2.2% very low. On the average, the participants noted that network-based approach in problem solving is

moderately high (mean=3.70, SD=1.05). On purposive actions item, 53.3% of the participants accepted there is a high extent of purposive actions, as 3.2% indicated very high, 17.5% high and 32.6% moderately high, although 46.7% varied in their views, as 34.5% indicated moderately low, 8.9% low and 3.2% very low. On the average, the participants noted that purposive actions is moderately high (mean=3.62, SD=1.07).

Participants who disclosed considerable hint of collective decision making within the very high to moderately high margin are 15.6%, with 0.5% indicating very high, 1.9% indicating high and 13.2% indicating moderately high, although 84.4% reported a diverse view, with 39.4% reporting moderately low, 21.3% low and 23.7% very low. On the average, the participants agreed that collective decision making is moderately low (mean=2.50, SD= 1.08). For participants who expressed their views on effective dissemination of information, 76.6% pointed out a high level of effective dissemination of information in their workplaces, with 16.2% indicating very high, 21.8% high and 38.5% moderately high, while 23.5% asserted different opinions, as 18.5% indicated moderately low, 4% low and 0.8% very low, on the average, the participants agreed that effective dissemination of information is moderately high (mean =4.25, SD = 1.11). The grand mean of social capital scale was 3.63 which denote that the participants views are affixed moderately high and the standard deviation of 0.89 implied that the participants do not differ much in their views.

Juxtaposing the results in tables, 1 and 2 in respect of participants views of abusive supervision on social capital. The results shows that a high display of power and threats of job loss, whereas aggressive eye contact and silent treatment of employees was quite low in the SMEs in LPG sub sector in Lagos State. Although succeeding findings revealed existence of passive aggressive and exhibit of impunity in the SMEs, social connections was high perhaps as a result of empathy among employees coming together to resolve issue of hostility. Further, persistent monitoring of work activities and repeated offensive remarks which has been reported as the hallmark of most SMEs owner/managers was reported in the findings. In addition, the study revealed a moderately high level of expectations of new challenges and display of unprofessionalism when addressing subordinates and co-workers in the selected SMEs. Conclusively, norms of trust and reciprocity among network member and social integration activities were reported in the selected SMEs. The findings suggest the abusive supervision could affect social capital. These outcomes offer answer to research question one and enable the researcher to achieve objective one.

Hypothesis One (H₀₁): Abusive supervision has no significant effect on social capital of the selected SMEs in the LPG sub sector in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 3a: Summary of Simple Regression Analysis for Effect of Abusive Supervision on Social Capital

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.649 ^a	.421	.419	.68572

a. Predictors: (Constant), ABS

Table 3b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	126.050	1	126.050	268.071	.000 ^b
	Residual	173.509	369	.470		
	Total	299.559	370			

a. Dependent Variable: SCP

b. Predictors: (Constant), ABS

Table 3c

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.987	.148		40.393	.000
	ABS	-.701	.043	-.649	-16.373	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SCP

Table 3 presents summary of results of regression analysis on the effect of abusive supervision on social capital in the selected SMEs in the LPG sub sector in Lagos State. The findings on Table 3 shows that abusive supervision has a significant negative effect on social ($\beta = -.701, t = -16.373, p < 0.05$). The result shows that abusive supervision and social capital moves in the opposite direction (connotes there is an inverse relationship). That is, if abusive increases, social capital decreases with the same extent, and vice versa. Conversely, the degree to which the two variables are negatively linked might vary over time. This finding is supported by F-statistic of $F(1, 369) = 268.071$ and p -value of 0.000 which is less than the assumed level of significance 0.05. The model R^2 (that is, goodness of fit for the regression between abusive supervision and social capital) was .421, which indicates that 42.1% of the variations in social capital are explained by abusive supervision. The p -value equals to 0.000 shows that abusive supervision significantly affects social capital of the selected SMEs in the LPG sub sector in Lagos State, Nigeria. The null hypothesis which states that abusive supervision has no significant effect on social capital of the selected SMEs in the LPG sub sector in Lagos State is hereby rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of abusive supervision on social capital of SMEs in the LPG sub sector in Lagos State, Nigeria. The annotations and findings acquired establish that there is a link between abusive supervision and social capital, inferring challenges for decision-making policy towards improving constructive workplace behaviours and proficiencies. Also, a review of extant literature revealed that abusive supervision is capable of creating social disintegration at the workplace. This may largely be due to the power distance that exists between employers and employees in SMEs coupled with Nigerian labour laws that have failed to protect vulnerable employees. To buttress this, Chan and McAllister (2014) argued that subordinate and supervisory behaviour is conditioned by the work environment in which interactions take place, and the consequences of misunderstood and inappropriate responses in cyclical interpersonal interactions can be seriously compounded over time.

The LPG sub sector, a service oriented may find it cumbersome to elicit customers patronage in a hostile work environment. As a way of response and contrivance, employees may become rude and discourteous to customers which could lead to poor quality service delivery. To help prevent such situations, a feedback mechanism becomes necessary to identify and correct any altercation or negative perception of abuse as soon as it rears its head. Thus, achieving the goal of influencing customers' expectations and patronage in the LPG sub sector requires talented, competent, and high motivated employees with the requisite workplace behaviour. Additionally, accentuating the household use of LPG is one of numerous pathways to accomplish the goal of universal ingress to clean cooking and heating solutions by 2030 (UN-Energy, 2011).

Based on the findings of this study, owner/managers should create social networking opportunities for employees through social support, effective communication among stakeholders, and exemplary leadership. Priesemuth (2013) underscored the essential of establishing a collegial workplace with shared opportunities and social bonding ties. A situation where employees cannot stand up and speak up for fear of being victimized is not in tandem with global practices and has negative connotation for intangible resources such as social capital. Also, there is need for organisational justice in SMEs to enable employees have a sense of fairness and dignity. To reinforce this, Greenbaum, Mawritz, and Piccolo (2012) argued that owner/ managers should ensure a level of congruence their words and deeds.

This research would be of relevance to SMEs in that some owner/managers may be unconscious of how their conventional characteristics of hostility is perceived negatively. More so, there is this propensity to exhibit sustained hostile behaviour since they own the capital of the business and therefore feel it is easy to dictate the pace of work and solely decide on key issues that pertain to the well being their employees. Hence, a greater appreciation of social destabilization and owner/managers double standards may help SMEs organizations comprehend what creates incongruous leadership.

Limitations of the Study

Participants were asked to respond to thoughtful questions like if they have been subjected to abuse, or if they have actually acted as abusive supervisors. Thus, an individual research level was applied (Matthiesen, Aasen, Holst, Wie, & Einarsen, 2003). The outcome of the study could be valid to the level that the participants replied the questions in a truthful manner and in agreement with their inner, subjective understanding. Therefore, items were crafted for easy understanding using the indices of the variables after an extensive perusal of related literature.

The utmost evident limitation of this cross-sectional study which is observational in design and mostly appropriate for assessing the prevalence of a behaviour in a population, is that well-founded inferences about the directions of causality implied cannot be drawn. Thus, interactions among variables must be inferred with caution. Factual causal inferences can only be drawn using longitudinal data. This is particularly essential for a construct like abusive supervision such as personality traits of the personnel and working conditions that could change over time. Therefore, future studies should utilise longitudinal data, which allows for more generalisation.

Impediments aroused from the sample frame which did not capture the concrete figure needed for the study. Some registered SMEs in the LPG sub sector in Lagos State were not included in the sample which limited the size. Thus, this created a possibility for restricted opinions as those not selected could have better data at their disposal that may aid effective decision making. Further studies could utilise larger sample frame to include gas filling plants in and outside Lagos State for generalisation. In addition, feasible limitations may have arose from the method of testing the hypotheses which may not create precise results for decision making. However, a comparison of results with similar studies in same culture could be made to ensure and enhance validity.

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