



Adaptation and Validation of the Abusive Supervision Scale: A Short Version for the Indonesian Context

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to adapt and examine the construct validity and internal reliability of the Abusive Supervision Scale Short Version (5-item) in the Indonesian context. The background of this research is based on the limited number of studies on abusive supervision in non-Western countries, particularly in Indonesia, which is characterized by high power distance. This study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design involving 252 employees who have direct supervisors in the province of South Sulawesi. The sample was selected purposively, and the scale was administered via an online platform. Data analysis was carried out using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with the WLSMV estimation method. The results show that the unidimensional model of the scale has a very good fit based on CFI (.998), TLI (.996), and SRMR (.019), with an RMSEA value of (.099). All items had factor loading values above 0.89 and were significant ($p < .001$), as well as an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of .89. In addition, the overall Omega coefficient value of .94 indicates very high internal reliability. These findings indicate that this scale is proven to be valid and reliable in measuring perceptions of abusive supervision in the Indonesian context. Practically, this short scale is useful for researchers and organizational practitioners because it can be used efficiently without increasing respondent fatigue, while still being able to provide an accurate depiction of the dynamics of abusive supervision.

Keywords: abusive supervision; power distance; reliability; scale adaptation; validity.

INTRODUCTION

Abusive supervision refers to subordinates' perceptions of supervisors' behavior that consistently displays verbally or nonverbally hostile actions, but does not involve physical violence (Bortolon et al., 2019; Griep et al., 2025; Tepper, 2000; Wei, 2022; Ye et al., 2021). This definition was later elaborated by Mitchell and Ambrose (2007), who conceptualized abusive supervision as a form of aggression behavior that is psychologically perceived by

subordinates as a deliberate attempt to cause harm. Such behavior includes the use of demeaning labels, yelling, intimidation, withholding important information, and verbally humiliating subordinates, as well as a tendency for leaders to use their power and authority arbitrarily and without empathy (Ashforth, 1997; Keashly & Harvey, 2005). Thus, abusive supervision can be understood as a form of power abuse manifested in ongoing, nonphysical aggressive behavior, characterized by intimidation, humiliation, and belittling actions that are perceived by subordinates as psychologically hurtful (Dai et al., 2019; Fischer et al., 2021; Khan & Khan, 2021; Kiazad et al., 2010; Mackey et al., 2013; Mathieu & Babiak, 2016).

Previous research shows that abusive treatment from supervisors can reduce job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and increase stress, burnout, and the intention to resign (Oliveira & Najnudel, 2023; Tepper, 2007). In addition, employees who experience abusive supervision tend to exhibit deviant behaviors such as sabotage, aggression, or conflicts with colleagues (Guo et al., 2024; Harris et al., 2011; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Perceptions of abusive supervision can also result in trickle-down abusive supervision, a condition where managers who feel abused by their superiors imitate and perpetuate the behavior towards their own subordinates (Mawritz et al., 2012). This impact can even extend into personal life, such as an increase in work-family conflict (Hoobler & Hu, 2013; López-Varela et al., 2025; Tepper, 2007; Tuarob et al., 2023; S. Wang et al., 2023; X. Wang & Chu, 2025).

The impact of the abusive supervision phenomenon has driven an increase in research on this topic. The narrative review conducted by Martinko et al. (2013) showed a surge of interest in this subject since Tepper's review in (2007) up to 2012, with more than 60 new studies exploring the causes, effects, and moderating factors of abusive supervision. Furthermore, a systematic review by Gallegos et al. (2022) also indicated a significant spike in research on abusive supervision between 2018 and 2020, with the identification of 101 theories related to abusive supervision. However, most studies on abusive supervision still focus on the individual level, while interactions with colleagues and team perceptions have not been widely examined. In fact, perceptions of abusive behavior can be shaped or moderated by team dynamics, relationships between members, and social support from coworkers (Brady et al., 2025; Gallegos et al., 2022; Hashmi et al., 2025; Kirkman et al., 2025; Li & Song, 2024). In addition, the majority of this rapidly growing research centers on Western cultural contexts.

Recent research developments have increasingly revealed the complexity of the impact of abusive supervision. A recent study by Li and Xu (2025) found that supervisors' abusive behavior significantly increases emotional exhaustion, especially when subordinates use maladaptive emotion regulation strategies such as expressive suppression. Another study in the hospitality sector also showed that abusive supervision undermines subordinates' hope and optimism, thereby reducing their ability to handle service errors or failures, particularly among employees with longer tenures (Gip et al., 2024). These findings emphasize that abusive supervision not only affects work attitudes but also reduces subordinates' psychological capacity to cope with pressure in the workplace.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, empirical studies on abusive supervision have begun to receive attention. Research by Kuzaimah et al. (2024) on employees of the Central Bureau of Statistics in South Sumatra shows that abusive supervision has a strong correlation with work stress and emotional exhaustion, which in turn drives the emergence of cyberloafing behavior and thus negatively affects employee performance. In addition, a systematic review by Muhtar and Herachwati (2024) of 29 quantitative articles published between 2019 and 2024 regarding the

relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention found a consistently positive relationship between the two namely, the higher the intensity of abusive behavior by supervisors, the greater the employees' tendency to leave the organization (Bah et al., 2025; Ozturk et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025; Roberge & Boudrias, 2025).

Nonetheless, research on abusive supervision in Indonesia is still relatively limited and tends to be focused on specific contexts or sectors. This is noteworthy given the potential for significant cultural influences on the perception and experience of abusive supervision in Indonesian workplaces. For example, the high level of power distance in Asian cultures such as Indonesia may affect how subordinates interpret and respond to supervisor behavior (Bajaba et al., 2024; Fischer et al., 2021; Hussain & Sia, 2017; Sarwar et al., 2021; Turek, 2022). These limitations highlight the importance of developing instruments appropriate for the Indonesian context. Therefore, the adaptation and validation of measurement instruments for abusive supervision from Western contexts becomes essential to ensure accuracy and relevance for the Indonesian population. This study aims to adapt and test construct validity through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and the internal reliability of the Abusive Leadership Scale Short Version (5-item). The results of this research are expected to provide empirical evidence on the factor structure and reliability of the Abusive Leadership Scale (5-item) in non-Western populations.

METHOD

Research design

This research is a quantitative study with a survey design and a cross-sectional approach, aiming to conduct a cross-cultural adaptation and construct validation of the Abusive Leadership Scale Short Version (5-item) within the Indonesian cultural context. This design was chosen because it is suitable for testing the factor structure and internal consistency of the instrument at one point in time, making it efficient for the purposes of adapting and validating psychological measurement tools. Through this design, data is collected during a specific period without any intervention, allowing researchers to describe relationships between variables and examine the fit of the measurement model with the target population (Chen et al., 2025).

Participants and procedure

The participants in this study were employees with direct supervisors in Indonesia, selected using purposive sampling techniques. The inclusion criteria were: (1) Aged 18 years or older; (2) employed at a company/agency within the last 6 months; (3) having a direct supervisor overseeing their work; and (4) residing in South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. This study involved 252 participants. Data collection was carried out using Google Form, which consisted of informed consent, an explanation of the study and inclusion criteria, as well as the measurement instrument items. Once all data were collected, analysis was conducted using JASP software version 0.19.3.0.

Measures and adaptation procedure

This study uses the Abusive Leadership Scale Short Version (5-item) developed by Mitchell and Ambrose (2007). This scale is designed to measure subordinates' perceptions of abusive

behavior by their supervisors. The instrument is unidimensional with five items representing forms of nonphysical abusive behavior, such as belittling, intimidating, or humiliating subordinates. The measurement uses a 5-point Likert scale, namely 1 = Never, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Quite Often, and 5 = Always. See Table 1 for the list of items in the scale.

The adaptation process was carried out following the cross-cultural adaptation guidelines by Beaton et al. (2000), which comprise six main stages. First, an initial translation from English to Indonesian was conducted by two translators who are native Indonesian speakers. One translator had a professional background relevant to the psychological constructs being measured, while the other did not have any specific background related to these constructs. This difference was intended to produce a more varied translation, both in terms of academic terminology and everyday language, thereby minimizing bias. Next, the two translation results were compared and compiled into a single combined version.

The combined version is then used as the basis for the next stage, which is back-translation. In this stage, the items were translated back into the original language by a translator who had no knowledge of the original version of the instrument. This step aims to verify the equivalence of meaning between the Indonesian translation and the original instrument (see Table 1), allowing for the identification of potential shifts in meaning or translation bias. Next, the back-translation results are compared to the original version and evaluated by experts with expertise in industrial and organizational psychology as well as linguistics. This evaluation focuses on the equivalence of meaning, clarity of wording, and cultural relevance, particularly within the local context of South Sulawesi Province.

After the adaptation process was completed, the researcher conducted a limited trial on respondents selected using purposive sampling techniques according to the inclusion criteria. All collected data were then screened to ensure their conformity with the established criteria. Next, psychometric testing was carried out using JASP software version 0.19.3.0. The psychometric tests conducted included Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and reliability analysis, aimed at ensuring the suitability of items with latent factors and assessing the internal consistency of the measurement instrument (R. B. Kline, 2023).

Table 1
List of items in abusive supervision scale

No	English	Indonesia
	My boss ...	Atasan saya ...
1	Ridicules me	<i>Merendahkan saya</i>
2	Tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid	<i>Memberitahu bahwa pikiran atau perasaan saya bodoh/tidak masuk akal</i>
3	Puts me down in front of others	<i>Menjatuhkan saya di hadapan orang lain</i>
4	Makes negative comments about me to	<i>Membuat komentar negatif tentang saya</i>

	others	<i>kepada orang lain</i>
5	Tells me I'm incompetent	<i>Memberitahu saya bahwa saya tidak kompeten</i>

Source: Data processed by JASP software version 0.19.3.0.

Data analysis

Data analysis in this study was carried out through several stages using JASP software version 0.19.3.0. The first stage was descriptive statistical analysis to obtain an initial overview of the data distribution. Initial results showed that the data tended to have a right-skewed or positively skewed distribution, with skewness values ranging from 2.238 to 2.831. This non-normal data became a primary consideration in choosing the Weighted Least Squares Mean and Variance Adjusted (WLSMV) estimation method for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Balci & Salah, 2015). After the CFA test, the next analysis is internal reliability analysis. The internal consistency reliability of the measurement tool is estimated using the Omega Coefficient (ω). The Omega Coefficient is chosen because it is considered superior and more robust compared to Cronbach's Alpha, especially for data that violate the tau-equivalence assumption and in the context of latent factor models (McNeish, 2018). In addition, omega is more suitable for factorial model-based analyses such as CFA and produces more accurate reliability estimates, especially when the number of items is small (Hayes & Coutts, 2020). An omega value ≥ 0.70 is interpreted as acceptable reliability.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 2
Demographic information and descriptive statistics

Demographic Variables	Participants		Abusive Supervision	
	N	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>N</i>	252	100	6.55	3.27
Gender				
Male	123	48.81	6.86	3.46
Female	129	51.19	6.27	3.06
Education				
High school	48	19.05	7.79	4.28
College Diploma	31	12.30	7.16	4.28
Undergraduate	146	57.94	6.13	2.62
Professional education	3	1.19	7.66	4.61
Postgraduate	24	9.52	5.75	2.15
Tenure				
< 1 year	7	2.78	6.42	1.98
1 – 5 years	171	67.85	6.84	3.61
6 – 10 years	34	13.48	5.70	1.88

Skewness						
Kurtosis	4.54	8.09	7.26	5.89	6.03	7.41
Std. Error Kurtosis	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	.306
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	5
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	25

Source: Data processed by JASP software version 0.19.3.0

Table 3 shows the results of the descriptive statistical analysis for the five items of the Abusive Leadership Scale Short Version. In general, the mean item scores tend to be low, ranging from 1.27 to 1.35, indicating that the majority of participants perceive or report never having experienced abusive supervision. The positive skewness values also indicate that the data distribution is skewed to the right, meaning that most responses are concentrated on the lower answer choices.

Table 4
Confirmatory Factor Analysis Fit Indices

No	Fit indices	Value	Cut-off
1	Chi-Square	17.405	-
2	Df	5	-
3	p-value	0.004	> 0.05
4	CFI	0.998	≥ 0.90 or ≥ 0.95
5	TLI	0.996	≥ 0.90 or ≥ 0.95
6	RMSEA	0.099	≤ 0.08
7	SRMR	0.019	≤ 0.08

Source: Data processed by JASP software version 0.19.3.0

Based on the results of the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) test on 252 subjects using JASP software version 0.19.3.0, a robust Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value of 0.998 and a robust Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) value of 0.996 were obtained. Both of these values are close to 1, which is the standard indicating a good model. The robust Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value obtained was 0.099, meeting the standard of < 0.08. Thus, the measuring instrument has a good model fit. For further details, see Table 3 and 4.

Table 5
Factor loading and average variance extracted (AVE)

No.	Factor loading	p-value	AVE
Item 1	.97	< .001	.89
Item 2	.96	< .001	
Item 3	.96	< .001	
Item 4	.93	< .001	
Item 5	.90	< .001	

Based on Table 5, the five items of the Abusive Supervision Scale Short Version instrument have factor loadings > 0.5 and p-values < .001, indicating that these items possess good validity. According to Table 4, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for the Abusive Supervision construct is .89, meaning that 89% of the item variance can be explained by the measured latent construct.

Table 6
Reliability analysis

Scale Reliability	Omega .94
No. Item	Omega Value if Item Deleted
Item 1	.92
Item 2	.93

Item 3	.93
Item 4	.93
Item 5	.94
<i>Overall Raw Omega</i>	.94

Source: Data processed by JASP software version 0.19.3.0

Based on Table 6, the five items of the Abusive Supervision Scale Short Version have a McDonald's Omega value $> .94$, indicating that the instrument has good reliability.

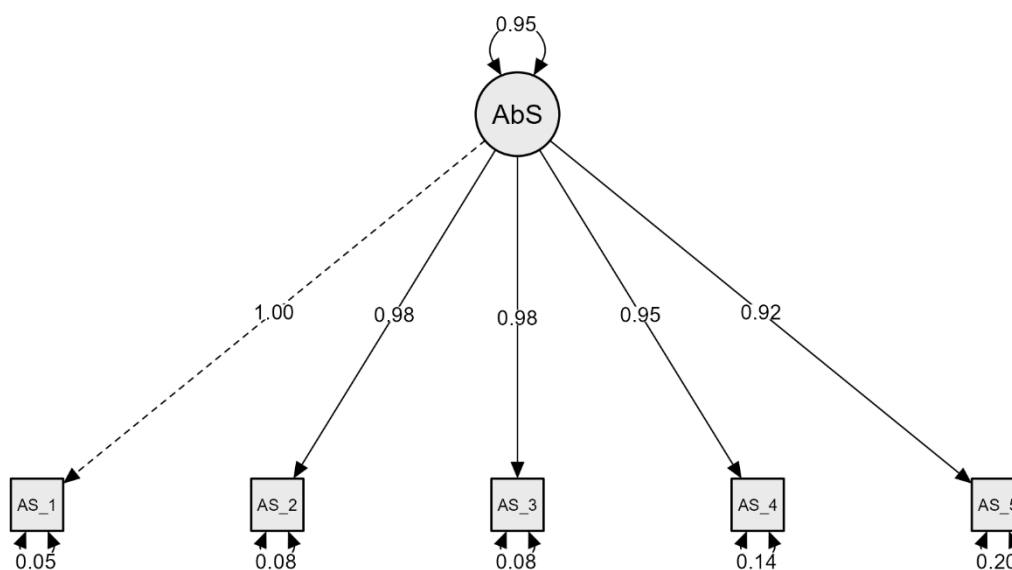


Figure 1. Model Plot

Source: Data processed by JASP software version 0.19.3.0

Figure 1 shows the measurement model of the AbS construct, which is built from five indicators, namely AS_1 to AS_5. Based on the analysis results, each indicator demonstrated a very high loading factor, with details as follows: AS_1 (1.00), AS_2 (0.98), AS_3 (0.98), AS_4 (0.95), and AS_5 (0.92). All loading factor values are above 0.90, indicating that each indicator makes a strong contribution in representing the AbS construct.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the Abusive Supervision Scale Short Version (5-item) possesses excellent construct validity and internal reliability when adapted to the Indonesian context. In general, the low mean values for each item ($M = 1.27-1.35$) and high skewness suggest that most participants reported either very minimal or no experiences of abusive supervision. This finding may reflect two possibilities: the low prevalence of abusive supervision behaviors in the participants' work environments or the possibility of underreporting

due to social and cultural norms that normalize superior power in Indonesian society, which is characterized by high power distance (Fischer et al., 2021; Hofstede, 2001).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) revealed that the unidimensional model of this scale has an excellent fit based on the CFI (.998), TLI (.996), and SRMR (.019) fit indices (W. Kline & McDermott, 2019). Although the RMSEA value is slightly above the ideal threshold (0.099), it is still acceptable in the context of a simple model with a limited number of indicators (Kenny et al., 2015). The high factor loadings ($> .89$) and an AVE value of .89 indicate that each item makes a strong contribution to the overall construct of abusive supervision (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019).

Then, for reliability, the Omega coefficient value of .94 and the omega if item dropped values that remain high even when one item is removed indicate good internal consistency. These findings reinforce that the five items complement each other in measuring the same construct, namely perceptions of abusive behavior by supervisors. This finding also supports previous research by Mitchell and Ambrose (2007), which stated that the short version of this scale is sufficiently sensitive in detecting perceptions of abusive supervision. However, it is important to consider that perceptions of supervisor behavior can be heavily influenced by cultural norms.

In addition to its academic contribution, this research also has significant practical implications. The Abusive Supervision Scale Short Version (5-item) can be utilized by human resource practitioners, organizational consultants, and researchers to efficiently assess employees' perceptions of abusive supervisor behavior. With its concise number of items, this instrument minimizes respondent fatigue, thereby improving the quality of the data obtained, especially in organizational surveys that include multiple variables or require brief completion times (Jeong et al., 2023). Furthermore, the existence of this short-form measurement tool enables organizations to periodically monitor the quality of supervisor-subordinate relationships without disrupting work productivity. The assessment results can serve as a basis for designing practical interventions, such as leadership training programs, employee counseling, or organizational policies that emphasize the importance of a healthy, abuse-free work climate. Thus, this instrument is not only beneficial for academic research purposes but also relevant in supporting talent management strategies, employee retention, and the enhancement of psychological well-being in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Abusive Supervision Scale Short Version (5-item) has excellent construct validity and internal reliability when adapted to the Indonesian cultural context. The results of the CFA analysis indicate that the unidimensional model of this scale demonstrates an excellent model fit based on the CFI, TLI, and SRMR values. The items on the scale also have high and significant factor loadings. In addition, the AVE value ≥ 0.50 demonstrates good convergent validity. Furthermore, the measurement tool also has a high Omega reliability coefficient, namely .94. Additionally, the low mean item values and right-skewed distribution indicate that the majority of participants reported very minimal experiences of abusive supervision. However, this finding needs to be interpreted cautiously within the Indonesian cultural context, which tends to have a high level of power distance. Therefore, these results support the notion that this scale can be used as a valid and consistent measurement tool in

studies of abusive leadership in Indonesia, while still taking into account the influence of local culture in data interpretation. Future research is recommended to broaden the range of participants across various sectors and regions, as well as to consider a mixed-methods approach in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of abusive supervision in Indonesia.

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