

Chapter 1

Organizations competing in the current economy face many obstacles on the road to success and prosperity. Unfortunately, not only do organizations face external obstacles (e.g., gaining a competitive advantage), but their success can also be threatened by the very people that make up the company—the employees. Employee deviance costs organizations billions of dollars annually (Bennett & Robinson, 2000) and may account for up to 20% of failed businesses (Coffin, 2003). Because of the negative impact of this "dark side" of employee behavior, it is of great interest to researchers and practitioners alike. Theoretically, in addition to task performance and citizenship performance, workplace deviance has been recognized as one of three components of overall job performance (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). Practically, workplace deviance is not only expensive for the organization (Coffin, 2003) it is also costly to employees' well-being (e.g., somatic health complaints; Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002).

Employee deviance is defined as “voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-beings of an organization, its members, or both” (Robinson & Bennett, 1995, p. 556). Bennett and Robinson (1995, 2000) identified two forms of workplace deviance: interpersonal and organizational. Interpersonal deviance refers to behaviors that are directed toward members of the organization (e.g., verbally lashing out at co-workers), whereas organizational deviance describes non-interpersonal behavior that is directed toward the organization (e.g., stealing office equipment). Rioux, Roberge, Brunet, Savoie, and Courcy (2005) found that over a six-month period, 90% of employees had engaged in at least one type of interpersonal or organizational deviance. Because of the severe consequences of these deviant acts, it is important to

examine the antecedents of workplace deviance.

With the present study I examined the psychological process which leads employees to engage in interpersonal deviance. Applying the conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) and job-demands resources model (JD-R; Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2000, 2001), I hypothesize that employees working for an abusive supervisor will engage in interpersonal deviance and that this relationship will be mediated by emotional exhaustion. Past work has shown a direct relationship between abusive supervision and subordinate deviance and have explained the relationship in terms of social exchange or social learning theories (e.g., Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne, & Marinova, 2012; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). However, if the data reveal that emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance, this would suggest that employees engage in interpersonal deviance in part to cope with increased job demands (being non-physically abused by one's supervisor) and decreased resources (e.g., lack of support received from one's supervisor). If supported, this research will extend the application of JD-R and COR theories as well as have practical implications for organizations (e.g., training how to effectively cope with work stressors). In addition, relying on the findings of Menard, Brunet, & Savoie (2011), I hypothesize that the relationship between abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance will be moderated by the subordinate's level of agreeableness, such that individuals low rather than high are more inclined to engage in interpersonal deviance.

To explain the rationale that led to my hypotheses, I will begin by providing a literature review of abusive supervision and the coinciding harmful effects to both the subordinate and the organization. Next, I will highlight the relationship between abusive

supervision and emotional exhaustion. To explain this relationship, I draw from JD-R and COR theories, positing that in addition to abusive supervision draining subordinates' personal resources, it serves as a job demand as well. I will then review the literature of interpersonal deviance hypothesizing a direct and indirect (mediated by emotional exhaustion) relationship with abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance. Finally, I will review the research indicating that agreeableness is an important predictor of interpersonal deviance (e.g., Menard, et al., 2011). This research supports the hypothesis that an employee's level of agreeableness may be an important moderator of the relationship between abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance.

Abusive Supervision

Abusive supervision carries significant negative consequences for both the organization and the employee. Abusive supervision affects approximately 14% of American workers. While this percentage may not sound alarming at first, abusive supervision costs U.S. companies upwards of \$23 billion annually in absenteeism and health care expenses (Tepper, 2007).

Traditionally, abusive supervision is examined under the theoretical perspective of justice theories (e.g., Tepper, 2000; 2007; Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, Giacalone, 2008; Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler, Ensley, 2004; Tepper, Duffy, & Shaw, 2001) primarily focusing on the negative consequences of abusive supervision. Abusive supervision has been referred to by many titles in the literature. Over the years, abusive supervision has been called petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1997), workplace victimization (Aquino, 2000), and workplace bullying (Hoel, Rayner, & Cooper, 1999). Abusive supervision is currently the most commonly used term; thus, I will use it here.

Tepper (2000) defined abusive supervision as “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (p. 178); examples include rudeness, public criticism, and inconsiderate actions (Bies, 2000; Bies & Tripp, 1998). Abusive supervision is sustained and lasting abuse that is likely to continue until (1) the target employee terminates the abusive relationship, (2) the abusive supervisor terminates the abusive relationship, or (3) the abusive supervisor corrects or modifies his or her abusive behavior (Shepard & Campbell, 1992). Abusive supervisors typically do not acknowledge or take responsibility for their behavior; thus, few modify or correct their behavior. Unfortunately, similar to other abusive relationships (e.g., intimate partners), employees often remain in the abusive environment because they feel powerless to take action, fear economic repercussions, or fear the unknown (Tepper, 2000).

Abusive supervision negatively impacts the workplace and the organization in many ways; for example, it reduces employees’ job and life satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, and affective commitment to the organization (Tepper, et al., 2004; Tepper, et al., 2008). Abusive supervision also increases employee psychological distress, work-family conflict, negative affect, and turnover (e.g., Duffy et al., 2002; Richman, Flaherty, Rospenda, & Christensen, 1992; Tepper, 2000, 2007; Tepper, et al., 2008; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002). Furthermore, abusive supervision has been found to be associated with an increase in employees engaging in counterproductive behaviors, such as theft and lashing out at coworkers (Tepper et al., 2001; Zellars, et al., 2002). To further explore the factors that influence this relationship, the present study proposes to examine the subordinate's emotional exhaustion as a response to abuse and as a potential mediator between abusive supervision

and interpersonal deviance.

Emotional Exhaustion

Burnout is a psychological response to work-related stress. It is characterized as feeling emotionally exhausted, increased cynicism, and reduced self-efficacy (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). At the individual level, burnout negatively impacts one's health, ability to cope, and general lifestyle. Burnout has been linked to physical problems such as high blood pressure, chronic fatigue, and frequent headaches. It can also lead to mental distress resulting in increased anxiety, depression, diminished sleep quality, and negative affect (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996; Taris, 2006).

At the organizational level, employees suffering from burnout often have lower levels of job performance (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Employees experiencing burnout typically withdraw from their job psychologically, physically, and emotionally. These employees exert less effort, doing only what is necessary in their daily duties. Because employees suffering from burnout spend less time and energy on their job tasks, the quality of their overall work diminishes (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Not surprisingly, burnout is associated with increased absenteeism, oftentimes leading these employees to leave the organization due to their lack of energy and desire to work hard at their job. However, employees experiencing burnout who remain within the organization suffer from decreased job satisfaction and reduced commitment to the organization (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli et al., 1996; Shirom, 2002; Taris, 2006). Burnout not only affects the individual employee, but there is also evidence indicating that burnout can have a "spillover" effect, negatively impacting the well-being of coworkers and family (Burke & Greenglass, 2001; Jackson & Maslach, 1982). Clearly, burnout carries severe consequences for the well-being of both the employee and the

organization.

In this study, I focus on emotional exhaustion, as it is considered the most central component of Maslach and Jackson's (1986) conceptualization of burnout. Furthermore, because abusive supervision is related to increased emotional exhaustion in employees (e.g., Wu & Hu, 2009), it is important to explore emotional exhaustion as a potential mediator in the relationship of abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance. When employees report burnout, they are typically referring to feeling emotionally exhausted, as it is the most noticeable symptom of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Emotional exhaustion occurs when employees continuously feel they no longer have enough emotional resources (e.g., encouragement, autonomy) to handle the stressors (e.g., excessive job demands and continuous stressors at work) that face them (Hobfoll, 1989; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). It is associated with a lack of energy, being both psychologically and emotionally “drained,” as well as a perception that one’s emotional resources have been diminished (Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

When employees incessantly work under stress induced by interpersonal interactions with their abusive supervisor, emotional exhaustion can occur. Because interpersonal interactions between the supervisor and subordinate are necessary, abusive supervision may induce emotional exhaustion in subordinates. Drawing from the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the JD-R model of burnout (Bakker, et al., 2003; Demerouti, et al. 2000, 2001), I posit that abusive supervision leads to employee emotional exhaustion.

COR and JD-R

According to the conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989), individuals are inclined to obtain, retain, and protect their resources. Hobfoll defined resources “as those

objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects” (p. 516). Examples of resources consist of social support, level of participation in decision making, and autonomy (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Psychological stress is experienced when individuals are confronted with the threat of resource loss, actual loss, or the failure of resource gain (Hobfoll, 1989). Resource loss is important because "resources have instrumental value to people, and second, they have symbolic value in that they help to define for people who they are." (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 517). When individuals are not facing stressors, people seek to develop resource surpluses in an effort to ward off future resource depletion. COR is a model of stress and burnout (Hobfoll, 1989) asserting that when resources are low burnout will occur. Resources reduce the negative impact of work-related stressors; thus, buffering the negative effects of stress for employees.

Complementing and extending COR theory, the JD-R model is a parsimonious model which explains how burnout and work engagement may be produced. The model is flexible in that it recognizes that while every occupation may have its own unique working characteristics, these characteristics can be classified into two broad categories that are found in every organizational context: job demands and job resources (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009). A primary principle of the model is that job demands may induce a strain or health impairment process, while job resources may evoke a motivational process (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli et al., 2009). The flexibility of the model allows it to be applied in a wide range of occupational settings (e.g., Bakker, et al., 2004; Schaufeli, & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009), regardless of the specific demands and resources particular to any one job. The foundation of this model asserts that job strain

develops as job demands increase and job resources are limited. Conversely, work engagement is most likely when job resources are plentiful.

Job demands are characterized as “physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs (e.g., exhaustion)” (Demerouti, et al., 2001, p. 501). Examples include emotional demands, role overload, and high work pressure (Bakker, et al., 2004). Evidence suggests that job demands are typically associated with exhaustion (Demerouti et al., 2001). Having an abusive supervisor who creates a hostile work environment and negative interactions serves as a job demand for employees. Because abusive supervisors typically exhibit rude and inconsiderate behaviors towards their employees, working under an abusive supervisor serves as a substantial emotional demand of the job and diminishes employees' resources. The JD-R model provides a health impairment process to better understand why emotionally abused employees become emotionally exhausted. This process asserts that chronic job demands (e.g., being mistreated and/or bullied by the supervisor) exhaust abused subordinates' mental and physical resources. This depletion often leads to lower energy levels and a host of health problems (e.g., feeling unaccountably tired, dizzy, muscle spasms; Chen & Kao, 2012). Abused subordinates expend psychological resources to reflect and ruminate on negative experiences created by the abuser that could have been utilized to increase one's job performance.

Additionally, abusive supervisors create a shortage in employees' job resources due to the lack of support and encouragement provided to the employee causing his/her resources to become depleted. Job resources can be a multitude of things, including physical, psychological, social, or organizational facets of the job that may serve to accomplish one or

more of the following: (1) helpfulness in meeting work goals; (2) reduction of job demands which carry physiological and psychological costs; and (3) facilitation of personal growth and development (Bakker et al., 2004). Bakker and colleagues (2004) indicated that job resources can be derived from the organization (e.g., career opportunities), through interpersonal and social relations (e.g., supervisor support), the organization of the work (e.g., role clarity), and the level of the job task (e.g., autonomy).

The availability of resources that can be utilized to address demands greatly influences the impact of those demands on the employee. One of the main responsibilities of a supervisor is to provide resources (e.g., emotional support, encouragement) to his/her employees. In the circumstance of abusive supervision, abused employees' resources are diminished due to the lack of support received from their supervisor. Additionally, great psychological effort must be exerted to manage the stress experienced when employees feel mistreated by their supervisors. In summary, based on the COR and JD-R theoretical framework it is hypothesized that abusive supervision increases job demands while depleting resources resulting in emotional exhaustion. Accordingly, in line with previous findings (e.g., Hu & Wu, 2009) I propose:

Hypothesis 1: Abusive supervision is positively related to emotional exhaustion.

Interpersonal Deviance

Because workplace deviance greatly affects organizations, it has captured the attention of many researchers. In the literature, workplace deviance has also been termed counterproductive work behaviors (CWB). While Robinson and Bennett (1995) distinguish between deviance geared toward the organization and deviance directed toward people

(interpersonal deviance), Spector, et al., (2006) assert that there are five dimensions of CWBs: abuse against others, production deviance, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal. Similar to interpersonal deviance, abuse against others "consists of harmful behaviors directed toward coworkers and others that harm either physically or psychologically through making threats and/or nasty comments, ignoring the person, or undermining the person's ability to work effectively" (Spector et al., 2006, p. 448). I will use Robinson and Bennett's (1995) construct of interpersonal deviance while acknowledging that it is similar to Spector and colleagues construct of abuse against others. However, Hershcovis and colleagues (2007) noted that "despite different labels (e.g., aggression, deviance, retaliation), the actual measurement of these constructs may be the same" (p.228).

As previously noted, emotional exhaustion results when employees feel they no longer have adequate emotional resources to handle continuous stressors (Hobfoll, 1989; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Cordes and Dougherty (1993) referred to emotional exhaustion as the "compassion fatigue," stating it "may coexist with feelings of frustration and tension as workers realize they cannot continue to give of themselves or be as responsible for clients as they have been in the past" (p. 623). Prior research linked emotional exhaustion to many negative outcomes, including diminished organizational commitment (Lee & Ashforth, 1993; Leiter & Maslach, 1988), turnover (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), decreased job performance (Quattrochi-Turbin, Jones, & Breedlove, 1983; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), and counterproductive work behavior (Jones, 1981; Quattrochi-Turbin, et al., 1983). Continuing to draw from COR theory and the JD-R model, emotionally exhausted employees are more likely and more motivated to engage in interpersonal deviance because they lack the energy and psychological and emotional resources to engage in

emotion and self-regulation. When employees' resources are depleted, they no longer have the resources necessary to engage in self-regulation due to the fatigue of emotional exhaustion. Hence, I propose:

Hypothesis 2: Emotional exhaustion is positively related to interpersonal deviance.

Effects of Abusive Supervision on Interpersonal Deviance

The process through which abusive supervision yields interpersonal deviance can take at least two paths: one is the direct, and the other is the indirect. Subordinates' perceptions of maltreatment may cause unfavorable psychological consequences, such as hostility, anxiety, frustration or depression (Richman et al., 1992; Tepper, 2007). Compared with their non-abused counterparts, employees with abusive supervisors experience less favorable attitudes (Ashforth, 1997; Keashly, Trott, & MacLean, 1994), increased organizational conflict (Baron, 1990), greater psychological distress (Baron, 1990; Duffy et al., 2002; Tepper, 2000), and an increased likelihood to respond to unfavorable treatment in an counterproductive manner (Baron, 1990; Mawritz, et al. 2012; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Tepper, et al., 2001; Zellars, et al., 2002). Additionally, previous research has linked abusive supervision with supervisor-directed aggression (Dupre, Inness, Connelly, Barling, & Hopton, 2006; Inness, Barling, & Turner, 2005; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007) and family-directed aggression (Hoobler & Brass, 2006). Employees expect supervisors to treat them in a respectful manner (Rousseau, 1990); when this expectation is not met, as is the case of abusive supervision, victims of abuse may ruminate about the negative experience created by abusive supervision.

The trickle-down theory of aggression (Goldstein, 1986) asserts that aggressive

behaviors can trickle-down from one hierarchical organizational level to another. The trickle-down theory of aggression stems from social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), which asserts that people learn through observation and then model or imitate the observed behavior. The trickle-down theory of aggression extends social learning theory, proposing that individuals are likely to model the aggressive behavior of those of greater power and status than themselves. Traditionally, trickle-down models have primarily focused on how positive aspects of upper management, such as perceived support, ethical leadership, and behavioral integrity, can influence lower level employees (e.g., Bass, Waldman, Avolio, & Bebb, 1987; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009). However, more recently trickle-down models have been used to explain how negative leadership characteristics, such as psychological contract violations (Hoobler & Brass, 2006) and injustice (e.g., Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006), trickle down from upper to lower management. In line with Goldstein's (1986) trickle-down model of aggression and social learning theory, I assert employees will model the abusive behavior displayed by their supervisor and engage in a similar deviant behavior, interpersonal deviance. Individuals are more inclined to model behaviors that capture and hold their attention; thus, committing the behavior to memory. Because supervisors are highly visible to their subordinates, their employees will likely mimic the non-physical abuse displayed by their supervisor.

Furthermore, social exchange theory suggests that having an abusive supervisor is likely to result in deviant behavior by the subordinate (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange theory (Homans, 1958) explores the relationship between parties, in which each party depends on each other under the assumption that each party will treat the other with dignity and respect. This assumption is violated when employees are mistreated by their

supervisor. However, mistreated employees are constrained in terms of how they can respond to the unfavorable treatment (Emerson, 1962; Zellars et al., 2002). Subordinates who feel threatened (e.g., as the target of an abusive supervisor) seek to preserve a semblance of autonomy (Wright & Brehm, 1992). Drawing from social exchange theory, the negative norm of reciprocity is applicable when making the case that abusive supervision has a direct effect on interpersonal deviance. In contrast to positive reciprocity, the negative norm of reciprocity asserts that an appropriate response to maltreatment is to retaliate with unfavorable treatment (Chen, Chen, & Portnoy, 2009).

When employees are abused by their supervisors, they are likely to become angry and frustrated by the lack of respect shown to them. Abused employees may engage in interpersonal deviance (e.g., lash out) as an effort to regain control over their autonomy either as a form of retaliation or by simply mimicking the abusive behavior displayed by their superior. Therefore, I assert:

Hypothesis 3a: Abusive supervision has a direct relationship with interpersonal deviance.

Abusive supervision may also have an indirect effect on interpersonal deviance through emotional exhaustion. Because of the stress and frustration employees feel as a result of having an abusive supervisor, coupled with the lack of physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary to engage in self-regulation and social facilitation, emotionally exhausted employees are likely to engage in interpersonal deviance as a coping mechanism. In other words, employees engaging in counterproductive work behaviors may not simply be driven to retaliate against maltreatment or model the abuse displayed by their supervisors, but the behavior may also serve as a coping mechanism. This is in line with

previous research suggesting that CWB can serve as a form of coping in response to job stressors (Krischer et al., 2010; LePine, Podsakoff, LePine, 2005; Spector & Fox, 2002). Employees leverage CWBs in an effort to conserve existing resources and to reduce exhaustion (e.g., Krischer, Penney, & Hunter, 2007; Penney, Hunter, & Perry, 2011).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping as cognitive and behavioral steps taken by individuals in response to perceived stressors. Ben-Zur and Yagil (2005) expanded on this definition asserting coping as "the behavioural and cognitive efforts to manage external and internal demands that are perceived as taxing or exceeding a person's resources" (p. 83). When employees appraise negative events in the workplace (e.g., abusive supervisor) as threatening to their well-being, these threats function as job stressors (Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001). Strain, an outcome of job stressors, has three components: psychological (e.g., job dissatisfaction), physical (e.g., increased blood pressure), and behavioral (e.g., counterproductive work behaviors; Fox, et al., 2001). Individuals engage in coping in an effort to conserve emotional, cognitive, and/or physical resources (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). The coping literature asserts that there are two primary forms of coping: problem-focused and emotion-focused. Problem-focused coping refers to the management or alteration of the person-environment relationship to directly address the sources of the stress in order to reduce or eliminate the stressor. Emotion-focused coping refers to the regulation of stressful emotions focusing on reducing an individual's negative emotional response to the stressor (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980).

Stressors can elicit either style of coping. Problem-focused coping occurs when individuals feel they are able to directly address the stressor and seeks to change the event causing the stress. Conversely, emotion-focused coping occurs when individuals feel that

stress is uncontrollable and aim instead to regulate their emotional response rather than directly addressing the stressor itself (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Fox & Spector, 2006; Krischer et al., 2010). Because abused employees who suffer from emotional exhaustion may not perceive that they are capable of directly addressing the stressor (e.g., an abusive supervisor) they will likely adopt an emotion-focused coping style (e.g., Krischer et al., 2010; LePine et al., 2005; Penney & Spector, 2008). I posit that emotionally exhausted employees engage in interpersonal deviance as a coping strategy.

Hypothesis 3b: Abusive supervision has an indirect relationship with interpersonal deviance through emotional exhaustion.

Agreeableness

It has been debated as to whether organizational or individual factors have a greater impact on deviant behaviors within the workplace (Henle, 2005). Hershcovis and colleagues (2007) found that both organizational and individual factors predicted aggression. However, more recently Menard et al. (2011) found that personality (especially agreeableness) explained a statistically significant amount of variance, above and beyond organizational factors when examining interpersonal deviance. Personality shapes an individual's perceptions, emotional responsiveness, and behavior (Spector & Fox, 2005). Menard and colleagues (2011) suggested that in order to have a more comprehensive model of workplace deviance, personality should be taken into consideration. Thus, it is not only important to investigate what causes employees to act out (e.g., abusive supervision) but to also examine *who* responds to these environmental stressors counterproductively.

Extensive research has looked into personality traits resulting in an initial consensus that there are five differential domains (John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008). Based on these five

factors, individuals can be characterized in terms of relatively constant patterns of actions, feelings, and thoughts. When investigating theoretical and applied questions relating to personality, the Five Factor Model (FFM) is commonly utilized (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg & Saucier, 1995; John, et al., 2008). The FFM is widely accepted as a sufficient taxonomy of personality traits. For more than two decades, longitudinal (Roberts, Walkton, Viechtbauer, 2006) and cross-cultural (Saucier & Ostendorf, 1999) evidence has supported the FFM bringing order and understanding to the endless list of specific traits (for critics of the FFM see, e.g., Block, 1995).

The five categories consist of agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, emotional stability (neuroticism), and openness to experience. Agreeable individuals are characterized as being warm, friendly, trusting, and cooperative toward others. Conscientiousness reflects the ability to control, regulate, and direct one's impulses in need for achievement, order, and persistence. Extraversion is described as a pronounced engagement with the outside world; these individuals are highly sociable, outgoing, and gregarious. Emotional stability (the opposite of neuroticism, where individuals are characterized as anxious and worrisome) is associated with individuals who are calm, not easily upset, and emotionally stable. Lastly, openness to experience reflects individuals who are imaginative, creative, and prefer variety (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Bolton, et al., 2010; Salgado, 2002). Based on these factors, individuals can be characterized in terms of relatively constant patterns of actions, feelings, and thoughts. Previous research suggested that personality traits can account for significant incremental validity beyond that accounted for by mental ability (McHenry, Hough, Toquam, Hanson, & Ashworth, 1990), assessment centers (Goffin, Rosthstein, & Johnston, 1996), interviews (e.g., Cortina, Goldstein, Payne,

Davison, & Gilliland, 2000) and bio data (e.g., McManus & Kelly, 1999).

Of present interest, agreeableness has been linked to positive work outcomes (e.g., Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007; Mount, Barrick, & Stewart, 1998; Witt, Burke, Barrick, & Mount, 2002) and socially desirable behaviors (Ashton & Lee, 2001; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Mount, et al., 1998; Mount, Ilies, & Johnson, 2006). Agreeable individuals can be characterized as cooperative, trusting, and tender-minded. They tend to shy away from expressing anger (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, & Hair, 1996), avoid provoking conflict (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997), and care about others' welfare (Ashton & Lee, 2001).

Conversely, abundant research has linked low agreeableness to deviant workplace behaviors (Berry et al., 2007; Mount, et al., 2006; Tepper et al., 2001; Salgado, 2002). Individuals low in agreeableness “should demonstrate little concern about performing actions that could evoke conflict as compared with their more agreeable counterparts” (Tepper, et al., 2001, p. 976). Tepper and colleagues (2001) found that subordinates under the authority of an abusive supervisor were more likely to engage in dysfunctional resistance (e.g., ignoring a supervisor's instruction, procrastinating) if the subordinate was low in conscientiousness and agreeableness. Another study (Simard et al., 2004) found a significant negative correlation between agreeableness and moral harassment and provocation. Additionally, Mount and colleagues (2006) found that agreeableness had a direct relationship with interpersonal deviance.

Individuals low in agreeableness perceive aversive conditions more negatively (Mount & Barrick, 1995). Tepper (2000) pointed out in his definition of abusive supervision that it was dependent upon subordinates' perceptions of supervisors' sustained non-physical

abuse. Therefore, because Tepper (2000) defined abusive supervision as subordinates' perceptions of supervisors' sustained non-physical abuse, individuals low in agreeableness will be more likely to perceive the situation as more aversive compared to their more agreeable counterparts. That is in the face of unpleasant situations, those low in agreeableness are quicker to become argumentative and hostile (Mount & Barrick, 1995) compared to those high in agreeableness, who are slow to anger, more tolerant (Graziano, et al., 1996; McCrae & John, 1992) and seek to avoid inciting further dissension (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997). Thus, agreeableness may decrease the motivation to engage in harmful behaviors, such as interpersonal deviance; whereas, subordinates low in agreeableness are more likely to engage in interpersonal deviance. In other words, employees low in agreeableness are more prone to engage in interpersonal deviance in retaliation to being mistreated in the workplace by their supervisor. Therefore, because employees low in agreeableness do not value interpersonal relationships like their tender-hearted counterparts, I assert that abused employees who are low in agreeableness engage in interpersonal deviance. Hypothesis 4a is illustrated in path *c* in my conceptual model presented in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 4a: The direct relationship of abusive supervision with interpersonal deviance is conditional on agreeableness, such that the relationship between abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance is stronger among persons low rather than high in agreeableness.

Agreeableness reflects an individual's concern for relational matters and is associated with traits such as nurturance and emotional support (Barrett & Pietromonaco, 1997; Digman, 1990; Tepper, et al., 2001). Agreeable individuals enjoy interpersonal intimacy (Graziano, et al., 1996) and are more inclined to forgive others (Ashton, Jackson, Helmes, &

Paunonen, 1998). Highly agreeable individuals are typically kinder toward those around them and in return are more likely to be treated kindly by others (Bowling, et al., 2004). Because of these positive social interactions with others, agreeable individuals are more likely to have a solid social support group and, subsequently, may be less likely to become emotionally exhausted. Indeed, a meta-analysis revealed that agreeableness was negatively related to emotional exhaustion (Alarcon, Eschleman, & Bowling, 2009).

However, because agreeable individuals yearn for positive interpersonal interactions and desire to be liked and accepted (Graziano, et al., & Hair, 1996) they may be more likely to experience abusive supervision as an emotional demand and a threat to resources than those low in agreeableness. Consequently, highly agreeable individuals may reflect on these negative experiences, expending additional resources. In contrast, abusive supervision is less likely to be a source of angst among low-agreeableness workers because they do not highly value social harmony like their agreeable counterparts. Hypothesis 4b is illustrated in path *a* in the conceptual model presented in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 4b: The direct relationship of abusive supervision with emotional exhaustion is conditional on agreeableness, such that the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion is stronger among persons high rather than low in agreeableness.

Prior research (e.g., Henle, 2005; McCrae & Costa, 1997; Menard et al., 2011; Penney, et al., 2011; Simard et al., 2004) found a relationship between personality traits and workplace deviance. Specifically, agreeableness was negatively correlated with interpersonal deviance (Berry, et al., 2007; Bolton, et al., 2010; Mount, et al., 2006; Salgado, 2002).

High— versus —low agreeable people are typically better at forming cooperative

relationships and facilitating social harmony (e.g., Mount, et al., 1998; Mount, et al., 2006). Conversely, individuals low in agreeableness typically exhibit behaviors that could be described as antagonistic, argumentative, hostile, manipulative, vengeful, inconsiderate, and insulting (Costa, McCrae, & Dembrowski, 1989; Goldberg, 1999). Because emotionally exhausted employees lack the resources necessary to engage in self-regulation and employees low in agreeableness lack the desire to be liked and accepted by those around them (e.g., coworkers), these individuals are more prone to engage in interpersonal deviance. Consequently, it is likely that emotionally exhausted employees who are low in agreeableness engage in interpersonal deviance more than highly agreeable employees as a form of coping. Because individuals high in agreeableness value peaceful relationships and being liked by others, they will likely find other coping strategies (e.g., exercise, drinking). Hypothesis 4c is illustrated in path *b* (see conceptual model presented in Figure 1).

Hypothesis 4c: The direct relationship of emotional exhaustion on interpersonal deviance is conditional on agreeableness, such that the relationship between emotional exhaustion and interpersonal deviance is stronger among persons low rather than high in agreeableness.

Emotional Stability and Conscientiousness

Emotional stability is associated with low levels of anxiety and emotionality. Individuals who are high in emotional stability are characterized as calm, emotionally stable, and have fewer negative thoughts and feelings. Conversely, employees low in emotional stability are more susceptible to experiencing psychological distress and have a greater likelihood to experience negative affect (Costa & McCrae, 2006), such as anger, anxiety, and depression. There is an abundance of research linking low emotional stability to emotional

exhaustion (e.g., Alarcon, et al., 2009; Bakker, Van Der Zee, Lewig, & Dollard, 2006). This relationship could be explained by research that suggests individuals who are low in emotional stability interpret situations more negatively and interpret many stimuli as threatening compared to their emotionally stable counterparts (Bakker et al., 2006; McCrae & John, 1992). In fact, emotional stability has consistently been related to burnout more than any other dimension of the Big Five (e.g., Bakker et al., 2006; Zellars & Perrewe, 2001). Consequently, I controlled for emotional stability.

In addition, employees who are high in conscientiousness are predisposed to be self-disciplined, organized, exacting, diligent, methodical, and purposeful (Maslach & Jackson, 1986; McCrae & Costa, 2003). These individuals are highly committed to work performance and have a strong need to comply with policy (Dunn, Mount, Barrick, & Ones, 1995). Conversely, low conscientious workers focus on satisfying immediate needs, regardless of future consequences (West, Elander, & French, 1993), and often fail to follow rules and regulations (Arthur & Doverspike, 2001). Furthermore, evidence (Berry, et al., 2007; Colbert, et al., 2004; Mount et al., 2006) linked low emotional stability and low conscientiousness to workplace deviance. Additionally, previous research which examined the Big Five has demonstrated that two measures of the Big Five tend to moderately correlate with agreeableness. Specifically, the correlation between agreeableness and conscientiousness has been found to be .27 and the correlation between agreeableness and emotional stability has been found to be .25 (Ones, 1993). This demonstrates shared variance among them, which could cause different effects if not controlled for. Moreover, the nature of this study sought to only examine the unique effect of agreeableness moderating all paths. For these reasons emotional stability and conscientiousness were controlled for in this study.

Chapter II

Method

Sample and Procedure

Surveys were sent to 550 employees and 347 (63%) were returned. All sample members worked in staff roles in a public sector organization. Workers' primary objective was to provide services to its internal customers. Duties of employees were wide spread and included but were not limited to: processing and maintaining personnel-related documentation, communicating with customers, maintaining files, operating office machines, and preparing and analyzing accounting records and financial statements while developing and maintaining budgets. All data were collected using online surveys. Human Resources delivered an email from the organization's senior managers requesting voluntary participation in the survey.

Measures

Abusive Supervision. I used the 5-item (e.g., "This supervisor tells me that I am incompetent"; see Appendix A) Tepper (2000) abusive supervision scale to assess abusive supervision ($\alpha = .90$). Participants responded to the items using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). High scores represent high levels of abusive supervision.

Emotional Exhaustion. I used 5-items (e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work"; see Appendix B) from Maslach and colleagues' (1996) burnout inventory ($\alpha = .87$). Participants responded to the items using the 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). High scores represent high levels of emotional exhaustion.

Interpersonal Deviance. I used the 4-item (e.g., "I have verbally abused someone at

work"; see Appendix C; $\alpha = .65$) abuse scale of counterproductive behavior checklist (Spector, et al., 2006) to assess interpersonal deviance. Participants responded to the items using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). High scores represent high levels of interpersonal deviance.

Personality. Saucier's (1994) Mini Markers, a short-form of Goldberg's Big Five measure was used to assess personality. The Mini-Markers are comprised of 40 single-adjective personality descriptors originally selected for their psychometric qualities (Saucier, 1994). I used 8-items to assess agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. Sample items include agreeableness (e.g., "Warm"; $\alpha = .80$; see Appendix D), conscientiousness (e.g., "Organized"; $\alpha = .83$; see Appendix E), and emotional stability (e.g., "Moody"; $\alpha = .80$; see Appendix F), with participants responding on a 9-point Likert-type scale (1 = Extremely inaccurate, 9 = Extremely accurate). High scores indicate higher levels of the personality trait.

Chapter III

Results

The employees were nested in working groups reporting to the superior. Thus, I first examined the intraclass correlation coefficient (i.e., ICC(1)) in order to assess the proportion of the total variance that could be explained by group membership (Bliese, 2000). The ICC(1) for the criterion variable, interpersonal deviance, was .03, thus, it was not necessary to utilize hierarchical linear modeling to account for level two effects (Snijders & Bosker, 1999).

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations. I followed procedures suggested by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007) and Edwards and Lambert (2007) to analyze the mediational and moderated mediation hypotheses (Table 3); thus, I utilized Andrew Hayes' "PROCESS" SPSS macro (model 59) and centered all predictors before creating the interaction terms. "PROCESS" runs two different regression models which together provide the needed information to calculate the full structural model (see Figure 2).

The first model calculated path *a* (Figure 1) with emotional exhaustion as the criterion variable (Table 2). The second model calculated path *b* (Figure 1) with interpersonal deviance as the criterion variable (Table 3). This macro utilized the bootstrapping procedure, which produced 10,000 bootstrap sample means and estimated the conditional indirect effect of agreeableness at the mean and ± 1 standard deviation (see Table 4). Preacher et al. (2007) suggested moderated mediation is present if the interaction terms from the first model (abusive supervision x agreeableness) and/or the second model (emotional exhaustion x agreeableness) are statistically significant, and if zero is excluded in the 95% confidence intervals associated with the indirect effect. Bootstrap confidence intervals are favored over

the Sobel test due to the Sobel test's unrealistic assumption of a normal sampling distribution of the indirect effect (Hayes, 2012); bootstrapping makes no assumption about the sampling distribution (Preacher, et al., 2007).

Supporting Hypothesis 1 (Table 2), abusive supervision was positively related to emotional exhaustion ($B = .62$, $SE = .09$, $p < .01$). Consistent with Hypothesis 2 (Table 3), emotional exhaustion was positively related to interpersonal deviance ($B = .14$, $SE = .07$, $p = .03$). Also shown in Table 3 and inconsistent with Hypothesis 3a, abusive supervision was not related to interpersonal deviance at stage two of the mediation ($B = .02$, $SE = .07$, $p = n.s.$). These findings—abusive supervision significant at stage one but not at stage two and emotional exhaustion significant at stage two—suggest full mediation (Hypothesis 3b).

Contradicting Hypothesis 4a and 4b, the abusive supervision x agreeableness cross product term was not significant ($B = .08$, $SE = .07$, $p = n.s.$) at either stage two (Table 3) or at stage one (Table 2: $B = .03$, $SE = .09$, $p = n.s.$). As shown in Table 3, the emotional exhaustion x agreeableness cross product term (Hypothesis 4c) was significantly related to interpersonal deviance ($B = -.20$, $SE = .08$, $p = .01$). Presented in Table 4, the upper and lower limits of the bootstrap estimates excluded zero when levels of employees' agreeableness was low. I plotted the emotional exhaustion x agreeableness interaction predicting interpersonal deviance (path *b* in Figure 1). Illustrated in Figure 3, the relationship between emotional exhaustion and interpersonal deviance was stronger among employees who were low rather than high in agreeableness. I present in Figure 4 a plot of the overall conditional indirect effect of abusive supervision on interpersonal deviance through emotional exhaustion.

Chapter IV

Discussion

By applying both resource-based theories and the social exchange theory, the purpose of the current study was to examine the psychological process that links supervisory abuse to interpersonal deviance. Results supported existing research (Hu & Wu, 2009) by finding a positive relationship between abusive supervision and subordinate emotional exhaustion (Hypothesis 1). Supporting the COR theory and JD-R model, results suggest that abusive supervisors serve as an emotional demand for employees by creating a negative and hostile work environment. Additionally, supervisory abuse likely drains employees' existing resources (e.g., through consistent belittlement and public criticism) while failing to increase resources (e.g., through encouragement and supervisor support). Consequently, employees' resources become depleted contributing to employees becoming emotionally exhausted.

Results supported the assertion that emotional exhaustion was positively and directly related to interpersonal deviance (Hypothesis 2). This finding suggests that when employees feel emotionally exhausted they lack the energy and psychological and emotional resources necessary to adequately engage in emotion- and self-regulation. Hence, due to the fatigue of emotional exhaustion these individuals may be more inclined to engage in interpersonal deviance.

I hypothesized that abusive supervision has a direct effect on interpersonal deviance (Hypothesis 3a). Applying the social exchange theory and the trickle-down theory of aggression, I suggested that employees engage in interpersonal deviance as a form of retaliation or by modeling the observed supervisory abuse. However, this hypothesis (Hypothesis 3a) was not supported. The null findings suggest that a psychological process is occurring that is more complex than employees simply retaliating in a "tit-for-tat" way or

mimicking the abusive behavior displayed by their supervisor. However, I did find support that emotional exhaustion fully mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance (Hypothesis 3b). In other words, employees engaging in deviance may not be motivated to retaliate against the maltreatment or model the observed abuse, but rather interpersonal deviance may serve as a coping mechanism for abused and exhausted employees. This finding supports emerging CWB literature asserting that employees leverage CWBs in an effort to conserve existing resources and to reduce exhaustion (e.g., Krischer, Penney, & Hunter, 2007; Penney, Hunter, & Perry, 2011). Thus, when examining the relationship of abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance, resource-based theories may be more appropriate than the social exchange theory and the trickle-down theory of aggression.

Finally, I examined agreeableness as a potential moderator on all paths. Hypothesis 4a, positing that the direct relationship between abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance is conditional upon agreeableness, was not supported. This null finding supports previous discussions, such that regardless of employees' level of agreeableness employees are not inclined or motivated to retaliate against or model abusive supervision. Additionally, I investigated agreeableness moderating the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion (Hypothesis 4b). The hypothesized moderation was not supported suggesting that employees, regardless of their level of agreeableness, may be at risk of becoming emotionally exhausted due to having an abusive supervisor. Hypothesis 4c, emotionally exhausted employees low in agreeableness will be more inclined to engage in interpersonal deviance, was supported. Thus, individuals low in agreeableness, who can be characterized as hostile, insulting, and vengeful (Costa et al., 1989), may cope with feeling

emotionally exhausted by taking out their frustration on those around them at work. Because employees low in agreeableness do not value being liked as much as their agreeable counterparts, they may cope with feeling emotionally exhausted by lashing out on those around them. Results indicated that highly agreeable employees refrain from engaging in interpersonal deviance perhaps because those high in agreeableness value social harmony (Bolton et al., 2010) more so than those low in agreeableness. Thus, these individuals may have found alternative ways to cope (e.g., socializing outside of work) rather than taking out their feelings (e.g., fatigue, frustration) on others in the workplace. Therefore, these findings suggest that emotionally exhausted employees who are high in agreeableness may seek alternative ways to cope; whereas, employees low in agreeableness are more inclined to engage in interpersonal deviance perhaps as a coping mechanism.

A gap in the existing literature which this study sought to fill was whether the relationship between abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance is direct, indirect, or both. Because path c (the direct path between abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance) was insignificant and path c' was significant (the indirect path of abusive supervision and interpersonal deviance through emotional exhaustion), the present findings suggest that employees primarily engage in interpersonal deviance as a method of coping as opposed to a form of retaliation or modeling. Thus, when investigating the psychological process of abused and emotionally exhausted employees engaging in interpersonal deviance, models of stress and burnout may be more useful compared to social exchange theory and trickle-down theory of aggression. An additional contribution of the current study is the moderating role of agreeableness. Findings suggest that employees low, rather than high, in agreeableness are more inclined to engage in interpersonal deviance.

Practical Implications

The findings of the present study support previous research highlighting the negative outcomes of abusive supervision (e.g., emotional exhaustion, interpersonal deviance; Duffy et al., 2002; Richman, Flaherty, Rospenda, & Christensen, 1992; Tepper, 2000, 2007; Tepper, et al., 2004; Tepper, et al., 2008; Zellars, et al, 2002). First, organizations should consider evaluating the culture, policies, and mission/value statements of the organization to ensure that a cohesive message is presented to employees (supervisors and subordinates) that abuse in any form is not tolerated. Organizations should focus on cultivating a positive ethical climate (Victor & Cullen, 1988) by implementing codes of conduct that explicitly state what constitutes deviant behavior and discusses the costs associated with deviance for the organization and employees. For example, organizations may want to consider adopting a zero tolerance organizational policy to deter all employees from acting in an abusive manner (Tepper et al., 2008). Mission/value statements should foster and support a culture and climate of social harmony to discourage abuse at both upper and lower levels of the organizational hierarchy.

Furthermore, results suggest that workplace aggression begets aggression. Thus, organizations should strive to stop the cycle of abuse which may begin with the abusive supervisor. Supervisor training programs should include material and exercises to make participants more aware of abusive behavior and its harmful effects. In March of 2013, 24 states in the United States introduced the Healthy Workplace Bills, a vehicle through which victims of supervisory abuse have legal standing to seek redress in civil courts (Healthy Workplace Bill, 2013). Similar bills have already been introduced or passed in Europe and Australia (Tepper, 2007; Martinko, Harvey, Brees, Mackey, 2013). By doing nothing,

organizations may put themselves at risk of facing costly legal repercussions (e.g., charges of harassment, expensive litigation) that may also tarnish their organization's reputation.

Data for this study were collected using 360-degree feedback surveys; thus, data for managers were collected from their superiors, subordinates, customers, and clients.

Organizations may want to consider conducting routine 360-degree feedback surveys to assess the manager's behavior as well as their subordinates feelings and actions. The results of feedback surveys can illuminate supervisors to problems related to their behavior of which they may have been unaware. This feedback can also be used when discussing development plans in performance appraisal meetings with managers.

However, striving to completely eliminate abusive supervision may, unfortunately, prove impossible. Understanding which employees have a potentially increased likelihood to respond to abuse and exhaustion in a deviant manner can serve as an important tool for personnel selection, placement, and management. As a result, organizations may want to be cautious in selecting employees who score low in agreeableness for specific jobs whose management cultures may be more likely to be perceived as abusive (Sulea, Fine, Fischann, Sava, 2013).

Employees could be offered stress management training and/or counseling to help mitigate the effects of emotional exhaustion, thus reducing the potential of employees engaging in interpersonal deviance or other negative outcomes (e.g., excessive drinking, theft). Intervention programs for employee burnout tend to focus on 1) increasing individual psychological resources and responses (e.g., coping) or 2) altering the occupational context (van der Klink, Blonk, R., Schene, A., & van Dijk, F., 2001). The former has been shown to be more effective than the latter (van der Klink et al., 2001; Maslach & Goldberg, 1998) and

is frequently referred to as stress management. These interventions typically focus on the development of coping skills in an employee to aid with better stress management (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). Additionally, findings suggest that when interpersonal deviance is occurring within the workplace, it may serve as a signal to the organization that employees are not being provided enough resources (e.g., supervisory support) to handle the daily stressors of work. Interventions focused on altering the organization have focused on social support as a key to intervention (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). Introducing a successful mentorship program may give abused and emotionally exhausted employees the additional resources they require through additional support and advisement. Employees could be offered training on how to build and maintain a network of supportive relationships and how to utilize these sources of support to minimize the threat of burnout (Thomas & Lankau, 2009). Furthermore, organizations may want to consider putting into place organizational policies that allow employees to voice their concerns in a forum where they feel safe and protected (e.g., grievance procedures).

Limitations/Future Directions

The current study design suffers from several potential limitations. First, one limitation of the study is its correlational and cross-sectional design. While cross-sectional data has its advantages (e.g., gathering large amounts of data easily), causation cannot be inferred from the results, only correlation. Thus, instead of viewing interpersonal deviance as an outcome of abusive supervision, it is possible that supervisors may be more inclined to abuse employees who engage in interpersonal deviance. Future research should address this limitation by replicating the current study using a longitudinal design to aid in inferring causation.

A second potential limitation of the study is the self-report nature of the survey. This poses a threat to internal validity as participants may not correctly remember past events and participants may be inclined to respond in a socially desirable manner. However, this is not a major concern of the present study as social desirability accounts for a relatively small portion of variance (Moorman & Podsakoff, 1992). In addition, Conway and Lance (2010) argued that self-report is not necessarily inferior to reports by others.

Finally, concerns about common method variance (CMV) should be considered. Because information was gathered through a self-report survey this could potentially pose a threat to internal validity. CMV is the bias that occurs when variables are related because of the similarity in the way they are assessed. This is a concern for the present study because all data were collected via online surveys during the same time for all employees. Essentially, this means that some of the current findings could be a result of the method of data collection instead of reflecting the true relationship among the variables (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Preferably, data should be collected from numerous sources to eliminate the threat of CMV. However, Spector (2006) challenged the severity of the threat of CMV going so far as to call it an "urban legend". Spector (2006) asserted that "there is universally shared variance inherent in our methods is both an exaggeration and oversimplification..." (p. 230). While CMV may be a concern of the present study design, I contend that some of the constructs examined in this study may be best captured through self-report. For example, abusive supervision is defined as "subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in.. hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors..." (Tepper, 2000; p. 178). Consequently, some of the constructs examined may best be captured through self-report.

Conclusion

Results found in the present study extend previous research by proposing and supporting the importance of two variables (emotional exhaustion and agreeableness) in understanding the relationship between abusive supervision and the interpersonal deviance of their subordinates. These findings suggest that abusive supervision has an indirect effect on interpersonal deviance mediated by emotional exhaustion. Moreover, this relationship is conditional such that individuals low rather than high in agreeableness are more inclined to engage in interpersonal deviance. The primary contribution of this study is to better understand the psychological process that is associated with employees engaging in interpersonal deviance. The results suggest that employees do not engage in interpersonal deviance merely to retaliate against being mistreated or to model the hostile behavior displayed by their boss. Rather, the findings suggest that employees low in agreeableness engage in interpersonal deviance as a coping mechanism as a result of feeling emotionally exhausted due to abuse by the supervisor. Because individuals high in agreeableness desire to be liked and accepted by those around them, these individuals may seek other ways in which to cope. The practical implications of these results are that “nice matters” and organizations would benefit from strategies to reduce abuse and disagreeableness in the workplace.

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Table 1.

Intercorrelation Matrix.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Agreeableness	7.78	.98	(.80)					
Abusive Supervision	1.74	.87	-.15	(.89)				
Conscientious	7.55	.88	.62***	-.10	(.70)			
Emotional Exhaustion	2.31	.94	-.11	.59***	-.09	(.87)		
Emotional Stability	7.24	1.23	.55***	-.18	.54***	-.22*	(.80)	
Interpersonal Deviance	1.55	.56	-.31***	.22*	-.28***	.25***	-.38***	(.65)

Note. *** $p < .001$; * $p < .05$. Reliabilites estimates (α) reported on the diagnoal.

Table 2.

Mediator Variable Model: Emotional Exhaustion Regressed on the Predictors.

Predictor	b	SE	t
Constant	.74	.85	0.87
Abusive Supervision	.62***	.09	7.21
Agreeableness	.04	.10	0.43
Abusive Supervision x Agreeableness	.03	.09	0.34
Conscientiousness	.02	.11	0.17
Emotional stability	-.12	.08	-1.61

Note. *** $p < .001$. $R^2 = .368$, $F(5, 109) = 12.168^{***}$.

Table 3.

Dependent Variable Model: Interpersonal Deviance Regressed on the Predictors.

Predictor	b	SE	t
Constant	2.49***	.56	4.48
Emotional Exhaustion	0.14*	.07	2.19
Abusive Supervision	0.02	.07	0.24
Emotional Exhaustion x Agreeableness	-0.20*	.08	-2.58
Agreeableness	-0.90	.07	-1.34
Abusive Supervision x Agreeableness	0.08	.07	1.12
Conscientiousness	-0.06	.07	-0.79
Emotional stability	-0.07	.05	-1.38

Note. *** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. $R^2 = .25$, $F(7, 107) = 4.99^{***}$.

Table 4.

Conditional Indirect Effects of Abusive Supervision on Interpersonal Deviance at Low, Average, and High Levels of Agreeableness.

Agreeableness	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Low	.20	.08	.07	.39
Average	.09	.05	.01	.19
High	-.03	.06	-.14	.10

Note. LLCI = Lower limit confidence interval; ULCI = Upper limit confidence interval.

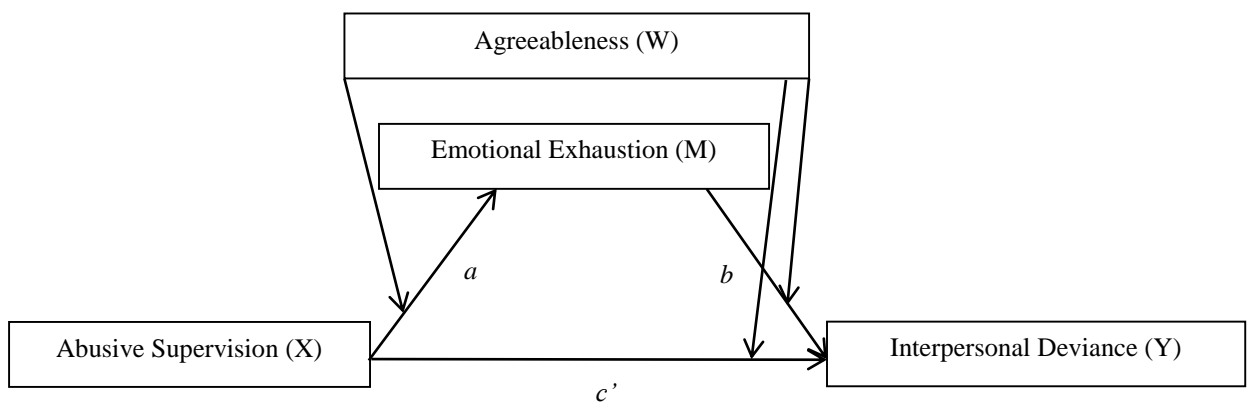


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual model.

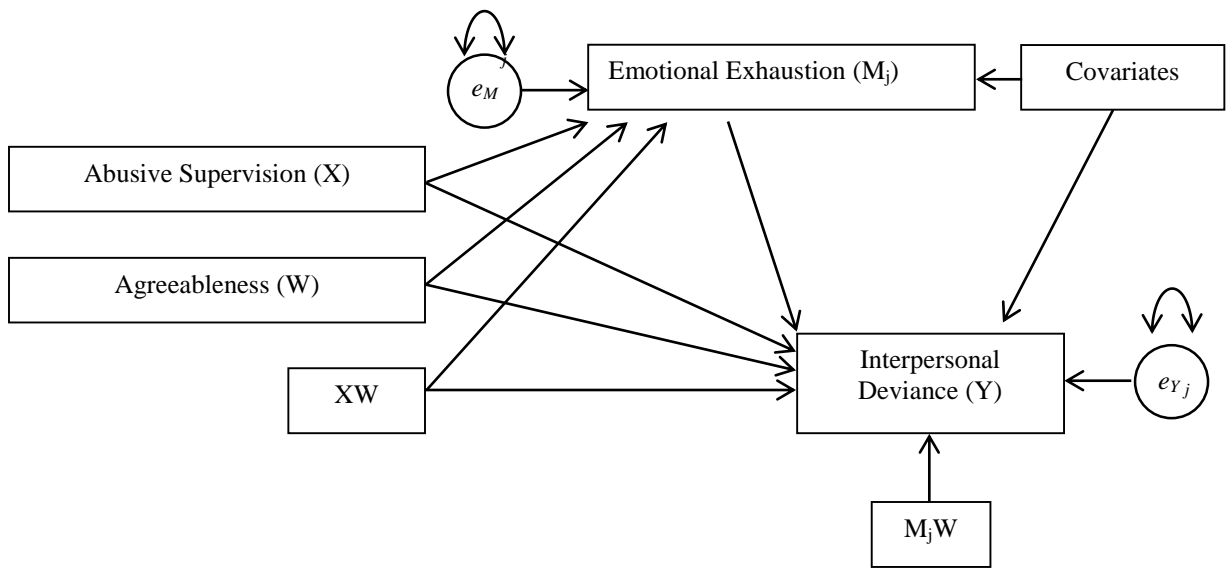


Figure 2. Proposed structural model. Covariates = Conscientiousness and emotional stability.

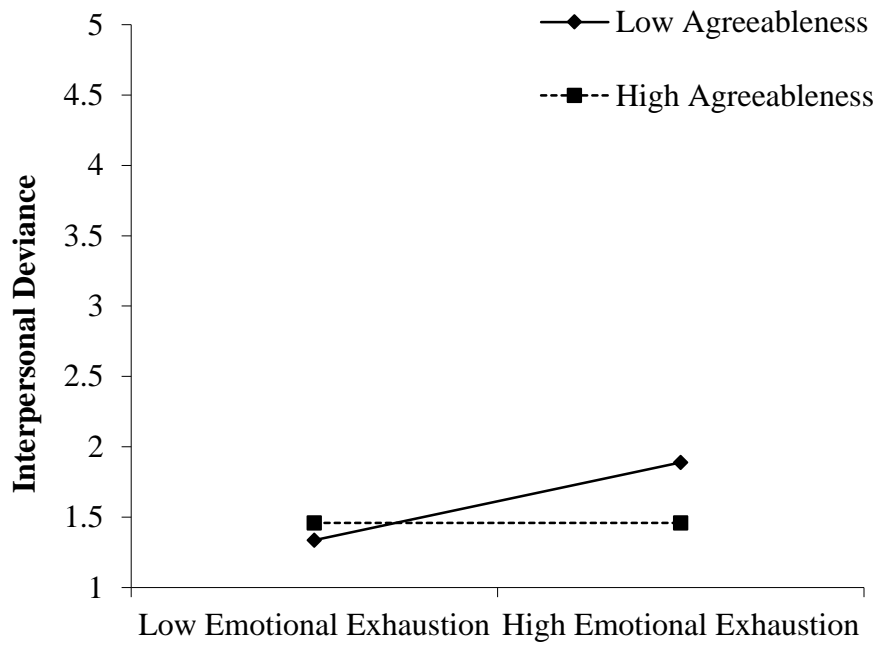


Figure 3. Conditional indirect effect of agreeableness on interpersonal deviance (Path *b*).

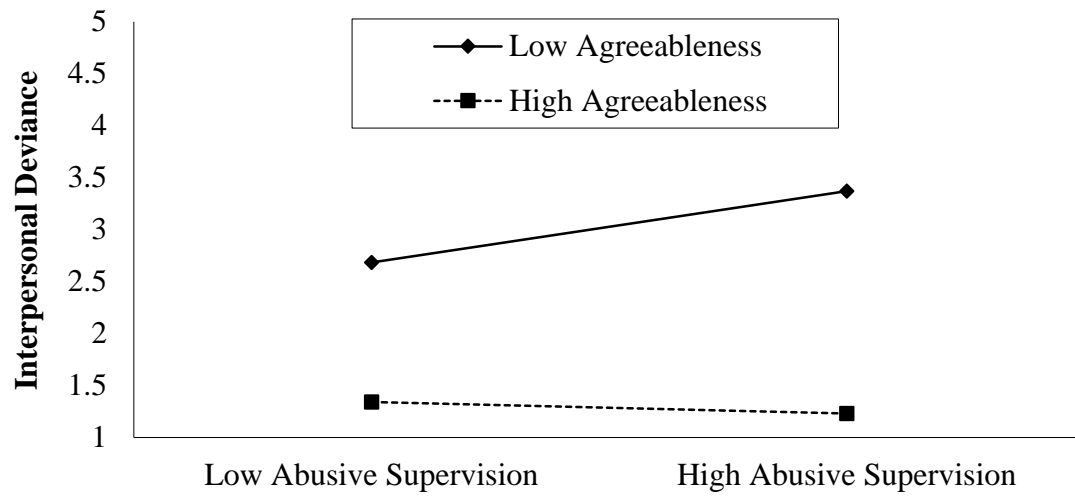


Figure 4. Conditional indirect effect of abusive supervision on interpersonal deviance through emotional exhaustion (Path c').

Appendix A

Abusive Supervision

1. This supervisor ridicules me.
2. This supervisor tells me that my thoughts or feelings are stupid.
3. This supervisor puts me down in front of others.
4. This supervisor makes negative comments about me to others.
5. This supervisor tells me that I am incompetent.

Appendix B

Emotionally Exhausted

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
4. Working all day is really a strain for me.
5. I feel burned out from work.

Appendix C

Interpersonal Deviance

1. I have been nasty or rude to a client, customer, or citizen.
2. I have insulted or made fun of someone at work.
3. I have ignored someone at work.
4. I have verbally abused someone at work.

Appendix D

Agreeableness

1. Cold
2. Harsh
3. Cooperative
4. Rude
5. Unsympathetic
6. Warm
7. Kind
9. Sympathetic

Appendix E

Conscientiousness

1. Inefficient
2. Disorganized
3. Sloppy
4. Efficient
5. Systematic
6. Organized
7. Careless
8. Practical

Appendix F

Emotional Stability

1. Fretful
2. Touchy
3. Relaxed
4. Unenvious
5. Jealous
6. Moody
7. Envious
8. Temperamental