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Abusive Supervision and its Impact on Performance

Bradley Estes

ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND ITS IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND ITS IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND ITS IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

Bradley Estes

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Purpose. Abusive supervision may have a significant negative influence on the performance of subordinates. Not only may subordinates react with a diminished work attitude or be more likely to resign, they also may intentionally reduce productivity, purposely neglect to follow supervisory instructions, and be less likely to participate in extra-role behaviors. Performance may decline and performance improvement may become more difficult.

This study explored the performance-related reactions to supervisory abuse. Two research questions guided this study: (1) How did abusive supervision influence performance-related behaviors? (2) What were the characteristics of the behaviors influenced by abusive supervision?

Method. This study was a systematic, random-sample inquiry among approximately 6,500 licensed registered nurses in a South Florida county. Data collection was by a mail survey utilizing a self-administered, self-report questionnaire. Responses were anonymous. Bennett and Robinson's (2000) organization deviant behavior workplace scale was utilized. A screening question determined participation. The required sample size of 364 useable responses for a $\pm 5\%$ sampling error at a 95% confidence level was attained. The inquiry was a descriptive study and utilized quantitative measures.

Major Findings. This study found that 46.6% of its participants had experienced supervisory abuse with 36.6% of the participants reporting negative influences on performance. Up to 73.5%

of those reporting negative influences on performance engaged in behaviors reducing productivity. The data demonstrates that abusive supervision resulted in a number of behaviors which diminished performance. The data also revealed that subordinates of abusive supervisors neglected to follow the instructions of their supervisors, thus reducing organizational control.

Supervisory abuse may interfere with human resource development's (HRD) core objectives. This study's findings should be of considerable concern to HRD professionals whose primary role is to facilitate a healthy and productive work environment.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will introduce the problem I studied, the background of the problem, and the rationale of this study. I will define the boundaries of my study and outline the study's research questions. I will also introduce the theoretical foundations related to my topic and discuss the significance of my study for human resource development (HRD) professionals.

Supervision has a dramatic impact on both individual employee and organizational performance (Jones & Chen, 2002). Employees not only depend upon supervision for the material essentials related to their jobs, they also need a considerate and supporting relationship with their supervisors (Vroom, 1964). Abusive supervision, defined as the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical violence (Tepper, 2000), may interfere with the development of that relationship.

Context of the Study

Organizations provide the context for abusive supervision. Organizations create the structure, set the goals, establish the control, oversee interpersonal relations, and embed the cultural assumptions for organization dynamics (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Presthus, 1958; Tannenbaum, 1977; Schein, 1965; Scott, 1977). I will first describe the functions of organizations and then expand upon the dynamics of organization control and organization culture.

Organization

Traditionally, organization is viewed as a vehicle for accomplishing goals and objectives (Scott, 1977). An organization is a system of interpersonal relations. Individuals are differentiated in terms of authority, status and role within prescribed personal interactions.

Organizations have three goals: growth, stability and interaction. Classical organization theory is built around four key pillars: (a) the division of labor, (b) the chain of command, (c) the logical relationships of functions arranged to accomplish the organization's objectives efficiently, and (d) the span of control (Presthus, 1958).

Organization control. Organizations are characterized by orderly arrangements of individual human interactions in which control is an essential ingredient. "The control process helps circumscribe idiosyncratic behaviors and keeps them conformant with the rational plan of the organization...It is the function of control to bring about conformity to organizational requirements and achievement of the ultimate goal of the organization" (Tannenbaum, 1977, p. 236-237).

Organization culture. Organization culture encompasses those things shared or held in common by groups (Schein, 1999). Culture contains the "shared basic assumptions" of an organization, based upon a group's conclusions on ways to solve its problems of external adaptation and internal integration (Schein, 1992, p. 12). He suggested that evidence of group assumptions become elements of a culture occurs when those assumptions are passed on to new group members who are taught "the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 12).

Problem of the Study

For most employees, their immediate supervisor "is the embodiment of the company" (Jones & Chen, 2002, p. 1). Supervisory behavior and attitudes drive employee perceptions of the company. Front-line supervisors are a main determinant of performance, retention and morale (Jones & Chen). Among the most critical factors related to job performance is a considerate and supportive relationship with supervisors. "The more 'considerate,' 'supportive,' and 'employee

oriented' the supervisor, the greater the extent subordinates will strive to do their jobs well" (Vroom, 1964, p. 212). As mentioned earlier, abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000) may interfere with the development of considerate, supportive and employee-oriented relationships.

Impacts of Abusive Supervision

While empirical evidence was minimal, some studies have indicated abusive supervision negatively impacts performance. Tepper (2000) reported higher turnover rates and less favorable attitudes toward jobs, lives and organizations among participants in his study of abusive supervision. Tepper and colleagues also found that abusive supervision negatively influenced subordinates' perceptions of whether organizational citizenship behaviors were part of their job requirements (Zellars, Tepper & Duffy, 2002). Organ and co-researchers suggested that organizational citizenship behaviors are essential for organizational performance (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006). Hornstein (1996) concluded from information gathered from nearly 1,000 workers that abusive supervision adversely affected employees' initiative, commitment, motivation, and productivity and created anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem. Bamberger and Bacharach (2006), in their study of blue-collar worker problem drinking and abusive supervision, discovered that subordinates of abusive supervisors were significantly more likely to report drinking problems.

Purpose and Research Questions

This study's purpose was to explore employees' experiences with abusive supervision, including their perceptions and the meanings of those perceptions related to performance-related behavior. The further intent of this study was to provide HRD professionals a better understanding of abusive supervision and its impact on HRD's primary objective, improving performance and maintaining a healthy organizational culture. The study participants included

registered nurses who worked in situations wherein their performance was negatively impacted by an abusive supervisor's "sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000, p. 178).

In exploring abusive supervision, these research questions guided my effort:

1. How did abusive supervision influence performance-related behaviors?
2. What were the characteristics of the behaviors influenced by abusive supervision?

Theoretical Foundations

Five theoretical foundations guided my study of abusive supervision, including management; emotional abuse including abusive supervision, mental disorders and moral maturity, the psychological contract, and performance. These theories provided insight into the dynamics, characteristics, causation, and impacts of abusive supervision, although research does not provide a solid foundation, discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

Management

Organizational control is accomplished by the managerial subsystem and the structure of authority which are inseparable. They arise out of the organizational needs to assure role performance, coordination of subsystems, decision making, response to external changes and replacement of system members. Every organization needs some form of managerial subsystem (Katz & Kahn, 1966). This subsystem provides a network of interrelated and interacting components for coordinating and directing employee performance toward the organization's objectives with varying levels of management (Chruden & Sherman, 1984).

Depending upon the size and complexity of the organization, management subsystems may include senior management, division management, department managers and first-line supervisors. Supervisors direct the largest portion of an organization's function which "places

them in a critical position, probably performing the most important functions of motivating and controlling employee performance” (Chruden & Sherman, 1984, p. 310). Management subsystems may have varying beliefs and attitudes as will be demonstrated in chapter 2 (Likert, 1967; Schein, 1965). McGregor (1960) probably best described those variances in his X and Y theories of management. “Behind every managerial decision or action are assumptions about human nature and human behavior” (p. 33).

Emotional Abuse

The concept of emotional abuse versus physical abuse was the second foundation that guided my inquiry into abusive supervision. Tepper’s concept of abusive supervision is based, in part, on Keashly’s (1998) definition of workplace emotional abuse, “repeated hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact, directed at one or more persons over a period of time resulting in the target’s self-efficacy as a worker and as a person being negatively affected” (p. 86). As summarized earlier, Tepper (2000) defined abusive supervision as the “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engaged in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact...that reflect indifference as well as willful hostility” (p. 178). Tepper’s definition is the predominate definition I found in my literature search. Harvey and Keashly (2005) later expounded on the definition of emotional abuse to include the elements: (a) patterned, (b) unwelcome and unsolicited, (c) violative of standards of conduct, (d) harmful, (e) implied intent or failure to control action, and (f) differences in power. Tepper’s concept of abusive supervision also evolved from another concept, the petty tyrant manager (Ashforth, 1994). Ashforth described that type of manager as “one who lords his power over others” (p. 755) and whose behaviors include public criticisms, loud and angry tantrums, rudeness, inconsiderate actions, coercion and use of authority or a position for personal gain.

Other researchers have considered certain supervisory behaviors hostile. These included subordinate coercion and intimidation (Hornstein, 1996) and mistreatment (Blase & Blase, 2003).

Mental Disorders and Moral Maturity

Assuming some supervisors act outside of behavioral norms for their organization, mental disorder theories provided insight into their motivations for abusive supervision. Those disorders may range from (a) psychosis in which an individual loses contact with reality, (b) to personality disorders characterized by maladaptive traits, which impair social and occupational functioning, and (c) to stress which strains the physiological or psychological capacities of an individual (Davison & Neal, 1986). Miller particularly pointed to personality disorders as troublesome in the workplace. Personality-disordered individuals typically have little insight into their own behavior or understanding of the adverse impact they have on themselves and others (Miller, 2003). Kohlberg's theory of moral maturity development also was utilized to explain behavior outside the norms. Supervisors may ignore organizational rules of behavior because of a low-level of moral maturity (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977).

The Psychological Contract

Schein (1965) defined the psychological contract as an "unwritten set of expectations operating at all times between every member of an organization and the various managers and others in that organization" (p. 22). The psychological contract assisted in explaining why some individuals may consider treatment by a supervisor abusive while others may not (Tepper, 2000). The same subjective differentiation may also apply to difference circumstances with the same supervisor. Abusive supervision is "a subjective assessment" (Tepper, p. 178).

Performance

The final theoretical foundation of my study was performance. The relationship of individual performance with organization performance was fundamental to my study in demonstrating that individual performance is consistently linked to organization performance.

Performance is the “valued productive output of a system in a form of goods or services” and is mediated through human expertise and effort (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 89). Performance is grounded in the concept of virtue. Aristotle, using Socrates’ thinking, linked virtue with happiness and happiness with the well being of the community. Aristotle argued that individual and societal interests are impossible to separate (Solomon, 1998, p. 264) similar to Rummler and Brache’s (1995) assertion that individual and organizational performance are inseparable in the context of results. Performance has multiple levels: organizational, process, subsystem and individual (Rummler & Brache, 1995). Campbell’s (1990) model of individual performance dichotomizes performance into three parts: (a) declarative knowledge (b) procedural knowledge and skill, and (c) motivation. Performance is linked with organizations via social systems and a product or outcome. A product or outcome is essential to renew the social system’s energy flow. “No social system is self-sufficient or self-contained” (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 20).

Conceptual Framework

Abusive supervision occurs within the context of organizations and organizational control. Figure 1 explains the dynamics of abusive supervision. Abusive supervision may be influenced by prescribed management assumptions, beliefs and attitudes, or abuse may occur outside of behavior norms due to aberrant behavior influenced by mental disorders or a low level of moral maturity. Abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000) occurs within the concept of workplace emotional abuse (Keashly 1998). Once abusive supervision occurs, subordinates use the expectations in

their psychological contract (Schein, 1980) to appraise the behavior to determine if they consider it abusive. Organization structure and culture may influence that appraisal process. Psychological contract violations may result in deviant workplace behavior (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

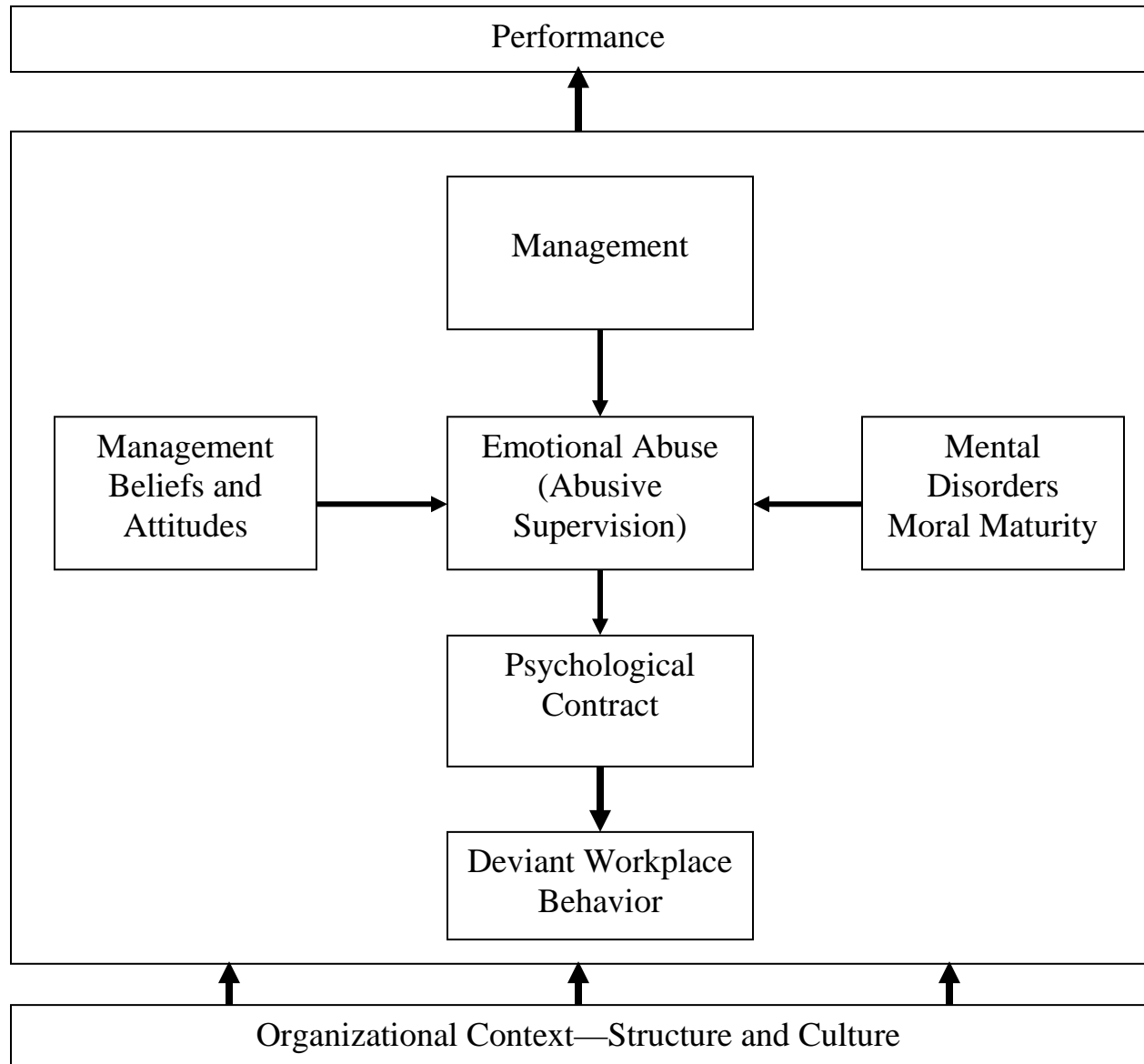


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of abusive supervision

Boundaries of the Study

The boundaries for my study of abusive supervision included delimitations with regard to supervision and participants. These delimitations provided guidance for my study as follows:

Supervision

The study focused on immediate or front-line supervision, in other words, those individuals most immediately responsible for the control and direction of one or more non-management workers. Because of the variations in titles related to supervision, my study disregarded titles and focused on responsibilities. In large organizations, supervisors, forepersons or line managers may provide immediate supervision. In small organizations, the owner, a partner or even the owner's spouse may provide such supervision. Fundamental to my definition of supervision will be Chruden & Sherman's (1984) criteria which defined a supervisor, acting on behalf of management, as being responsible for (a) structuring the work of subordinates, (b) motivating and controlling the employee performance, (c) determining the extent goals are being met, (d) deciding if quality standards are being maintained, and (e) assuring compliance with company policies, procedures and regulations.

Abusive Supervision

My study of abusive supervision was limited to emotional abuse and did not include physical abuse. This is consistent with Tepper's (2000) definition of abusive supervision.

Study Methodology and Participants

The study was an anonymous, cross-sectional descriptive study of licensed registered nurses in a selected county in South Florida. Data was collected by unsolicited survey utilizing a self-administered, self-report questionnaire mailed to a random sample of currently-licensed nurses in that county. Initially, the population from which the random sample was drawn was all of the licensed registered nurses in the selected county. Those with addresses of record listing employers were eliminated. A survey screening question resulted in a stratified sample of only licensed registered nurses with the characteristic that they had had experienced supervisory abuse

which had negatively impacted their performance. Inferences were drawn about licensed registered nurses in the selected county with the same characteristic.

Significance of the Study

The significance of my study relates to HRD in two ways:

1. First, my study will enhance maintaining a healthy organizational culture aligned with organizational objectives. HRD professionals will be better able to identify supervisory behaviors inconsistent with maintaining a healthy organizational culture.
2. Secondly, this research will add to the understanding of abusive supervision's impact on performance and performance improvement, critical objectives of HRD (Swanson & Holton, 2001) and provide intervention recommendations.

A Healthy Organizational Culture

Historically, management system assumptions and behaviors which are threatening instill fear and display a lack of trust in employees generate the lowest level of organizational performance (Likert, 1967; McGregor, 1960; Schein, 1965). Supervisor employee relations significantly impact employee motivation (Vroom, 1964). More recently, abusive supervision researchers have found a host of negative attitudes and affective responses which indirectly or directly impact organizational performance (Blase & Blase, 2003; Burton & Hoobler, 2006; Day & Hamblin, 1964; Hornstein, 1996; Tepper, 2000; Valle, 2005; Zellars et al., 2002). These abusive assumptions and behaviors are often embedded in organization culture (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1992). Alignment of organizational culture with organizational goals is critical to organizational performance (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1999). Organizational performance is a fundamental objective of HRD (Swanson & Holton, 2001) and thus a major focus of this study.

In that regard, my study provides HRD professionals a better understanding of the characteristics, causes and negative impacts of abusive supervision that threatens maintaining a healthy organizational culture and accomplishing performance objectives. Specifically, HRD professionals will be better able to (a) recognize if abusive supervision is occurring, (b) convince senior management of the importance of intervening, (c) advance the organizational awareness that abusive supervision negatively impacts performance, (d) develop and implement interventions that are responsive to abusive supervision situations and (e) assist with the monitoring of any further incidence of abusive supervision and modify interventions as needed.

Performance and Performance Improvement

My second objective related specifically to achieving performance and performance improvement through education and training, a core HRD objective (Swanson & Holton, 2001). “Training is useless if it cannot be translated into performance” (Yamhill & McLean, 2001, p. 195). Training is also an expensive investment (Cheng & Ho, 2001). While the effectiveness of education and training focused on performance improvement depends upon a number of variables (Swanson & Holton), paramount in the concern is the transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Defined as the degree to which trainees effectively apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in the training context to the job (Newstrom, 1986), Baldwin and Ford suggested a training transfer model with three key inputs: trainee characteristics, training design and work-environment factors. Supervisory support and organizational philosophy were key elements of the work-environment factors.

Supervisory support is a multi-dimensional construct including both verbal and non-verbal behaviors such as encouragement, goal-setting activities, reinforcement and modeling. Organizational philosophy may also influence the transfer of training. Noting the need for more

research, Baldwin and Ford suggest that, for example, the organization's philosophy on human relations can have important implications for the transferring of skills from a human-relations training program.

This study will enhance the awareness and understanding of HRD professionals about abusive supervision's impacts on transfer of training as they focus on the various elements of training transfer.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the background and the context for the problem of abusive supervision, organizations and organizational dynamics. I presented the purpose of the study and the research questions. I also provided a brief overview of the theoretical framework related to abusive supervision, the boundaries of my study and the study's significance.

Abusive supervision is a topic about which there is little understanding. The limited research on the issue indicated negative impacts on individual performance. Individual performance is inter-related with organizational performance, which is critical to the success and sustainability of organizations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I will present my methodology for the literature review of my study of abusive supervision's negative influence on performance, followed by an introduction and discussion of the theories and constructs of my study's conceptual framework.

To ground the study of abusive supervision in theory, I used literature search and review. This included searches in Google Scholar, ABI/Inform Complete at ProQuest, ERIC, PsychInfo, and Academic Search Premier with the following key words: organization, organizational control, management systems, managerial behavior, supervisory behavior, abusive supervision, supervisory abuse, aberrant supervisory behavior, psychological disorders, mental disorders, personality disorders, moral maturity, the psychological contract, employee performance, worker performance and workplace performance. I also reviewed references in publications acquired from this study's literature search to obtain additional related publications.

The Conceptual Framework

Nine groups of theories and constructs guided my study of abusive supervision. I developed the Figure 1 to graphically portray the conceptual framework of my topic: performance, management, emotional abuse of which supervisory abuse is a dimension, management beliefs and attitudes, mental disorders and moral maturity, the psychological contract, deviant workplace behavior and organizational context consisting of organizational structure and culture.

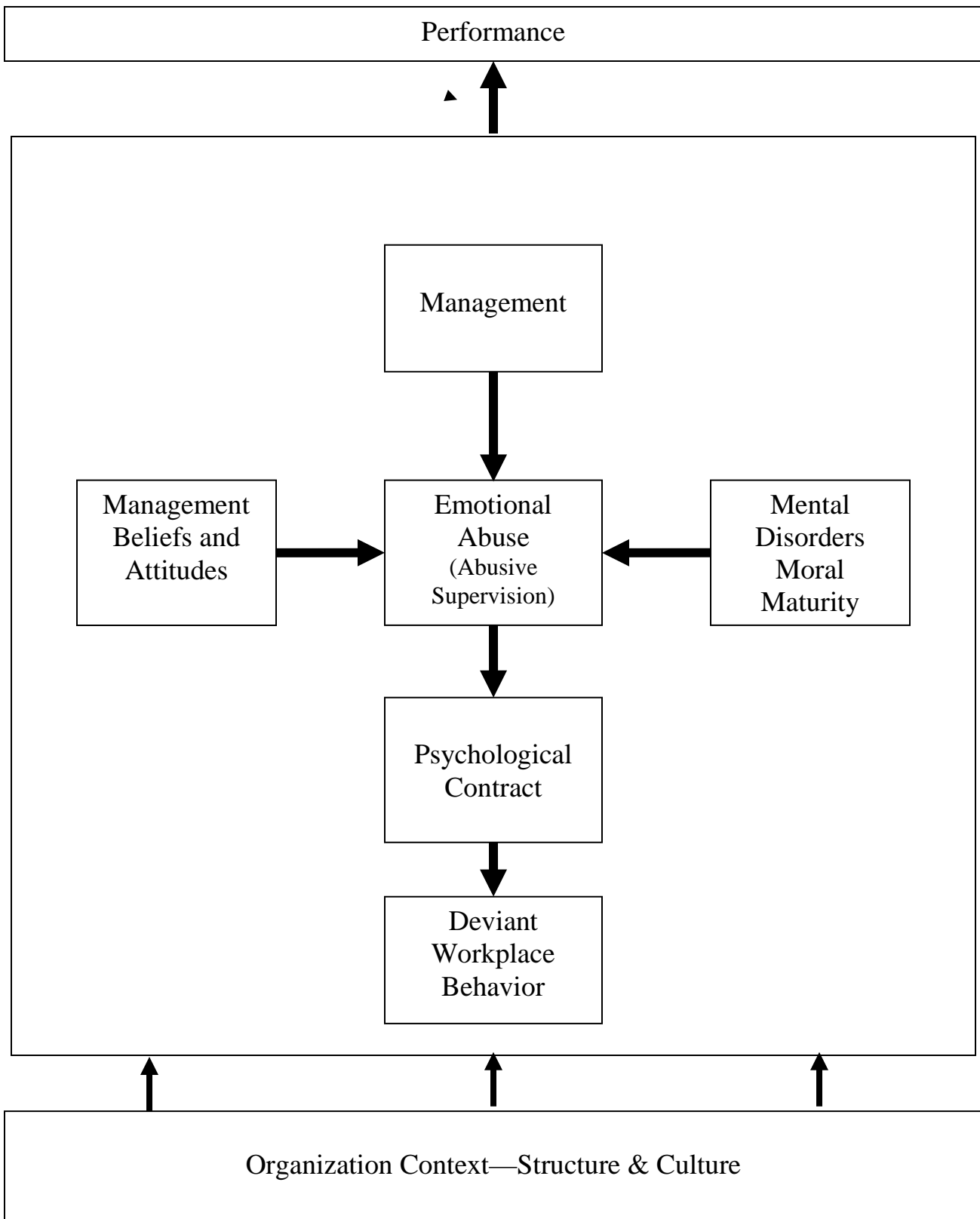


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of abusive supervision

Summary of the Elements of the Conceptual Framework

This section summarizes the eight elements which guided my study, to be followed by a detailed discussion of each element. There are elements which directly influence abusive supervision, such as management assumptions. There are also elements that indirectly influence abusive supervision, such as organization structure.

Organization establishes the setting and opportunity for supervisor abuse. Organizations set up structure and control which provide the power and authority (Scott, 1977) for abuse. As indicated in figure 1 the organizational context, structure and culture, influenced the dynamics within the organization. Organizational culture influences actions, perceptions and reactions of supervisors and subordinates (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1965). Abusive supervision occurs within the organization management system which may be influenced by assumptions and prescribed management beliefs and attitudes which have been embedded in the organization as norms for management behavior (Likert, 1967; McGregor, 1960; Schein, 1992).

Supervisors may or may not function within the norms established by a management system (Hornstein, 1996). Supervisory abuse may occur outside of the behavioral norms, influenced by mental disorders such as personality disorders (Miller, 2003; Zimbardo, Weber & Johnson, 2003). Supervisory behavior outside of norms may also be result of a low level of moral maturity (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977).

Supervisory abuse is a dynamic of workplace emotional abuse (Keashly, 1998). This construct and the development of the construct of supervisory abuse (Tepper, 2000) established the criteria for determining if supervisory behavior is abusive.

Psychological contract theory assists in the understanding of the subjectivity and the appraisal process of the experience of supervisory abuse. The appraisal criteria is the embedded

in the expectations of the individual employee (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1990; Schein, 1965). Perceived violations of the psychological contract correlated positively with turnover and negatively with trust, satisfaction and intentions to remain.

An understanding of the influence of supervisory abuse on performance was the objective of my study. Performance theories and models (Campbell, 1990; Holton, 1999; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Rummler & Brache, 1995; Swanson & Holton, 2001) assisted in understanding the influence of abusive supervision on performance-related workplace behavior. I will now discuss these seven conceptual elements in more detail.

The Organizational Context

This section will discuss organizational context, a key component of the conceptual framework for the study. Organizational context through its elements, organization structure and culture, provide an on-going influence of organizational dynamics, both formally and informally (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

I will first discuss the concept of organization, followed by a review of the evolution of organization theory which was primarily prompted by the human relations movement (Scott, 1977). I will then discuss organization culture (Schein, 1965).

Organization

The fundamental purpose of organization is to accomplish goals and objectives through human collaboration in a system of structured interpersonal relations in which individuals are differentiated in terms of authority, status and role. Organization is a mechanism for offsetting those forces which undermine human collaboration by limiting the number of behavioral alternatives available to an individual (Prethuis, 1958; Scott, 1977). Katz and Kahn (1966) described the organization as an input-output system in which the energetic return from the output

reactivates the system. The patterned activities of this social system must be consistent with the common output or outcome.

Intense organizational activity in the United States began with the change from a rural culture to a culture based on technology, industry and the city (Scott (1977)). A new way of life emerged characterized by the proximity and dependence of people on each other. Proximity and dependency, as conditions of social life, harbored the threats of human conflict, capricious anti-social behavior, human relationship instabilities, and uncertainty about the nature of the social structure with its concomitant roles.

Organizations emerged as a way to assure common goals were identified and achieved, both in society in general and in the vast industrial development in the United States at the time. The classic organization doctrine, or “formal organization” became the initial approach which can be traced to Frederick W. Taylor’s interest in functional foremanship and planning staffs (Scott, 1977, p. 168), followed by the neoclassical, modern and contemporary organization theory.

Classic organization theory was founded upon four principles as follows (Scott, 1977): First, the division of labor was the cornerstone. This specifically entailed specialization and departmentalization of functions. Second, the scalar and functional processes dealt with the vertical and horizontal growth of the organization. These included the chain of command, the delegation of authority and responsibility, unity of command and the obligation to report. Third, structure provided the logical relationships of organizational functions to accomplish objectives through system and pattern. Structure is the vehicle for introducing logical and consistent relationships among the diverse functions which comprise the organization. Lastly, span of control dealt with the number of subordinates a manager could effectively supervise. Span of

control directed attention to the complexity of human and functional relationships in an organization.

However, the classic organization overlooked the problems stemming from human interactions, neglecting the interplay of individual personality, informal groups, intra-organizational conflict and the decision-making process in the formal structure (Scott, 1977).

Also ignoring behavioral sciences, classical organizational theory “only has relevant insights into the nature of organization” (Scott, 1977, p. 169).

The Evolution of Organization Theory

This section will discuss the evolution of organization theory from the classic to the modern organization, including the contributions of neoclassical organizational theory which embarked on rectifying some of the deficiencies of classical organizational theory relating to human relations. The human relations movement sparked the development of the neoclassical theory with human relations theories being added to the theoretical foundation of organization (Scott, 1977).

Among the keystone research which focused attention on the human element in the workplace was the Western Electric investigation conducted by Harvard University researchers. Earlier researchers, investigating the influence of plant lighting on work productivity in the 1920s, found that any change improved worker productivity. Harvard professors Elton Mayo, F. J. Roethlisberger and William J. Dickson followed the earlier researchers and discovered that it was not the lighting change that increased productivity but rather new or increased attention upon workers, a phenomenon later called the “Hawthorne Effect” (Mayo, 1945; Moorehead & Griffin, 1995). Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) note that in one sense the Hawthorne

studies, while not theoretically oriented, resulted in a new industry frame of reference on supervisory-subordinate relationships.

Mayo (1945) was among several individuals concerned about working conditions, calling worker relations “the seamy side of progress” (p. 3). Mayo (1945) pointed to as evidence workers’ attitudes of wariness or hostility and the lack of eagerness to cooperate wholeheartedly with other groups (p. 59). “Collaboration in an industrial society cannot be left to chance...such neglect will lead to disruption and catastrophe” (p. 9).

Chester Barnard (1938) also was among the early critics of classic organizational theory, suggesting the importance of human behavior in the workplace. Barnard (1938) argued that the foundation of organization is the cooperative system which was “indispensable” (p. 84).

Abraham Maslow (1970) published his human needs theory in 1954, arguing that depriving individuals of basic human needs at work can result in psychopathology.

Several other researchers published human relations works in the 1950s and the 1960s suggesting that psychological and social factors were fundamental to human performance and deserved consideration (Herzberg et al., 1959; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Likert, 1967; McGregor, 1960; Schein, 1965). Herzberg and colleagues focused on the shortcomings of current management practices in meeting the needs of employees and identified and delineated workplace motivational factors (Herzberg et al.). Katz and Kahn (1966) argued that individuals do not exist in a social vacuum and that an understanding of workplace social systems, both formal and informal, was essential to the understanding of behavior in organizations and institutions. Likert (1967) proposed a science-based system of management with a focus on the systemic nature of enterprise and motivation. McGregor (1960) pointed out the inadequacy of

the present assumptions concerning human nature and behavior. Schein (1965) argued that the organization must be viewed as a complex social system.

Neoclassical organization theory. This theory evolved from the pillars of the formal organization theory as outlined below by Scott (1977) with the viewpoints of neoclassicists added:

First, neoclassicists added theory relating to motivation, coordination and leadership to the division of labor. Both motivation and coordination relate to executive leadership.

Second, the neoclassical school pointed out that human problems are caused by process imperfections such as too much or insufficient delegation which may render an executive incapable of action. Assumptions about perfection in delegation and functionalization processes were eliminated.

Third, human behavior may disrupt the best laid organization plans, and thwart the logical relationships founded in the structure. Neoclassicists offered prescriptions for eliminating conflict in structure through participation which recognizes human dignity and better communication.

Lastly, span of control is a function of human determinants which the classical theory overlooked. A universally applicable ratio is inappropriate. Neoclassicists suggested some of the determinants included individual differences in managerial abilities, the type of people and functions supervised, and the extent of communication effectiveness. The neoclassical view also included the informal organization.

Modern organization theory. The next movement was to modern organizational theory which is distinctive from neoclassical theory because of its reliance on empirical research data, and its integrating nature. “The only meaningful way to study organization is to study it as a

system” including human systems (Scott, 1977, p. 173). Modern organization theory asked a range of interrelated questions not seriously considered by classic or neoclassical organization theory. Those questions related to interdependency, interactions, processes and goals. In addition, modern organization theorists pointed to three linking activities which are universal to human systems: (a) organized behavior, (b) communication, and (c) balance and decision making. These three linking activities are distinctive from neoclassical organization theory (Scott, 1977).

First, modern theorists studied the communication network. Neoclassicists viewed communication as a mechanism. Modern theorists viewed it as the method by which action is evoked from the system. “Communication acts not only as stimuli resulting in action, but also as a control and coordination mechanism linking the decision centers in the system into a synchronized pattern” (Scott, 1977, p. 175).

Second, balance in the linking process referred to equilibrating mechanisms whereby various parts of the system are harmoniously maintained in relation to one another. Systems exhibit built-in propensities to maintain steady states. When innovative change is introduced, new programs have to be evolved in order for the system to maintain internal harmony.

Lastly, decisions to produce are largely a result of an interaction between individual attitudes and the demands of the organization. Motivational analysis becomes central to studying the nature and results of interaction. Individual decisions regarding the intent to participate in the organization are influenced on such issues as the relationship between organizational rewards versus the demands made by the organization.

Contemporary organization behavior theory. The next movement in organization theory was to contemporary organization behavior theory which encompassed a multi-disciplinary approach

including anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology (Moorehead & Griffin, 1995). Swanson and Holton (2001) developed a similar multi-disciplinary approach in their theoretical foundation of human resource development related to performance. Their theory was an integration of psychological, economic and system theories in an ethical framework with the integrating state central to HRD discipline, not in just being aware of the elements. Underlying each theory are additional theoretical perspectives appropriate to the HRD discipline as follows: (a) economic theory, including scarce resource theory, sustainable resource theory and human capital theory; (b) psychological theory, encompassing Gestalt psychology, behavioral psychology, and cognitive psychology; and (c) system theory, inclusive of general system theory, chaos theory, and futures theory. Swanson and Holton's theory remains among the predominant current-day HRD theoretical and disciplinary foundations of HRD.

Organization Culture

Organization culture is the second element of my discussion related to the organizational context. As my conceptual framework suggested, organizational context, of which organizational culture is an element, may influence the actions, perceptions, and reactions to abusive supervision. Endemic to culture is a collective way of thinking and feeling (Schein, 1992). The extent cultural influence depends upon the strength of the culture of the organization which varies, depending upon the philosophies of the organization's founders and subsequent management (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

A definition and history. Organization culture is defined as "shared basic assumptions" (Schein, 1992, p. 12). These "shared basic assumptions" are not just any assumptions, but rather assumptions that have solved organization problems, both external and internal. The

assumptions have worked well enough to be adopted into a culture, are closely guarded in terms of compliance, and are taught to new members as the way to perceive, think and feel (Schein, 1992, p. 12).

Culture is a concept derived by social scientists to better understand societies by identifying their values, beliefs, and behaviors. Anthropologists also use cultural elements to study the physical evidence to understand the development of prehistoric life (Federico, 1979). Sociologists incorporate cultural variables in their analysis of societal group structures. The social sciences definition is commonly used to describe an organizational culture. For example, Schein's organization cultural definition of "shared basic assumptions" (Schein, 1992, p. 12) is similar to the definition used by sociologist Ronald Federico (1979), "the concept of culture includes all those aspects of human life that are learned and shared by the members of a society" (p. 33). In fact, culture, a Latin term meaning to cultivate, and society are often used interchangeably although culture is actually an element of society which "forms the basis for rules" that guide behavior of people in a group (Federico, 1979, p. 34).

While organization culture received researchers' early attention under different concepts such as the informal organization (Barnard, 1938; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Likert, 1967; Mayo, 1945), organization culture did not become a concern in the study of organization behavior until the 1980s (Moorehead & Griffin, 1995). That concern was not just limited to academia. Business interest in culture was far more intense than academia as business periodicals published articles "that claimed culture was essential to an organization's success and suggested that managers who could manage through their organization's culture almost certainly would rise to the top" (Moorehead & Griffin, 1995, p. 440). From the human relations aspect, Deal and Kennedy (1982) discovered in studying cultures of 80 of America's greatest companies that they were not

merely organizations, but “successful, human institutions” (p. 7). They concluded that the impact of values and beliefs on company performance “was indeed real” (p. 7). But organizational values had to be shared values, providing a common direction and guidelines for day-to-day behavior of all employees (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

Related to leadership, culture “surrounds us at all times, being constantly enacted and created by our interaction with others (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 1). “If you want to distinguish leadership from management or administration, leaders create culture and change cultures, while managers and administrators live within them” (p. 5).

By the mid-1990s, the business interest in culture had waned somewhat, but the significant research on culture completed in the 1980s fundamentally shifted the way both academics and managers looked at organizations (Moorehead & Griffin, 1995). Organization culture acquired an additional meaning to business interests in the 1990s related to change. The emergence of global competition, multi-national and multi-cultural organizations, and mergers and acquisitions in the 1990s sparked a different interest in organizational culture. Existing strong cultures became an obstacle to needed changes to adapt to external market changes (Schein, 1999). Resiliency is embedded in strong cultures to allow a group to continue to function, fulfilling the human mind’s need for cognitive stability which a culture provides. Any challenge to or questioning of basic assumptions will release anxiety and defensiveness (Schein, 1999). While cultures have evolutionary mechanisms to adapt to external threats, changes that threaten the culture’s core principles may prompt resistance. Businesses learned that lasting changes meant cultural changes. The 1990s brought about research and publications such as Schein’s model for transformational change, “unlearning and relearning culture” (Schein, 1999, p. 115). Schein’s model, based in part on Kurt Lewin’s change model (Lewin, 1958), first focuses on unlearning

utilizing some sense of threat, crisis or dissatisfaction coupled with anxiety and guilt. Stage one also has to build psychological safety for new learning. The first stage is followed by learning new concepts and new meanings for old concepts by identifying with role models, scanning for solutions and trial-and-error learning. The final stage of Schein's model internalizes new concepts and meanings by incorporating them into self-concepts, identities and on-going relationships. Schein proposed the use of temporary parallel systems for change in which some part of the organization exposes itself to new ways of thinking.

Culture and norms. Critical to the study of abusive supervision is an understanding that organization behavior norms reside in the culture (Schein, 1999). Culture is an element of organizational context. Culture influences various types of organizational behavior by applying pressure for compliance with norms and imposing sanctions on those who do not comply (Schein, 1999).

A Trend of Workplace Ambiguity

While not a topic of this study, workplace incivility research provides insight into the emerging trends concerning organizational culture and may add to the understanding of abusive supervision. There are a number of similarities in the dynamics of incivility and supervisory abuse. Workplace incivility will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Findings by incivility researchers suggest that climate changes have occurred in the workplace with regard to respect, politeness and relationships (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson & Porath, 2005). These changes may be adding to the frustration of supervision, influencing their personal conduct standards or just creating a less civil environment in general (Hornstein, 1996).

Incivility researchers have reported a growing trend toward workplace informality with a concurrent decline in workplace respect, politeness, and confusion as to what is acceptable and

unacceptable (Gonthier, 2002; Pearson, Andersson & Porath, 2000). This change is attributed to the casual atmosphere emerging in the workplace and the changing nature of work in the new millennium. When the workplace “went casual,” the lines between what is and is not appropriate became blurred (Gonthier, 2002, p. 7). Pearson et al. (2000) also reported that an informal corporate climate has caused confusion as employees have difficulty determining acceptable behavior.

A majority of participants (in their studies) reported that the number, complexity, and fragmentation of workplace relationships, facilitated by technologies such as voice mail, e-mail, and teleconferencing, had vastly changed. One manager, for example, concluded that “emerging technology takes away the human face—it’s easy to ‘flame’ somebody you don’t have to look at.” Other participants cited “faddish” corporate initiatives such as employee diversity, reengineering, downsizing, budget cuts, productivity pressures, and the use of part-time and temporary employees as potential causes of uncivil workplace behaviors. (Pearson et al., 2000, p. 128)

Management

I will first introduce the concept of management control and then discuss the management system, both essential elements for fundamental requirements of the input-output system (Katz & Kahn, 1966). I will then discuss supervision within the context of the management system. I will conclude with a detailed outline of the assumptions of different management theories and systems (Likert, 1967; Schein, 1965).

Control

Control is an evitable correlate of organization. Control is an essential and universal aspect of organization. Control, defined as power, authority or influence, refers to any process which

intentionally affects what another person or group or organization will do (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Control may operate very specifically, such as foreman specifying how a subordinate will do a particular job. Or it may operate more generally, such as the determination of organizational policies or actions” (Tannenbaum, 1977). Tannenbaum (1977) suggested that we provide power to an individual to the extent that the person is in a position to exercise control, relating inversely to freedom or lack of freedom to determine one’s own course of action.

Katz and Kahn (1966) proposed that the continuing requirement for all human organizations is the motivation of role behavior of organizationally required acts. Calling this phenomenon the “reduction of human variability” (p. 199), Katz and Kahn argued that an organizational member behaves in ways in which he or she would not outside the organization because of power and authority. “The organization is engaged in a never-ending process of adaptation...which in turn guarantees the product which justifies organizational existence” (p. 202).

The Management System

Power and authority are vested in a management system (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Embedded within a management system are assumptions based upon beliefs, opinions, convictions and generalizations. Some are explicitly stated, but some are implicit, but easily inferred (McGregor, 1960). These assumptions contain the assumptions about human behavior. Assumptions determine the managerial climate and employee motivation (Schein, 1965). Every aspect of an organization is determined by the competence, motivation and general effectiveness of its human organization (Likert, 1967).

Supervision. Typically, supervision belongs to two groups within the organization as a part of the organizational management system (Chruden & Sherman, 1984). The supervisor is the superior in one group, the group he or she supervises, and a subordinate in another, the

management system. “The supervisor is the link between these two groups” front-line employees and senior management (Chruden & Sherman, 1984, p. 311). Organizations have varying levels of management and supervision. Middle management may be in between supervisors and senior management, or managers may also act as supervisors in smaller organizations.

Management assumptions. With regard to management assumptions, I will first utilize Schein’s (1965) selection and analysis of the three major competing sets of assumptions about human relations. I will then outline Likert’s (1967) findings relating to characteristics of management systems and their underlying assumptions.

Schein (1965) identified three assumption categories: (a) rational-economic, (b) social, and (c) self-actualization. “These assumptions are based upon our past experience, cultural norms and what others have taught us to expect” (p. 50). Schein suggested, for those attempting to understand managerial behavior, research must focus on how people perceive situations, how they attribute causality to make situations meaningful, and how their personal attitudes and values influence perceptions and attributions. Assumptions managers make about the nature of people will determine their managerial strategy and their concept of what the agreement is with and between the employee and organization (Schein, 1965). Schein suggested three theoretical categories:

The rational-economic managerial assumptions are founded on hedonism which asserts that people act to maximize their self interest. “The organization is buying the services and obedience of the employee for economic rewards, and the organization assumes the obligation of protecting itself and the employee from the irrational side of his or her nature via a system of authority and controls” (Schein, 1965, p. 54). Primary importance is on an efficient task

performance in the rational-economic assumptions. Feelings and morale of employees are secondary unless those feelings relate directly to task performance. An organization attempting to improve its overall effectiveness will concentrate on the organization itself. The burden for organizational performance falls entirely on management. Schein (1965) contended that McGregor's theory X best described the rational-economic theory assumptions. McGregor developed these assumptions from interviews with 30 former Alfred P. Sloan Foundation fellows and over 100 managers in their companies (McGregor, 1960). Theory X assumptions include:

1. The average human being has an inherent dislike of work, avoiding it if he can.
2. Because of this human characteristic of dislike of work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives.
3. The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition and wants security above all.

Schein (1965) argued that there is some credibility of the rational-economic assumptions. Money and individual incentives have proven to be successful motivators of human effort in many kinds of organizations, assuming a worker's only expectation is money. However, as research results were being compiled, "it became clear that workers brought with them many motives, needs and expectations which did not fit the rational-economic assumptions, yet which influenced the quality and quantity of their work and their relationship to the organization" (Schein, 1965, p. 55). These studies led to another set of assumptions that put greater emphasis on social needs and motives.

Schein's second category of assumptions is social-managerial assumptions which recognize that workers bring social needs to organizations. They find expression in informal groupings.

These groupings actually influence how the work is performed, productivity levels, and the quality of input. These assumptions have drastically different implications for management strategy in four areas (Schein, 1965):

1. Managers do not limit their attention to the task, also providing attention to the needs of the people who work for them.
2. Managers are concerned less with directing and controlling and more with the psychological well-being of subordinates, particularly their feelings in regard to acceptance and a sense of belonging and identity.
3. Managers accept work groups as a reality.
4. Managers focus on acting as an intermediary between employees and higher management, listening and attempting to understand the needs and feelings of subordinates and upholding subordinates' claims at higher levels. The manager's role shifts from being the work giver, motivator and controller to that of the facilitator of work and the employee's sympathetic supporter.

Overall, the socially-oriented manager acknowledges the existence of needs other than purely economic ones and must look at the total social situation to attempt to understand the meaning an employee attributes to his or her situation (Schein, 1965).

The last of the Schein's three categories of managerial assumptions was the self-actualization assumption. Schein (1965) suggested that the self-actualization assumption is best expressed by McGregor's Theory Y which includes:

1. Physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play and work.

2. External control and the threat of punishment are not the only means for bringing about effort toward organizational objectives. Workers will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which they are committed.
3. Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement.
4. The average human being learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but also to seek responsibility.
5. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of organizational problems is widely, not narrowly, distributed.
6. Under the conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially utilized.

Managers using the self-actualization assumptions are more concerned about how to make work intrinsically more challenging and meaningful for workers. Work providing pride and self-esteem are critical. Managers may find themselves attempting to determine what will challenge a particular worker. They will delegate more, in the sense of giving a subordinate just as much responsibility as they feel she or he can handle. The whole concept of participative management flows from assumptions that employees want to be morally involved in their work organizations, want to influence decisions and want to use their capacities in the service of organizational goals (Schein, 1965).

The next of three viewpoints on management assumptions is Likert's analysis of various management systems. Likert (1967) suggested four management system characteristics (see Table 1) from his study of productivity and labor relations under different management groups. Managerial assumptions concerning human behavior are implicit in Likert's study. He suggested two general managerial assumptions, authoritative and participative. Within those two general

assumptions, Likert's study discovered four prevailing characteristics management systems ranging from exploitive to participative relating to producing more effective organizations.

Table 1

Characteristics of Management Systems

Operating Characteristics	Authoritative (Exploitive authoritative)	Authoritative (Benevolent authoritative)	Participative (Consultative)	Participative (Group)
Characteristics of motivational forces	Physical and economic security, and some use of desire for status	Economic and occasionally ego motives, e. g., the desire for status	Economic, ego, and other major motives, e. g., desire for new experience	Full use of economic, ego and other major motives such as motivational forces from group processes.
Manner in which motives are used	Fear, threats, punishment and occasional rewards	Rewards and some actual or potential punishment	Rewards, occasional punishment and some involvement	Economic rewards based on a system of compensation developed through participation
Underlying Assumptions (from Likert's survey instrument on organizational characteristics)	No confidence and trust in subordinates	Have condescending confidence and trust such as a master has in a servant-master relationship	Substantial but not complete confidence and trust; still wishes to keep control of decisions	Complete confidence and trust in all matters

Both Schein (1965) and Likert (1967) demonstrated the vast differences in management assumptions, including standard behaviors that can be characterized as abusive based upon the definitions of workplace abuse and abusive supervision as noted in the next section.

Workplace Emotional Abuse and Abusive Supervision

I will now focus on the literature relating to the underlying theoretical framework of abusive supervision, workplace emotional abuse. I will then present and discuss empirical data specific to abusive supervision. Lastly and because of the few empirical findings on abusive supervision's impact on workplace performance, I will conclude by discussing the research findings of workplace incivility's influence on workers which provides additional research helpful to understanding abusive supervision.

Workplace Emotional Abuse

Workplace emotional abuse provides the conceptual framework for abusive supervision. The predominant definition of abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000) has elements common to workplace emotional abuse definition. Tepper defined abusive supervision as “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors excluding physical contact...that reflect indifference as well as willful hostility” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178). Although Tepper (2000) does not specifically reference Keashly’s definition of workplace emotional abuse, his definition is similar to Keashly’s, “repeated hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours (excluding physical contact) directed at one or more persons over a period of time such that the target’s sense of self as a competent worker and person is negatively affected” (Keashly, 1998, p. 117). Tepper (2000) omitted the negative impact on perceptions and well-being elements in his definition which he does not explain. Keashly’s theoretical foundation for workplace emotional abuse is non-violence (Keashly, 1998)

with seven dimensions (Harvey & Keashly, 2005): First, emotional abuse's nature is behavioral. Its main exclusion is physical contact, but also excludes sexual behavior, gender, racial and ethnic harassment. The authors did not provide a reason for the exclusions. Second, emotional abuse is patterned, meaning that behaviors that are repeated over time are abusive even though obscure as single incidents. Third, emotional abuse is unwelcome and unsolicited. However, while making this known to the perpetrator is a clear indication of the behavior being unwelcome, this action is not necessary for the perpetrator's behavior to be unwelcome. Harvey and Keashly (2005) recognized that the targeted person may be in a vulnerable position or be in a subservient role in the organization. Fourth, emotional abuse violates standards of conduct. Harvey and Keashly (2005) urged caution in varying views of what constitutes abuse, noting that such views vary within and between individuals, organizations and societies. They characterize workplace emotional abuse as a "complex interplay among situational forces, actor characteristics and target-oriented factors. All three sets of factors are required to understand emotional abuse as a socially-constructed experience within the social cauldron of organizational life" (p. 6). Fifth, emotional abuse causes harm. Emotional abuse is in evidence when harm is done to the individual targeted. Harvey and Keashly (2005) urged caution that causal statements be considered unseen and largely unexplored phenomena. Psychological and social mechanisms influence the outcome of emotional harm between the time people are exposed to abusive conduct and the outcome of emotional harm. Personality characteristics and social support can be contextual factors that can influence the degree of harm. Sixth, emotional abuse implies intent or failure to control actions. The targeted employee's determination of the perpetrator's intent has a powerful influence on whether the behavior is interpreted and experienced as abuse. The more the behavior is interpreted as intentional, the greater the likelihood of an abusive

experience and thus the greater potential for experiential harm. Seventh, emotional abuse involves differences in power. Power is an important defining element. Power is not an absolute construct but rather relative to the actors in the social system and their vulnerabilities to one another, either real or perceived. However, while co-workers and supervisors are equally likely to engage in persistent hostile acts towards other employees, supervisory abuse will be experienced as more harmful, “when one of the venues for reporting the mistreatment has been cut off” (Harvey & Keashly, 2005, p. 8).

Abusive Supervision

As mentioned previously, abusive supervision was the topic of my study. The study focused on the experience of abusive supervision by subordinates of abusive supervisors, and the influence of the experience at work. This section will review the empirical research on abusive supervision.

My literature search produced 15 reports of empirical research spanning 43 years but with the majority of research occurring since 2000. One report was published in 1964 and the next research my literature review revealed was not published until 1994. Three reports appeared in the 1990s with ten reports so far since the year 2000. I limited the research on which I reported to those related to Canadian and United States supervisors and workers to minimize the influence of cultural differences. All findings of each study were not reported if the findings were not related to abusive supervision. I discovered common characteristics with three other constructs, related either to abusive behavior of management or supervision. Therefore, these constructs were included in the research I will present and discuss: (a) petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1994), (b) brutality (Hornstein, 1996), and (c) mistreatment (Blase & Blase, 2003). Ashforth (1994) defined petty tyrant as a manager who uses his or her power and authority “oppressively,

capriciously and vindictively” (p. 126). Hornstein (1996) described management brutality as being intentionally cruel and disrespectful to subordinates. Blase and Blase (2003) based their conceptual foundation on workplace emotional abuse (Keashly, 1998), petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1994), brutality (Hornstein, 1996) and abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000).

Tepper (2000) provided the definition now predominate in abusive supervision literature. As mentioned earlier, he defined abusive supervision as “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors excluding physical contact...that reflect indifference as well as willful hostility” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178).

Tepper and colleagues have also conducted the vast majority of research, although my literature search discovered other research. The terms manager and supervisor were used interchangeably if the research indicated the supervisor-subordinate relationship was an immediate relationship.

I developed Figure 2 to graphically explain the conceptual framework of the dimensions and dynamics of abusive supervision based upon the related research.

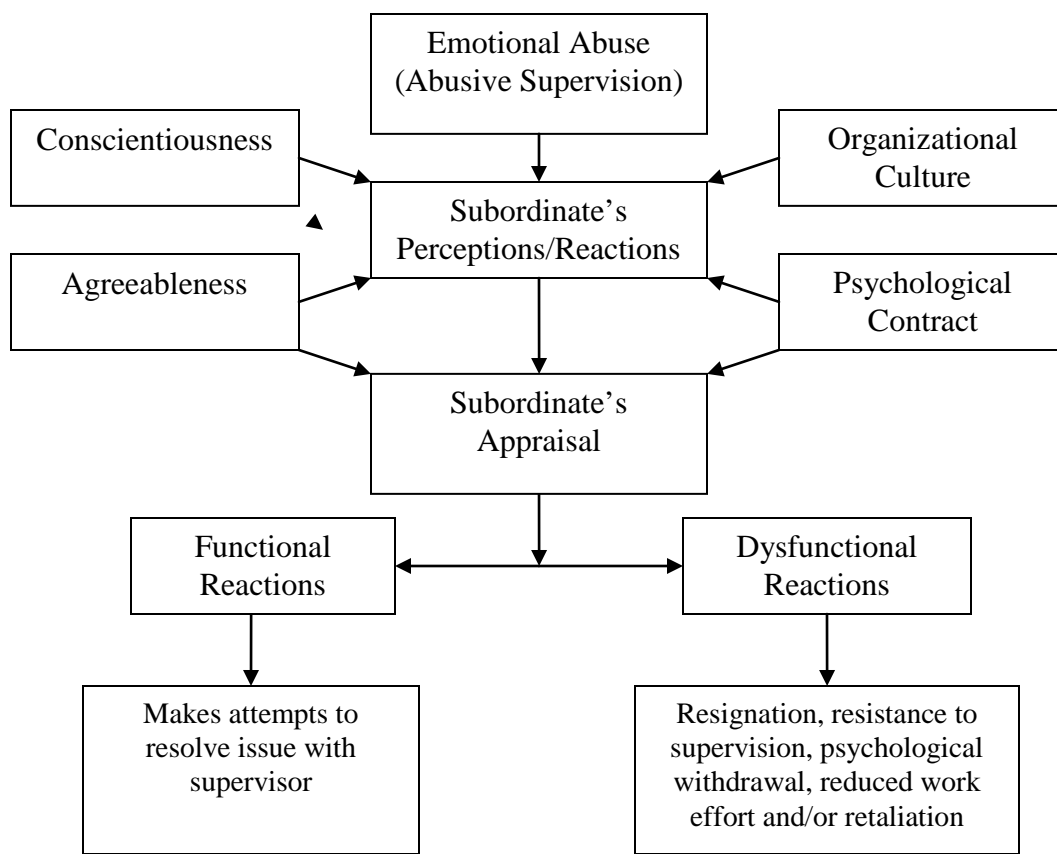


Figure 2. Dynamics of abusive supervision

Table 2 summarizes the research relating to the dynamics and reactions to abusive supervision my literature search discovered. This summary will be followed by a more detailed discussion of each of the research findings, categorized by the various aspects of abusive supervision found in the literature. Publications in Table 2 are listed chronologically.

Table 2

Summary of Abusive Supervision Literature

Author(s)	Publication	Research Purpose and Findings
Day and Hamblin (1964)	<i>American Journal of Sociology</i>	- This laboratory study investigated the influence of close and punitive supervision on workplace

Table 2

Summary of Abusive Supervision Literature

Author(s)	Publication	Research Purpose and Findings
		<p>relationships and productivity among 24 college women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The study found that close supervision resulted in significantly increased aggressive feelings toward the supervisor and slightly increased aggression towards coworkers. - The study also discovered that punitive supervision produced significant increases in indirect aggression through lowered productivity and verbal aggression
Ashforth (1994)	<i>Human Relations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This quantitative study inquired into the characteristics of tyrannical managers as rated by 562 college business students. - This research produced a six-dimension description of the characteristics of tyrannical managers.
Hornstein (1996)	Published book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This mixed-methods study (case studies, interviews and surveys) investigated the characteristics, causes and impacts of brutal supervision. - The study series concluded that abusive supervision is common, subordinates suffered significant personal consequences and organizational performance was negatively impacted.

Table 2 (continued)

Author(s)	Publication	Research Purpose and Findings
Ashforth (1997)	<i>Revue Canadienne des Science de l'Administration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -This was a quantitative study of a proposed model of petty tyranny, its antecedents and effects among 63 sets of currently-employed business students. Each set included at least one manager. - The study found no relationship between the hypothesized antecedents of petty tyranny (bureaucratic style and/or theory X-oriented managers) and petty tyranny - Tyrannical managers created a variety of negative reactions among the respondents.
Bies and Tripp (1998)	<i>Published edited book</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was a quantitative study of characteristics of tyrannical bosses among 37 students in an executive MBA program. - The authors found seven common characteristics of tyrannical managers.
Tepper (2000)	<i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was a quantitative study of abusive supervision's impact on employees using 712 Midwestern workers selected at random. - The researcher found a number of negative attitudinal and affective impacts of abusive supervision. - The predominately-used definition of abusive supervision was published in this article.

Table 2 (continued)

Author(s)	Publication	Research Purpose and Findings
Tepper, Duffy and Shaw (2001)	<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was a quantitative investigation of behavioral responses to abusive supervision and the moderating effects of personality characteristics. The researcher used data collected from the earlier survey of 712 Midwestern subordinate workers. - Personality characteristics influenced the reaction to abusive supervision. - The authors suggested reactions to abusive supervision may have been dysfunctional or functional and reported both types of reactions to abusive supervision.
Zellars, Tepper and Duffy (2002)	<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was a quantitative study of the relationship between subordinates' perceptions of abusive supervision and the occurrence of organizational citizenship behaviors among 373 Air National Guard members and their immediate supervisors. - The study found that in the event of abusive supervision, participants reported fewer intentions to perform citizenship behaviors.

Table 2 (continued)

Author(s)	Publication	Research Purpose and Findings
Valle (2005)	<i>Southern Business Review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was a quantitative inquiry to develop a model for the antecedents of abusive supervision among 77 full-time employees of a medium-sized university. - The researcher also inquired as to the frequency of incidence and impacts of abusive supervision - Findings concluded that poor supervisor-subordinate relations led to perceptions of abuse. - Greater perceptions of abuse led to dysfunctional consequences. - The frequency of the incidence of reported abusive supervision was 2% which was considered insignificant by the researcher.
Blase and Blase (2003)	<i>Journal of Educational Administration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was a qualitative study of principal mistreatment of 50 teachers in various in various U.S. geographical areas. - The researchers developed a three-level model of abusive principals and reported a variety of negative individual and organizational impacts.
Hoobler and Brass (2006)	<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was a quantitative investigation of factors that contribute to and impacts of abusive supervision among executive MBA students in six universities - The study found that supervisors' organizational satisfaction influenced the frequency of abusive supervision.

Table 2 (continued)

Author(s)	Publication	Research Purpose and Findings
Burton and Hoobler (2006)	<i>Journal of Managerial Issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The study also found negative impacts on subordinates' family relations.
Bamberger and Bacharach (2006)	<i>Human Relations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was a quantitative study of 196 students recruited from introductory management classes in a western University to test, in a laboratory setting, the impact of abusive supervision on state self-esteem. - Abusive supervision negatively impacted state self-esteem. - The researchers conducted a quantitative study of 1473 blue-collar workers in 55 work units to determine the influence abusive supervision has on subordinate problem drinking. The researchers also investigated the moderating effects of personality on the reactions to abusive supervision. - Abusive supervision influenced subordinate problem drinking. - Personality characteristics attenuated the effects of abusive supervision.
Aryee, Sun, Chen & Debrah (2007)	<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authoritarian leadership mediated subordinates' perceptions of interactional justice and abusive supervision.
Harris, Kacmar & Zivnuska (2007)	<i>Leadership Quarterly</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abusive supervision was negatively related to performance ratings and the meaning of work moderated the relationships.

I will now present additional details of these 15 studies in six categories:

(a) antecedents of abusive supervision, (b) behavioral characteristics of abusive supervisors, (c) abusive supervision's influence on the supervisory-subordinate relationship, (d) personal consequences of abusive supervision, (e) performance-related consequences of abusive supervision, and (f) mediating or moderating factors of subordinates' regarding reactions to abusive supervision.

But first, I want to point out that my literature review discovered few research efforts regarding the frequency of abusive supervision and conclusive findings. I found only two studies relating to the incidence. For various reasons, neither is helpful. Valle (2005) reported a 2% incidence among participants in his study of university employees. He did not analyze the data because of the insignificance of the reported incidence. Hornstein (1996) reported a high incidence of "brutal boss behavior" but did not elaborate nor provide data, a data analysis or describe his methodology (p. x).

Antecedents of abusive supervision. With regard to my first category, antecedents or precipitating factors of abusive supervision, researchers (Likert, 1967; McGregor, 1960; Schein, 1965) have suggested that management assumptions and aberrant supervisory behavior may influence managerial and supervisory behavior in a general way. Management assumptions were previously discussed. The aberrant behavior discussion will follow this section. With regard to specific antecedent research, I found a mix of findings in four studies. Ashforth reported he found no antecedents that influenced supervisory abuse in 1997. Ashforth (1997) investigated managerial dispositional factors such as theory X beliefs and a bureaucratic, centralized management style but discovered no influence on supervisors' abusive behaviors among his 63 sets of respondents, each consisting of one manager and two subordinates. In 2005, Valle reported that the poor supervisory-subordinate relations led to significant additional perceptions

of abuse. Women were more likely to perceive abuse in the dyads of Valle's study participants, 77 full-time faculty, staff and contract employees of a medium-sized university in the southeastern United States (Valle, 2005). In the third study, Hoobler & Brass (2006) reported that when supervisors felt their organizations had not lived up to what they expected (a violation of the supervisor's psychological contract), their subordinates reported a higher incidence of abusive supervision. The influence of psychological contract violation on a supervisor's inclination toward subordinate abuse was moderated by hostile attribution bias. Hostile attribution bias is a propensity to see events as hostile even though they may not be intended that way. This study was based upon data from executive MBA candidates at six universities in the midwestern, southern and eastern sections of the United States. Besides being MBA candidates, the study participants also were working in business, industry, education and government. They personally participated in the study while also obtaining participation of their immediate supervisors. Lastly in a dyad study in a telecommunications company in southeastern China, investigators found an authoritarian leadership style moderated the relationship between the perceptions of interactional justice and abusive supervision. The relationship was stronger for supervisors high in the authoritarian leadership style (Aryee et al., 2007).

Behavioral characteristics of abusive supervisors. My second categorical topic is behavioral characteristics of abusive supervisors. What are the common behaviors of abusive supervisors? Four studies provide insight, but I urge caution about either the generalizability or validity of the data (Ashforth, 1994; Bies & Tripp, 1998; Blase & Blase, 2003; Hornstein, 1996). The most referenced study by predominant abusive supervision investigators Tepper and colleagues is Ashforth's study (Ashforth, 1994). However, this data is at least 20 years old and is limited to Canadian college business students' experiences with their most current or recent past employers

in the 1980s. Ashforth presented his study at the 1987 Academy of Management meeting, but the study was not published until 1994 (Ashforth, 1994). A detailed report on Ashforth's finding will follow. Hornstein (1996) reported his findings in his book "*Brutal Bosses*" which was not peer reviewed nor has detailed data concerning the findings. Next, I will discuss the results of Bies and Tripp's (1998) study involving 47 participants in an executive MBA program. However, Bies and Tripp reported no specific data or data analysis. I will then follow with Blase and Blase's study which used the qualitative approach. While providing a rich description of several aspects of subordinate mistreatment, the findings are not generalizable to a larger population because of their qualitative nature (Blase & Blase, 2003) but could be the basis of an expanded-sample quantitative study.

With the limitations mentioned above, findings of Ashforth (1994), Hornstein (1996), Bies and Tripp (1998) and Blase and Blase (2003) are presented. Ashforth's study identified six behavioral characteristics of managers who are petty tyrants (Ashforth, 1994):

1. Arbitrariness and self-aggrandizement such as using authority or position for personal gain; administering organizational policies unfairly, and playing favorites among subordinates.
2. Belittling subordinates such as yelling at them, criticizing them in front of others, or engaging in belittlement or embarrassment.
3. Lack of consideration such as not being friendly and approachable, not looking out for the personal welfare of group members and not doing little things to make it pleasant to be a group member.
4. A forcing style of conflict resolution such as forcing acceptance of his or her point of view, demanding to get his or her way, and not taking "no" for an answer.

5. Discouraging initiative such as not encouraging subordinates to participate in important decisions, not training them to take on more authority and not encouraging initiative among group members.
6. Non-contingent punishment such as being displeased with the work of a subordinate for no apparent reason, reprimanding a subordinate without specifying the reason and being critical of work even when subordinates perform well.

Hornstein, a psychologist, developed his findings from information gathered from interviews and surveys of approximately 1,000 American and international workers in a variety of businesses and industry with various personal demographics over eight years of research using both face-to-face interviews and surveys (Hornstein, 1996). As noted earlier, Hornstein does not provide data or a description of his methodology in his book. Thus the validity of this data is unknown. Hornstein describes behavioral characteristics as:

Bosses who sometimes seethed with quiet rage, and other times erupted with screamed obscenities, vicious ridicule, name-calling, and even physical assault. I heard of bosses—lots of them—who spit, threw things, and smashed objects, some ordinary, some precious. Subordinates told me about how, facing threats that were extreme, frightening, and bizarre, they were commanded to provide demeaning and non-work-related personal services for bosses. And others described how their bosses engaged in rudeness, lying, favoritism, and sleazy dealings at their expense. (pp. xi-xii)

Bies and Tripp (1998) surveyed 30 men and 17 women in an executive MBA program, and who had an average of 12 years of work experience. The study had two purposes: (a) to develop a description of a boss they had worked for that “they would label as an abusive boss or a boss

from hell” (p. 205), and (b) to identify coping techniques used by the participants. Bies and Tripp (1998) concluded upon the following seven characteristics of abusive supervisors:

First, the bosses were obsessed with details and perfectionism. “He had to attend every meeting, and then he had to review and sign off on every piece of paper produced by the group,” one participant recalled. Another said her boss wanted to know her whereabouts every minute. Participants reported their abusive bosses set unreasonably high performance expectations, were impatient and unforgiving of any mistakes. Blame for lack of performance was always assigned to a subordinate. Abusive bosses engaged in “second guessing” (p. 206).

Second, participants described abusive bosses who typically asked for high quality performance but were vague about what high quality meant. Abusive bosses also avoided setting priorities, depicting everything as high priority.

Third, several respondents reported volatile mood swings. The abusive boss would be calm, peaceful and satisfied one minute and erupt into a loud, angry, temper tantrums and public tirades without warning. The eruptions included throwing things, threatening, and occasionally using physical violence such as shoving an employee.

Fourth, abusive bosses were obsessed with loyalty and obedience. Dissenters from the boss’ point of view were punished. Some bosses insisted that subordinates pass along rumors and gossip about other employees. Efforts were made to ferret out the “disloyal” (p. 208).

Fifth, abusive bosses were noted for their arbitrariness and hypocrisy. One boss raised the sales target just before a sales group was about to reach the target, thus causing the group to lose its bonus. Abusive bosses would have double standards and a “do as I say, not as I do” attitude (p. 209).

Sixth, participants described the use of “raw power” as common including coercion, unjustified decisions, and arbitrary judgments. One boss ordered a study participant to discharge an adequately-performing subordinate because the boss did not like the employee. Another instructed a subordinate to add a vendor to the bid list even though the vendor didn’t meet the requirements.

Blase and Blase (2003) also developed a profile of abusive supervision from their interviews of 50 teachers throughout the United States who were subjected to long-term mistreatment from school principals. They identified three behavioral levels of mistreatment:

Level 1, indirect and moderately aggressive behavior including: (a) discounting teachers’ thoughts, needs and feelings; (b) isolating and abandoning teachers and withholding resources; (c) denying approval, opportunities and credit; (d) favoring “select” teachers; and (e) engaging in offensive personal conduct.

Level 2, direct and escalating aggression such as: (a) spying, sabotaging, stealing, and destroying teacher instructional aids; and (b) making unreasonable demands, and public and private criticisms, the ubiquitous characteristic of this level of mistreatment.

Level 3, direct and several aggressive behaviors including: (a) lying and being explosive; (b) making threats, issuing unwarranted written reprimands, issuing unfair evaluations, mistreating students, and forcing teachers out of their jobs (reassessing, transferring unilaterally, terminating); (c) preventing teachers from leaving and advancing; and (d) engaging in sexual harassment and racism.

Blase and Blase (2003) noted that this model does not imply that a lower level of mistreatment resulted in less harm to teachers. “To the contrary, the degree of harm related to

any single aggressive behavior varied from one victimized teacher to another, as one would expect” (p. 376). The researchers focused on the cumulative effects of long-term mistreatment.

Abusive supervision’s influence on the supervisory-subordinate relationship. My third categorical discussion relates to the relationship impacts of abusive supervision. How does abusive supervision impact supervisor-subordinate and coworker relationships? In the first study I found on abusive supervision, Day and Hamblin (1964) discovered close and punitive supervision produced aggressive feelings between coworkers and verbal aggression toward the supervisor. Study participants included first and second-year college women. Ashforth (1997) reported tyrannical managers undermined leader endorsement, defined as affective feelings of subordinates regarding their managers. Employees appeared to believe that their managers “ought to have their best interests at heart” (p. 129). Blase and Blase (2003) reported mistreatment resulted in teachers’ feelings of anger and rage toward their principals, explicitly and implicitly.

Personal consequences of abusive supervision. Related to my fourth category, personal consequences of abusive supervision, Ashforth (1997) reported frustration, stress, and reactance among the 63 sets of supervisory-subordinate respondents whom he does not more specifically identify. Bamberger and Bacharach (2006) identified an association between worker problem drinking and abusive supervision among 1473 blue-collar workers surveyed. Hornstein (1996) found anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem with possible implications with headaches, heart disease, gastrointestinal disorders, sleep disturbances, dermatological problems, sexual dysfunction and “even murder” (p. xiii). Tepper’s random study of 712 participants who served in various subordinate capacities in a medium-sized Midwestern community discovered abusive supervision produced a number of dysfunctional personal consequences. These included a less

favorable attitude about life in general, greater conflict between work and family, and greater psychological distress. Greater psychological distress included depression and emotional exhaustion and were more pronounced if subordinates had less job mobility or “no viable means of escape” (Tepper, 2000, p. 185). Blase and Blase’s (2003) study of school teachers detected depression, feelings of isolation and being trapped. Some sought counseling and psychiatric care for therapy and medication. “At home, I would lose my temper over nothing...I lost the joy of teaching...I didn’t sleep... I didn’t eat...I was depressed and tried not to show it at school” (p. 390). Hoobler & Brass (2006) described a higher incidence of undermining in the home of abused subordinates, suggesting that work interactions “flow downhill” to non-work relationships, “that is, employees, are ‘put down’ by their supervisors and, as a result, feel the need to ‘put down’ family members or domestic partners” (p. 1134).

Performance-related consequences of abusive supervision. My fifth category is performance-related consequences of abusive supervision. In that regard, Ashforth (1997) reported work alienation and less work-unit cohesiveness in the event of petty tyranny. Blase & Blase (2003) reported a “culture of fear” (p. 389) and avoidance reactions by victims. For example, to avoid further mistreatment, teachers usually withdrew both emotionally and physically (when possible) from social and professional activities (i.e., faculty meetings, committee work, sponsorship of student activities, professional associations). When required to attend group events, they did not participate. Hornstein (1996) recounted that those he interviewed and surveyed had less initiative, commitment and motivation and elaborated as follows:

Disrespectful abuse by bosses is clearly more than a breach of good manners. It is an assault on individual well-being and organizational productivity. Intimidation, one of the key components of abuse, erodes subordinates’ faith in themselves. Intimidated

workers relinquish autonomy and work hard to avoid being hit by their boss's other shoe when it drops, forgoing self-direction in favor of self-protection. Instead of exercising self-control, they yield, gripped by passivity and restraint, to the boss's control.

Subordinates...learn quickly to survive by advancing with extreme caution, reducing their exposure to bosses' wrath by employing as little independent judgment and discretion as possible. (pp. 79-80)

Hornstein (1996) also discovered indirect harm of subordinates who are not the supervisor's target. Hornstein (1996) reported that coworkers witnessing a worker abused by a boss could result in witness emotional trauma, wondering if he or she will be the supervisor's next target. Tepper's (2000) study of the Midwestern workers previously mentioned reported less favorable attitudes toward the job and the organization, less affective and normative organizational commitment and a greater likelihood of resignations. Tepper et al. (2001), continuing to study the data from the study involving 712 subordinate Midwestern employees, reported abused subordinates demonstrated their resistance as follows: "I act like I don't know about it," "I just ignore my supervisor," and "I make a half-hearted effort and then let my boss know I could not do it." Tepper et al. (2001) characterized these statements as dysfunctional resistance. Dysfunctional resistance occurs when responses to abuse could be harmful to the organization. The following statements made by study participants demonstrated functional resistance: "I ask for additional explanation," or "I explain that I think it should be done a different way" (Tepper et al., 2001, pp. 980-981). Functional resistance involves reactions that are intended to be helpful to the organization (Tepper et al., 2001). Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy (2002) investigated the impact of abusive supervision on organizational citizenship behaviors utilizing 373 Air National Guard members and their leaders in their survey research. The results of this research suggested

that subordinates of abusive supervisors performed fewer organizational citizenship behaviors than their non-abused counterparts. Organizational citizenship behaviors are discretionary actions that in the aggregate promote organizational effectiveness (Organ et al., 2006). Valle's study of university employees found decreased work dissatisfaction and higher intentions of turnover when abusive supervision occurred (Valle, 2005). Harris et al., (2007) reported in their study of workers in a southeastern manufacturing plant that abusive supervision was negatively related to actual performance ratings from formal appraisals as well as leader-rated performance at the time of the study.

Mediating or moderating factors of subordinates' reactions to abusive supervision. The final category of my discussion of abusive supervision relates to mitigating or mediation influences used by subordinates to develop a perception and appraise their experiences of abusive supervision. Why do some subordinates react to abusive supervision and some do not? This category relates to the influence of personality characteristics and the reaction to abuse, not whether a subordinate considers a supervisory behavior abusive which will be addressed later in this chapter when the psychological contract is discussed. Researchers have identified two personality characteristics that mitigate or moderate abusive supervision, conscientiousness and agreeableness (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Tepper et al., 2001; Zellars et al., 2002). Conscientiousness includes characteristics of responsibility, duty and self-discipline. Agreeableness includes characteristics of cooperativeness, trusting and tender-mindedness (Tepper et al., 2001). Researchers discovered that conscientiousness and agreeableness, acting jointly or individually, influenced the dysfunctional reactions to abusive supervision. The higher the levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness, the lower the dysfunctional reactions among Tepper's study of Midwestern workers mentioned earlier (Tepper et al., 2001). Bamberger and

Bacharach (2006) reported similar findings in their study of blue-collar workers and problem drinking. Harris et al. (2007) found that the negative relationship between abuse and performance was strongest for those employees reporting high meaning of work, thus the greater impact of abusive supervision on the performance of those employees.

Observations regarding abusive supervision research. So far, the existing research on abusive supervision does not provide a solid foundation for an understanding of abusive supervision, and its influence on workers' performance-related behaviors in the workplace. Research on the topic has vastly increased, with the number of reports since the year 2000 already over double the number in the 1990s. But, I suggest there are four research gaps:

First, all but one of the 15 studies I found was quantitative. As a result, it appears that the fundamental work of first exploring the phenomenon has not been done with the exception of Blase and Blase's report in 2003. There may be assumptions in the quantitative instruments that are not grounded in abusive supervision research which qualitative studies could offer. There also may be variables that have been overlooked in the quantitative studies. Additional qualitative research would provide a more comprehensive description of the phenomenon.

Second, I found no valid or reliable empirical studies that addressed the frequency of the incidence of abusive supervision. The one study on which I reported (Hornstein, 1996) did not provide the data, show a data analysis or reveal the instrument(s) used.

Third, studies reporting behavioral characteristics of abusive supervisors did include detailed data or a data analysis, or, in some cases, did not identify the instruments used in the quantitative studies (Ashforth, 1994; Bies & Tripp, 1998; Hornstein, 1996). Some studies were also of small samples of college students (Ashforth, 1994; Bies & Tripp, 1998), indicating possibly they were preliminary studies on which I found no follow up. Blase and Blase's (2003) qualitative study

proposed a behavioral model of abusive school principals, but no quantitative research was found that tested that model although Blase and Blase published their study in 2003.

Fourth, much of the research on the impacts of abusive supervision on performance reported changes in attitudes and affective states of mind with, but without inquiry as to resulting specific behavioral changes related to performance which was the topic of my study. The reports do not answer the question: What specific behaviors changed as a result of these diminished attitudes or affective states? For example, Tepper (2000) reported findings that abuse victims' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, negative feelings about the employer, and the intention to continue their employment declined, but did not report, or presumably ask, how those factors diminished job behaviors such as lost time and avoiding contact with the supervisor. Other researchers who reported similar general findings (Hornstein, 1996; Tepper et al., 2001; Valle, 2005; Zellars et al., 2002). Zellars et al. (2002) did report a decline in organizational citizenship behaviors in the event of abusive supervision. Organ et al. (2006) defined those behaviors as extra-role efforts such as helping a new employee, volunteering for assignments, speaking well of the organization and maintaining a positive attitude during adversity. Blase and Blase (2003) also reported specific job behavioral changes such as avoiding group events and declining to participate if not a job requirement. I will discuss later in this chapter research on the impacts of a related phenomenon, workplace incivility, which specifically demonstrates how incivility influences workers. Harris et al. (2007) reported that abusive supervision was negatively related to performance ratings, but specific areas in which performance diminished were not part of their study.

This concludes my introduction and discussion of literature relating to abusive supervision. As mentioned previously, abusive supervision researchers have not conducted research relating

to performance and performance improvement with the exception of extra-role behaviors (Zellars et al., 2002) and social withdrawal (Blase & Blase, 2003). I was unable to find any research relating to abusive supervision's influence on specific job-role performance. Three research areas provide additional insight into the dynamics of behaviors which may result from abusive supervision: mental disorders and moral maturity, the psychological contract, and workplace deviance. Each now will be discussed.

Mental Disorders and Moral Maturity

As mentioned earlier, abusive supervision may result from supervisors adopting abusive organizational management assumptions as their own, but also be the result of mental disorders or a low level of moral maturity. The management system may prescribe supervisory behaviors in their treatment of subordinates (Katz & Kahn, 1966). However, some supervisory behavior may not comply with those acceptable behaviors and be abusive (Hornstein, 1996). While mental disorders and moral maturity are not a focus of my study, this section will assist in understanding the causes of supervisory abuse outside of organizational norms.

The literature on abusive supervision reported incidents of supervisors screaming obscenities at subordinates, viciously ridiculing them, calling them names, throwing things and smashing objects (Hornstein, 1996). Ashforth (1994) describes managers using their authority or power for personal gain, yelling at subordinates, criticizing subordinates in front of others and demanding to get their way. "Such bosses certainly exist, possessed by core characteristics that are malignant and cruel" (Hornstein, 1996, p. 6). These behaviors may indicate psychological disorders and/or a low level of moral maturity although Hornstein argued that the work conditions may generate extreme stress and prod bosses of all types toward brutality. "Organizational power hierarchies, competitive work climates, and the bunker mentality of

contemporary corporate life all provide a hospitable environment for the toxin of disrespect, and even it induce, from bosses who would otherwise be just” (p. 6).

Figure 3 provides the conceptual framework I developed from reviewing the literature to help guide the discussion on mental disorders and moral maturity.

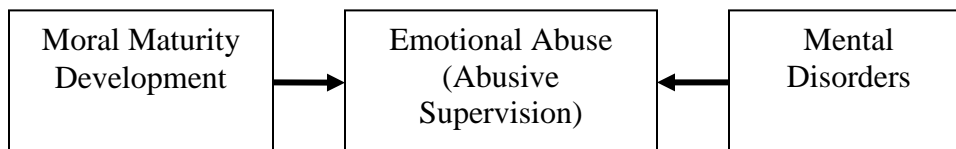


Figure 3. Conceptual framework of aberrant supervisory behavior

Mental disorders. Mental disorders theory will provide insight into aberrant behavior of supervisors, behavior outside the norms prescribed by the organization and society. These are behaviors that are deviant or abnormal (Davison & Neale, 1986). They defined abnormal as when an individual's behavior creates great distress and torment to himself or herself. Violations of social norms or behavior that threaten or make individuals anxious by observing it are also defined as abnormal behavior. However, various forms of unusual behavior can be considered normal, depending upon on the prevailing culture (Davison & Neal), suggesting that screaming at subordinates might not be abnormal in an organization depending upon the circumstances. “Abnormality is viewed as an interaction between individuals and the social and cultural context” (Zimbardo et al., p. 493). As a general rule, Zimbardo et al. agree that behaviors that make other people feel uncomfortable or threatened may be a sign of abnormality. Causes of mental disorders often are issues of disagreement among psychologists, but they generally agree upon six indicators (Zimbardo et al.):

1. Distress as indicated by unusual or prolonged levels of unease or anxiety.

2. Maladaptiveness as evidenced by actions that interfere with an individual's personal well-being or the needs of society.
3. Irrationality defined as actions or talk that is incomprehensible to others.
4. Unpredictability as demonstrated by erratic or inconsistent behavior at different times or from one situation to another.
5. Unconventionality and undesirable behavior as evidenced by behavior that is rare and violates laws or social norms.
6. Observer discomfort by making them feel threatened or distressed.

Clinicians generally consider two or more of the above symptoms evidence of abnormal behavior. However, normal or abnormal also relate to a matter of degree and frequency (Zimbardo et al., 2003).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) provides a classification system of more than 300 recognized mental disorders along with their symptoms in eight categories (American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 1994, fourth edition):

1. Affective disorders: excitement or depression, consistently inappropriate for the situation (extreme forms may be psychotic). Symptoms of the bipolar disorder, also called the manic-depressive disorder, include wide swings of mood, unexplained by events in a person's life. Some individuals go right from manic episodes to clinical depression and back again producing unending cycles that are devastating to them and their families, friends and coworkers.

2. Anxiety disorders: fears, panic attacks, and anxiety. This is a relatively common disorder which includes three major problems that have anxiety as their main feature which include panic, phobic, and obsessive-compulsive disorders.
3. Somatoform disorders: over-concern with physical health such as hypochondriasis.
4. Dissociative disorders: non-psychotic fragmentation of the personality. The common denominator for dissociative disorders is a fragmentation of the personality. Dissociative symptoms may include amnesia, loss of a sense of identity and disorientation. Some suffering from dissociative disorders reported out of body experiences or feelings of being external observers of their own bodies.
5. Eating disorders: extreme dieting, bingeing and purging.
6. Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders: psychotic deterioration of the personality or paranoid disturbance of logic and reasoning.
7. Personality disorders (narcissism and anti-social disorders): chronic disorders affecting all parts of the personality. Personality disorders are characterized by distrust, lack of feeling for others, attention-seeking, hypersensitivity, submissiveness, perfectionism, impulsivity, unstable relationships or a pathological need for admiration. “These conditions involve a chronic, pervasive, inflexible, and maladaptive pattern of thinking, emotion, social relationships, or impulse control. These patterns can seriously impair an individual’s ability to function in social and work settings and can cause significant stress” (Zimbardo et al., 2003, p. 488). The narcissistic personality disorder is characterized by a grandiose sense of self importance, a preoccupation with fantasies of success or power, and a need for constant attention or admiration.

8. Adjustment disorders and other conditions that may be the focus of clinical attention: The patient has problems but not a major mental disorder such as problems involving making choices and dealing with confusion, frustration and loss. Examples include mild depression, physical complaints, marital problems, academic problems, job problems, parent-child problems, bereavement and even malingering (faking an illness).

Miller (2003) pointed out that the personality disorder can be disruptive in the workplace:

Personality-disordered individuals typically have little insight into their own behavior or understanding of the adverse impact they have on themselves and others. They characteristically justify their offensive or self-defeating behavior patterns as being due to uncontrollable fate or to the fault of someone else...In many cases, these dynamics can be crucial to the success or failure of public or private organizations and administrations. (p. 419)

Stress is not listed among the DSM-IV disorders because people respond differently to stress based upon personality and perceptions and the way they have learned to respond to stress (Zimbardo et al., 2003). Those who respond to stress adversely are viewed as having a psychophysiological disorder often resulting in physical illnesses. The most common are ulcers and hypertension (Davison & Neale, 1986). Other stress-related conditions include headaches, indigestion, stomach aches and diarrhea. There also may be behavioral reactions to stress. Researchers have developed Type A and Type B personalities to help explain the different reactions to stress. Type A personalities are characterized by an intense, angry, competitive, or a perfectionist response to life. Type B personalities are characterized by a relaxed, unruffled response to life (Zimbardo et al., 2003). The organizational context, the frequency and duration of type A's responses would determine if a type A-personality individual has a mental disorder.

The reactions to stress may be another cause of abusive supervision (Hornstein, 1996). Relating to stress, Hornstein suggested that the changing nature of work and management has significantly increased the stress on the managerial team. Calling the resulting management climate as “a siege mentality,” Hornstein (1996, p. 25) asserts that as the world’s economy worsened in the 1990s, cost-conscious organizational whittling carved away layers of supervision and management. For bosses, and everyone else who remained behind, a trimmed organization meant a greater work burden. “Survivors were expected to produce more with fewer resources” (p. 26). Layoffs also adversely managers, leaving remaining bosses with much more to do with less staff. “Pressure on bosses—a specialty of this decade (1990s)—can push them to mistreat subordinates with a frequency and vehemence that would be unlikely otherwise” (p. 24).

Moral Maturity

Prevalence of workplace incivility also may relate to Kohlberg's theory of moral maturity development. Morality is simply the respect one has for the rules (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Organizations may have well-defined behavioral rules but have and hire supervisors who ignore them (Hornstein, 1996). Kohlberg’s moral maturity theory offers an explanation. Kohlberg’s theory includes six stages of moral maturity. Compliance with norms varies based upon: (a) stage one, the threat of punishment; (b) stage two, the probability of reciprocity; (c) stage three, if compliance behavior pleases others; (d) stage four, doing one’s duty based upon respect for authority and social order for its own sake; (e) stage five, a recognition that individual rights are determined by the entire society; and (f) stage six, compliance with norms is aligned with decisions of personal conscience. Stages one and two are pre-conventional levels. Stages three and four are conventional levels. Stages five and six are post-conventional or principled levels.

Based upon Kohlberg's theory, supervisors at stages one through three might ignore organizational behavioral guidelines if there is inadequate oversight, if reciprocity for compliance does not exist or if higher management does not seem to care. Compliance might be without question among supervisors demonstrating moral development at stages four and five. Stage six, supervisors might decide the appropriateness of behavior based upon personal principles (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977).

The Psychological Contract

The discussion of the psychological contract will provide insight into why and when an individual may consider supervision abusive. For example, Tepper (2000) suggested that the experience of abusive supervision is a subjective one. One subordinate may consider a supervisory behavior abusive while another subordinate may not find the same supervisory behavior offensive. Tepper (2000) also reported among his study findings that subordinates' experiences of abusive supervision were specifically influenced by expectations regarding organizational justice. I will first introduce and discuss psychological contract theory and then discuss research indicating contract elements that may relate to abusive supervision such as organizational justice.

Psychological Contract Theory

The psychological contract, defined as an implied set of unwritten expectations in a relationship, may provide the framework to consider the experience abusive and determine its meaning. However, the conceptual framework of my study of abusive supervision suggests that the psychological contract may not stand alone. Organizational culture may attempt to influence the perception, meaning and reaction of and to a supervisor's behavior.

The seminal work on the psychological contract was by Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl and Solley (1962) who defined it as a series of mutual expectations of which the parties to the relationship may or may not be aware but nonetheless will govern their relationships to each other. The psychological contract is perceptual, unwritten and hence is not necessarily shared by the other party to the exchange. Consequently, employees and employers may hold different views on the content of the contract and the degree to which each party has fulfilled the mutual obligations of the exchange (Levinson et al., 1962; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Schein, 1965). Two employees, hired at the same time into the same positions, may develop idiosyncratic interpretations of their psychological contract (Robinson & Rousseau).

Psychological contract dimensions and elements. The psychological contract may also have two dimensions: obligations and expectations. The importance of distinguishing between the differences exists in their consequences. In theory, violations of obligations should produce a more intense and organizationally detrimental response than unmet expectations (Robinson, 1996). However, further empirical work needs to clarify whether obligations and expectations are indeed conceptually distinct (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). Two potential reasons for employer violation or breach are renegeing and incongruence. The former occurs as a result of the unwillingness or inability of the employer to fulfill its obligations to employees. The latter occurs when the two parties have different understandings of the promises made. In this case, the employer may not perceive an obligation whereas the employee perceives not only the obligation but also that the employer has failed in fulfilling it. Violation results in feelings of anger and betrayal. Researchers have reported that violations decreases employees= trust toward their employers, satisfaction with their jobs and organizations, perceived obligations to their organizations and intentions to remain (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Rousseau,

1994). In another study, researchers reported that extra-role behavior or organizational citizenship behavior in particular suffered following violations (Robinson & Morrison, 1995). Tepper et al. (2002) reported similar findings in the event of abusive supervision. As mentioned earlier, organizational citizenship behaviors were found critical to organizational performance (Organ et al., 2006). Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000) suggested psychological contracts have two elements, transactional and relational, as demonstrated in Table 3:

Table 3

Elements of the Psychological Contract

Element	Characteristic	Comments
Transactional obligations	Any communication of future intent	May be written or oral and is understood by both parties. Examples include competitive pay, benefits, annual pay increases, and adequate training for the job.
Relational obligations	Broad, open-ended and long-term obligations	Based upon socio-economic elements such as loyalty, affirmation, recognition, rewards and support; based upon employee perception and may not be shared

To complicate matters, there is also the question regarding the formation of a psychological contract. Who is the employer? In the case of large organizations, several possibilities may exist regarding who employees think of as their employer (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). Any given number of individuals in an organization may create a psychological contract without knowing it. The individual employee perceives his or her contract with the Aorganization≅ and not with any specific agency or individual manager or supervisor (Levinson et al., 1962).

Psychological contracts and organizational justice. As mentioned earlier, Tepper (2000) suggested expectations regarding organizational justice influenced perceptions of abusive supervision. While he did not specifically mention the psychological contract, there is a common element, employee expectations. As a result, I will expand upon the concept of organization justice. Organizational justice has three dimensions: procedural, distributive and interactional (Tepper, 2000). Procedural justice relates to the fairness and the enforcement of the rules. Distributive justice relates to fairness of judgments, referencing to what others receive or how others are treated. Interactional justice reflects the interactional dimension of fairness, how subordinates are treatment by their supervisors. Tepper's study of the 712 Midwestern workers mentioned earlier demonstrated the influence of organizational justice, particularly interactional justice, on perceptions of abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000).

Specifically relating to interactional justice, Bies (2001) suggested that people are concerned about four aspects: (a) derogatory judgments made about themselves by others, (b) deception relating to one's words versus actions, (c) invasion of privacy related to legitimacy of disclosing personal information about one person to another, and (d) disrespect, the signs and symbols relating to the intrinsic value and worth of the individual.

Supervisory Abuse

Supervisory abuse, defined as the behavior intended to harm subordinates with the exception of physical violence, may play a major role in perceptions employees have regarding whether or not there has been compliance with the psychological contract. Supervision could have been directly or indirectly involved in all ten of the types of psychological contract violations Robinson and Rousseau (1994) discovered in their study of alumni of a MBA program in a midwestern university. Whether or not these violations were considered abuse depends upon the

subordinate's perception of harmful intent. Organization culture may influence the subordinate in how to perceive the act by actually providing direction on how to think, feel and act (Schein, 1999). With regard to violations themselves, Robinson and Rousseau (1994) reported unkept promises relating to training and development, compensation, promotion, job duties, job security, performance feedback, management of change, job responsibility and challenges, and misrepresentations regarding expertise, work style and reputation of coworkers. As mentioned previously, interactional justice may be a critical element in the supervisory-subordinate relationship (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Therefore, how a subordinate is treated regarding an unkept promise may have a greater influence on retaliation than the unkept promise itself. In fact, insensitive interpersonal conduct by a supervisor or other management agent is more likely to predict whether retaliation follows with regard to perceived injustices (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

Behavioral Reactions to Abusive Supervision

This section will discuss the construct that will guide my efforts to answer my research questions. I reviewed constructs and determined that workplace deviance was the most appropriate construct.

Several constructs describe behaviors counterproductive to performance, including organization retaliation (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), workplace aggression (Baron & Neuman, 1996), antisocial behavior (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997), workplace revenge, (Aquino, Bies & Tripp, 2001), counterproductive workplace behavior (Fox, Spector & Miles, 2001), and workplace deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Perceptions of injustice, especially interactional justice, is a common thread among these constructs with regard to

explaining employee aberrations in organizational behavior. The expectation of justice is also a common element in a psychological contract (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

My criteria for selecting a guiding construct were fourfold: (1) the construct must explain the relationship between perceptions of injustice and diminished performance, (2) the construct must consider the severity of the negative psychological impacts of abusive supervision on subordinates which brings into question the inclusivity of intentionality as a dimension of many of the constructs mentioned above, (3) the construct must have been developed to the point of providing a comprehensive explanation of behavior which has been generally peer accepted, and (4) an instrument to measure the construct must have been developed and validated.

The construct, workplace deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), meets my four criteria as follows:

1. Diminished performance: Robinson and Bennett define workplace deviance as voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms, and in doing so, threatens the well-being of the organization. Robinson and Bennett explain reactions that diminish performance with two of their four dimensions, productive deviance and property deviance which will be discussed later in this chapter.
2. Negative psychological impacts: Robinson and Bennett (1995) describe deviant behavior as voluntary behavior in that employees either lack motivation to conform to, and/or become motivated to violate normative expectations.
3. A peer-recognized, comprehensive construct: Robinson and Bennett's (1995) typology has been used by peers in research relating to dimensions of interpersonal and organizational deviance (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007), organizational citizenship behavior and workplace

deviant behavior (Dunlop & Lee, 2004; Lee & Allen, 2002), and the link between abusive supervision and workplace deviance (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007),

4. The existence of a validated measurement instrument: Bennett and Robinson (2000) have developed and validated a measure of workplace deviance which has been used by other researchers (Dunlop & Lee, 2004; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Lee & Allen, 2002).

The following figure (Figure 4) shows the dynamics of the experience of abusive supervision from the psychological contract, to the appraisal and reaction, and finally to the decision to engage in functional or dysfunctional reactions, the latter resulting in workplace deviance. These behaviors may be harmful to performance. They may be intentional or unintentional, unintentional occurring when the lack of motivation to conform to organizational norms exists. Each of the constructs or behaviors in the figure either has been previously discussed or will be discussed following the table.

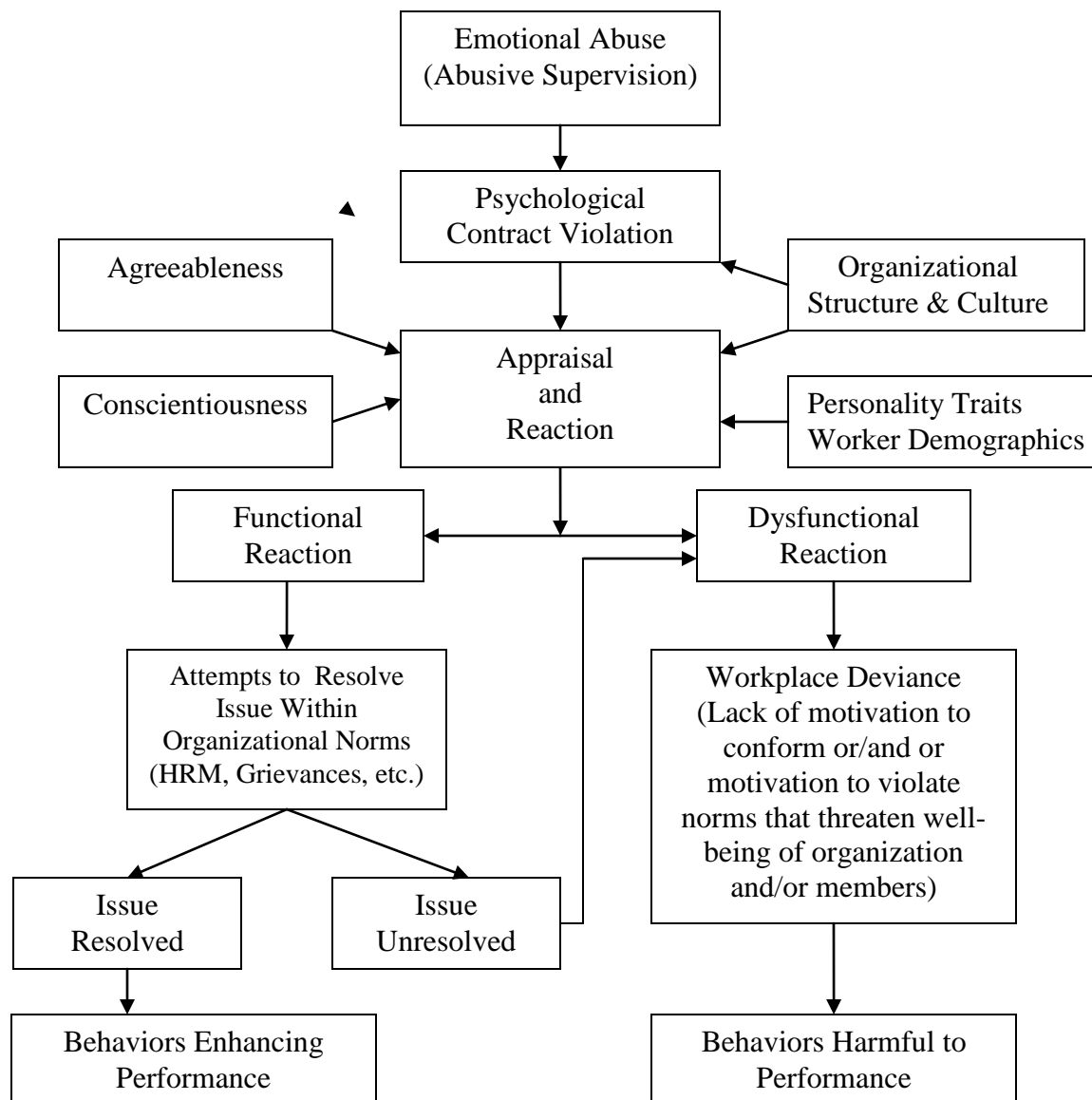


Figure 4. Conceptual framework: emotional abuse to performance-related behaviors

Workplace Deviance

While there is little abusive supervision research relating to negative behavioral responses to abusive treatment, the construct workplace deviance provides a foundation for exploring abusive supervision's influence on workplace behavior, especially performance. As mentioned earlier, workplace deviance is based upon voluntary violations of significant organizational norms which, in doing so, threaten the well-being of the organization, its members, or both. Employee

deviance results from employees lacking the motivation to conform to normative expectations of the social context or becoming motivated to violate those expectations. Organizational norms are distinguished from a system of moral standards. They are also distinguished on a continuum of severity with the degree of significance to the organization's well-being the test of deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). They also focused on the violation of norms espoused by the dominant administrative coalition rather than norms of work groups or subcultures in an organization. Workplace deviance is also distinct from ethics which focuses on right or wrong when judged in terms of justice, law or other societal guidelines. Lastly, Bennett and Robinson (2000) argue that workplace deviance can be captured with two dimensions and two types in each dimension: interpersonal deviance (political and personal aggression) and organizational deviance (production deviance and property deviance). Each will be discussed after the discussion of the theory underlying workplace deviance.

Linking psychological contract violations and workplace deviance. Unfair interpersonal treatment link psychological contract violations with workplace deviance. Deviant behavior occurs in response to people's beliefs that they have been treated unfairly on the job (Robinson & Greenberg, 1998). As previously discussed, Robinson & Rousseau (1994) reported typical violations involved feelings of unfair treatment and/or injustice. Robinson and Greenberg (1998) highlight the importance of perceived injustices created by insensitive and uncaring interpersonal treatment. The initial act may not prompt a reaction such as in pay inequity, while a calloused, insensitive and uncaring manner regarding complaints expressed to management may actually prompt the reaction (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997).

Self-attitudes and deviance. Unlike most constructs explaining the negative reactions of injustice and other stressful events solely utilizing aggression theory, Robinson and Bennett

based their workplace deviance construct on the work of Howard B. Kaplan of the Baylor University School of Medicine (1975). Deviance results from either the lack of motivation to conform or becoming motivated to violate normative expectations.

This approach addresses my concern about intentionality as an antecedent of the other constructs explaining reactions to unfair or unjust treatment (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Bies & Tripp, 1996; Fox & Spector, & Miles, 2001; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). There is no evidence that reactions to abusive supervision are intentionally harmful for harm's sake. In fact, abusive supervision research found a host of reactions which could result in deviance behaviors such as: (a) damage to the supervisor-subordinate relationship (Ashforth, 1997; Blase & Blase, 2003; Day & Hamblin, 1964), (b) instances of psychological distress, problem drinking, declining attitudes about work and life in general and lower organizational commitment (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Blase & Blase, 2003; Hornstein, 1996; Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2001), and (c) emotional and even physical withdrawal from performing extra-role behaviors (Blase & Blase, 2003; Zellars et al., 2002) and higher intentions of turnover (Tepper et al., 2001; Valle, 2005). Tepper et al. (2001) did report some anecdotal evidence of functional resistance such as employees ignoring a supervisor, making a half-hearted attempt at a task, and acting as if they weren't aware of what the supervisor wanted. Several researchers found conscientiousness and agreeableness as mitigating and moderating influences on reactions to abusive supervision (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Tepper et al., 2001; Zellars et al., 2002). At this point, the research only indicates that negative reactions to abuse may be "striking back" at the organization or individual supervisor but may also be a means to deal with their distress and threats to self-esteem. While intentionality is not discussed in any detail in the workplace literature, researchers do recognize the "safety valve" aspect of deviant behavior and the fact that

while behavior may be harmful to the organization or individuals, that harm may be unintentional (Robinson & Greenberg, 1998). As a result, this study considered intentionality as a possibility, not probability in terms of motivation.

Linking workplace deviance to abusive supervision. There is little research connecting abusive supervision and workplace deviance or to any construct based upon reactance. However, one recent study does specifically link abusive supervision and workplace deviance. Mitchell and Ambrose's (2007) study of 427 individuals called for jury duty by a circuit court in the southeastern United States found that abusive supervision is positively related to all types of employee deviance. Abusive supervision is associated not only with harm to the source of the abuse, but also "collateral" damage to the organization and others in the workplace. Study participants with negative reciprocity beliefs reacted with more supervisory-directed deviance than individuals who did not endorse reciprocity. Those individuals also engaged in greater levels of all types of deviance. A negative reciprocity orientation is the individual tendency to return negative treatment for negative treatment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Mitchell and Ambrose also reported that trait anger was found to positively related to supervisor-directed and interpersonal deviance, but not organizational deviance.

As a foundation for their study, Mitchell and Ambrose suggested that organizational justice or reactance theory is useful in understanding individual reactions to abusive supervision. When employees feel they have been treated unfairly, they react. Attitudes and behavior suffer (Tepper, 2000). Secondly, subordinates of abusive supervisors feel little or no control. They strive to regain personal control, utilizing alternative behaviors to restore control (Zellars et al., 2002).

Personality, worker demographics and behavioral deviance. Research on workplace deviance and individual factors is not yet well developed other than to acknowledge that personality characteristics, such as low self control and stunted moral development, leave some individuals predisposed to engage in deviant behavior (Robinson & Greenberg, 1998). They note that the matter of personal characteristics and predispositions toward deviance is not settled. With regard to worker demographics, there is evidence that some forms of production and property deviance are likely to occur with workers who are young, new to the job, part-time, have low starting pay, and are in low-status jobs. Again, Robinson & Greenberg suggest that this is an area for additional research.

As previously discussed, Tepper et al. (2001) reported that workers high in agreeableness and conscientiousness were less likely to engage in dysfunctional activities (harmful to the organization) as a result of experiencing abusive supervision.

Workplace deviance and performance. By definition, workplace deviance is harmful to organizations and/or to its members or both (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). These harmful effects may occur in two dimensions, interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance. This discussion will focus on organizational deviance. While interpersonal deviance, political acts and interpersonal aggression, may negatively influence performance indirectly, organizational deviance, encompassing production and property deviance, are more directly related to performance (Robinson & Bennett).

Evidence that they are distinct constructs has been demonstrated by research (Berry et al., 2007; Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Organizational deviance is distinct in that it is usually behavior that is very constrained. Employees in any given time or context may be limited in deviant behavior in which they may engage. Differing manifestations may depend upon these

constraints. Employee chose the one that is least constrained, or least costly, given the context (Robinson & Bennett, 1997). For example, employee performance outputs may be very closely monitored so reductions in work effort or outputs could be readily discovered. However, reporting to be ill when one is not ill may not be detectable. This is consistent with Mitchell and Ambrose's (2007) suggestion of displaced deviance. For example, an abused subordinate may engage in deviance directed toward the organization or another in the organization rather than the abusive supervisor because of the fear of further retaliation by the supervisor.

Measurement of Workplace Deviance. As mentioned earlier, two dimensions and four types of workplace deviance are included in the workplace deviant behaviors. Bennett and Robinson (2000) have developed a measure of workplace deviance utilizing these two dimensions and four types of behavior. They developed a 12-item scale of organizational deviance and a 7-item scale of interpersonal deviance and conducted three multiphase studies for instrument development. Results of those studies will be discussed in chapter 3.

Performance

The final dimension of my conceptual framework for the study of abusive supervision, defined as a sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, is performance. This discussion will provide a definition of performance, discuss the relationship between individual and organization performance, introduce two models of individual performance, and three models of multi-level performance.

Swanson and Holton (2001) defined performance as the "valued productive output of a system in a form of goods or services" which is mediated through human expertise and effort (p. 89). There are multiple levels of performance, organizational, process, sub-system and individual (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Katz and Kahn (1966) contend that performance is

critical to organizations because the product or outcome renews the energy flow of the social system.

In a factory the raw materials and the human labor are the energetic input, the patterned activities of production, the transformation, and the finished product or output. To maintain the patterned activity requires continued renewal of the inflow of energy.

This is guaranteed in social systems from the product or outcome. Thus the outcome of the cycle of activities furnishes new energy for the initiation of a renewed cycle.

The company that produces automobiles sells them and by doing so obtains the means of securing new resources, compensating its labor force, and continuing the activity pattern.

(Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 17)

Abusive supervision may interfere with the human labor and energetic input cycle that Katz and Kahn (1966) describe as workers attention and motivation is diverted from organization objectives.

Individual and Organization Performance

As mentioned earlier in chapter 1, individual and organizational performance was viewed by this study as inseparable. Fundamental to that statement is the question: Does individual behavior influence the organization? The question may be answered by the concept of wholeness (Bertalanffy, 1968; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Solomon, 1998). Aristotle argued that individual and societal interests are impossible to separate (Solomon, 1998, p. 264). Bertalanffy (1968) argued that the “sum of individuals as social atoms...was replaced by the tendency to consider society, economy, nation as a whole superordinated by its parts” (p. 31). Katz and Kahn’s view of the organization was as a system of roles and role behavior, defined as “recurring

actions of an individual, appropriately interrelated with the repetitive activities of others so as to yield a predictable outcome” (Katz and Kahn, 1966, p. 174).

These arguments support my assertion that individual performance cannot be separated from organizational performance. For example, if abusive supervision’s influences at work result in a lower level of motivation, resistance to a supervisor, personal psychological distress, less organizational commitment, and aggression toward a supervisor (Ashforth, 1997; Blase & Blase, 2003; Hornstein, 1996; Tepper, 2000; Zellars et al., 2002), organizational performance will be negatively impacted because of both the indirect and direct influences on the wholeness of the organization. Both individual and multi-level performance improvement models also demonstrate the inter-relatedness of the individual and organization and vice versa.

Performance Models

This section summarizes Campbell’s model explaining the taxonomy of individual performance, Rummler and Brache’s performance improvement model, Swanson’s performance diagnosis matrix and Holton’s integrated taxonomy of performance domains (Campbell, 1990; Holton, 1999; Rummler & Brache, 1995; Swanson & Holton, 2001).

Campbell’s model of individual performance. Campbell’s taxonomy of individual performance has three key parts: (a) performance components, (b) performance determinants, and (c) predictors of performance determinants. Campbell proposed that predictors of performance exist in three groups: declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and skill and motivation. Predictors of declarative and procedural knowledge include ability, personality, interests, education, training, experience and the interaction of these components (Campbell, 1990). Campbell (1990) suggested that individual behavior relates to organizational behavior

under his facilitating peer and team performance component of job performance. These behaviors included:

1. Support of peers.
2. Commitment to group goals.
3. Being a good model for the group.
4. Reinforcing participation by group members.

Multi-level performance models. I will now describe three multi-level performance models but first will provide an overview of the differing viewpoints and variables of each in Table 4. These models were developed to resolve the frustration with the piece meal approach to performance improvement.

The system theory approach argues that the focus on any subset of organizational performance improvements is usually doomed to failure unless the improvements are embedded in the context of the whole system (Swanson & Holton, 2001). These models provide the context to attempt to reduce the complexity of the systems approach to performance improvement.

Table 4

Three Models of Performance Improvement

Theorist	Rummler and Brache	Swanson	Holton
Organization	Goals Design Management	Mission/goal System design Capacity Motivation/Expertise	
Performance System			Mission Goals Outcomes
Process	Goals Design Management	Mission/goal System design Capacity Motivation/Expertise	Goals Design Management
Social Sub-system			Identification Explicit/implicit Congruence Appropriateness Optimal relationships Organizational hindrance Appropriate metrics
Individual	Goals Design Management	Mission/goal System design Capacity Motivation/Expertise	Goals Design Management

Rummler and Brache's model. Rummler and Brache's performance model suggests three interrelated and critical variables of organizational performance: the organizational level, the process level and the job/performer level. The organizational level emphasizes the relationship with the market and provides the skeleton of the major organizational functions. The process

level encompasses the work flow and how the work gets done. The job/performer level involves the individual doing various jobs (Rummler & Brache, 1995). Within each of three levels are three performance variables: goals, design and management. Goals provide specific standards that reflect customer expectations for the product and service quality, quantity, timeliness and cost. Design includes the structural needs for necessary components and configuration capable of efficient satisfaction of the goals. Management assures goals are current and are achieved. These levels and variables are inseparably related to performance, including individual performance:

The organization and process levels may be beautifully wired in terms of goals, design, and management. However, the electricity will flow only if we address the needs of people who make or break organization and process performance. If processes are the vehicle through which an organization produces its outputs, people are the vehicle through which processes function. (Rummler & Brache, 1995, p. 24)

Swanson's performance diagnosis matrix. Swanson's performance matrix extended the number of performance variables of Rummler and Brache's model. The three performance levels are identical to those of Rummler and Brache, organization, process and individual. Swanson proposed five variables versus Rummler and Brache's three, goals, design and management. Swanson's five variables included mission/goal, system design, capacity, motivation and expertise. Swanson argued that the matrixed perspective and the accompanying diagnostic questions provide a powerful tool in diagnosing performance. A work process may contain an inherent goal which conflicts with the organization's mission and/or goal or a person working in the process. The questions help the diagnostician sort out the performance overlaps and disconnects (Swanson & Holton, 2001).

Holton's integrated taxonomy of performance domains. Holton attempted to reconcile differences between the organizational development domains and the Rummler-Brache and Swanson models. Holton also attempted to change the language of the model to make it more universal and address the criticism that performance was viewed as a short-term phenomenon. Holton proposed four performance domains of a system, mission, process, social subsystem and individual. Holton's mission domain specifies the expected outcomes of the system. Holton's process domain is identical to Rummler-Brache and Swanson's models. Holton adds the social subsystem domain, an internal social entity (group, team, organizational unit) that contribute to the mission of the overall system via subunit goals. Holton's individual domain is identical to that of Rummler and Brache and Swanson's models. As mentioned earlier, each of the model described the inter-connectedness of the individual with the organization within the various elements these researchers describe (Campbell, 1990; Holton, 1999; Rummler & Brache, 1995; Swanson & Holton, 2001).

Summary

This chapter, guided by the conceptual framework for the study, started with introducing the influence of organizational context and organizational dynamics of abusive supervision, then discussed the management system, the supervisory relationship within the management system and the influence of management assumptions. Next, I introduced and elaborated on the theoretical framework of workplace emotional abuse and how abusive supervision occurs within that framework. I then introduced and explained the influences on aberrant supervisory behavior, how targeted subordinates perceive, give meaning to and react to their perceptions. I concluded with a discussion defining organizational performance and relating individual performance to organizational performance.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will identify the research methodology as well as the rationale for the methodology for this study. I will discuss the research design, methods, procedures, the instrumentation, sampling, data collection, safeguards for human participants, and data analysis, concluding with a discussion relating to the limitations of the study, community concerns, and the study timetable.

Overview

This study examined the negative influence of abusive supervision on performance-related behaviors. The research was an anonymous cross-sectional descriptive study of licensed registered nurses in a selected South Florida county who have experienced abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000) which negatively influenced their performance. Data was collected by unsolicited survey utilizing a self-administered, self-report questionnaire mailed to a random sample of currently-licensed registered nurses in the selected county. The population and the sample population are depicted in Figure 5.

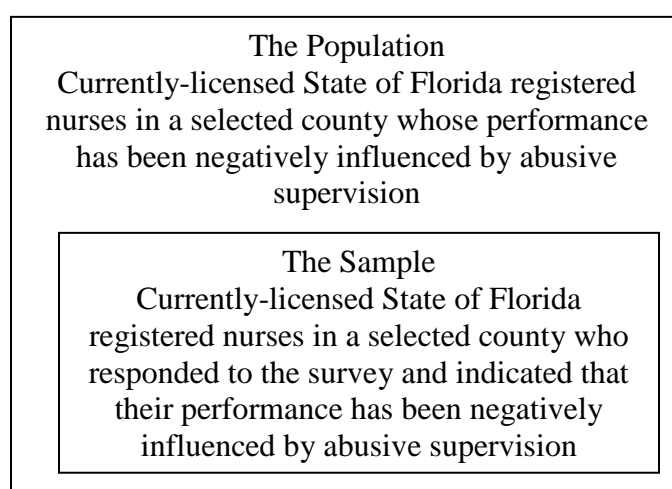


Figure 5. Differences between the population and the sample population

Initially, the population from which the random sample was drawn was from the State of Florida public domain listing of all of the licensed registered nurses in the county selected for this study. A survey screening question resulted in a stratified sample of only licensed registered nurses with the characteristic that they had experienced supervisory abuse which negatively impacted their performance. Inferences were then be possible about licensed nurses in the south Florida county selected for this study who have the same characteristic.

The influence of abusive supervision on individual performance, including among registered nurses, had not been addressed by the research discovered by my literature search. As a result, the research herein was intended to add to the understanding of abusive supervision's impact on performance, a critical objective of HRD (Swanson & Holton, 2001). I further used what was discovered by my study to increase HRD's awareness and ability to address supervisory abuse, including suggesting strategies for a better understanding of abusive supervision, approaches for detecting abusive supervision, and methods for developing effective interventions. This improved understanding and effectiveness in interventions will also advance HRD's primary objective, improving performance (Swanson & Holton, 2001).

The Research Approach

I took the positivist viewpoint in my research approach which combines a deductive approach with precise measurement of quantitative data in order to predict human behavior (Neuman, 2000).

Upon completion of my literature review, it became evident that a comprehensive understanding of the influences of abusive supervision on subordinate behavior did not exist, thus the need for further study, especially with regard to performance-related behavior. This study's literature review identified the constructs of abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000) and

performance (Swanson & Holton, 2001). A theoretical framework to explain causal relationships, the psychological contract (Levinson et al., 1962), was established. The construct deviant workplace behavior, which may result from the violation of a personal psychological contract, was discovered (Robinson & Bennett, 1995) along with a validated scale (Bennett & Robinson, 2000), to measure the reaction to the violation.

The Research Gap

As discussed in more detail in chapter 2, a research gap existed with regard to the experience of abusive supervision and performance-related behaviors. Abusive supervision research provides evidence of a negative influence upon subordinates. But the research has focused on the personal consequences, such as anxiety, stress, depression and problem drinking (Ashforth, 1997; Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Hornstein, 1996; Tepper, 2000) and diminished work attitudes and feelings (Blase & Blase, 2003; Hornstein, 1996; Tepper, 2000). Empirical research on behavior-related influences was limited to extra-role citizenship behaviors (Zellars et al., 2002) and social withdrawal (Blase & Blase). Zellars et al. reported that national guard members who reported being abused by their supervisors had less intention to participate in organizational citizenship behaviors. Blase and Blase reported social withdrawal in their qualitative study of teachers and principal mistreatment.

This study addressed the research gap, specifically examining performance-related behaviors as reactions to abusive supervision and the characteristics of those behaviors. An identical research gap existed for nursing as well. A literature search found few studies that had examined abusive supervision's implications specific to performance. In fact, no studies were found that specifically focused on supervisory abuse (Tepper, 2000) and nursing either. Nursing studies focused on verbal abuse and the sources, characteristics, and affective implications of that type

of abuse (Cox, 1987; Cox, Braun, Christle, Walker & Tiwanak, 1991; Rowe & Sherlock, 2005; Sofield & Salmond, 2003). Verbal abuse was defined as frequent and consistent verbal aggression (Kinney, 1994). Rowe and Sherlock reported in their study among nurses in a Philadelphia hospital that the most frequent source of verbal abuse was other nurses (27%), followed by patients' families (25%), doctors (22%), patients (17%) and others (9%). Of the 27% verbal abuse among nurses, 80% of that abuse was by other nurses while 20% originated from nurse managers. However, these researchers did not include empirical evidence relating to the performance implications of verbal abuse. Sofield and Salmond (2003) reported that 91% of their survey respondents, who were nurses in the northeastern United States, had experienced verbal abuse in the past month, and that physicians were the most common source, followed by the patient, the patients' family, peers, subordinates and immediate supervisors. Frequency of immediate supervisor abuse was 15%. Only general implications of abuse were reported, including decreases in morale, productivity, and nursing care delivery and an increase in errors (Sofield & Salmond). Their results were similar to the research results by Cox (1987) and Cox et al. (1991).

Purpose and Research Questions

As stated earlier, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between abusive supervision and performance-related behavior. Specifically, two research questions guided this study:

1. How did abusive supervision influence performance-related behaviors?
2. What were the characteristics of the behaviors influenced by abusive supervision?

The Research Design

As summarized earlier, the research design was a cross-sectional survey utilizing a self-administered, self-reported unsolicited mailed questionnaire. This study's intent was to determine the characteristics of abusive supervision and performance-related behavior of the target population so inferences may be made about the characteristics of the population (Creswell, 2003), licensed registered nurses in a selected county in South Florida. Survey design also offered anonymity for participants (Babbie, 1992), essential because of sensitivity of the topic, abusive supervision, and deviance from workplace norms. I utilized probability, stratified sampling to gain access to a difficult-to-reach specialized population, subordinates who had experienced supervisory abuse (Neuman, 2000).

This study utilized the construct of deviant workplace behavior and the scale developed to measure organizational deviance, (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Bennett & Robinson, 2000) discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Operational Statement

This study examined the influence of supervisory abuse on performance-related behavior. Supervisory abuse has been defined as the perceived extent to which supervisors engage in a sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact (Tepper, 2000). Performance-related behavior was defined as the "valued productive output of a system in the form of goods or services" (Swanson & Holton, p. 89). It was expected that supervisory abuse will negatively influence performance-related behavior, especially related to the quantity and quality of work performed. Figure 6 describes the various study aspects:

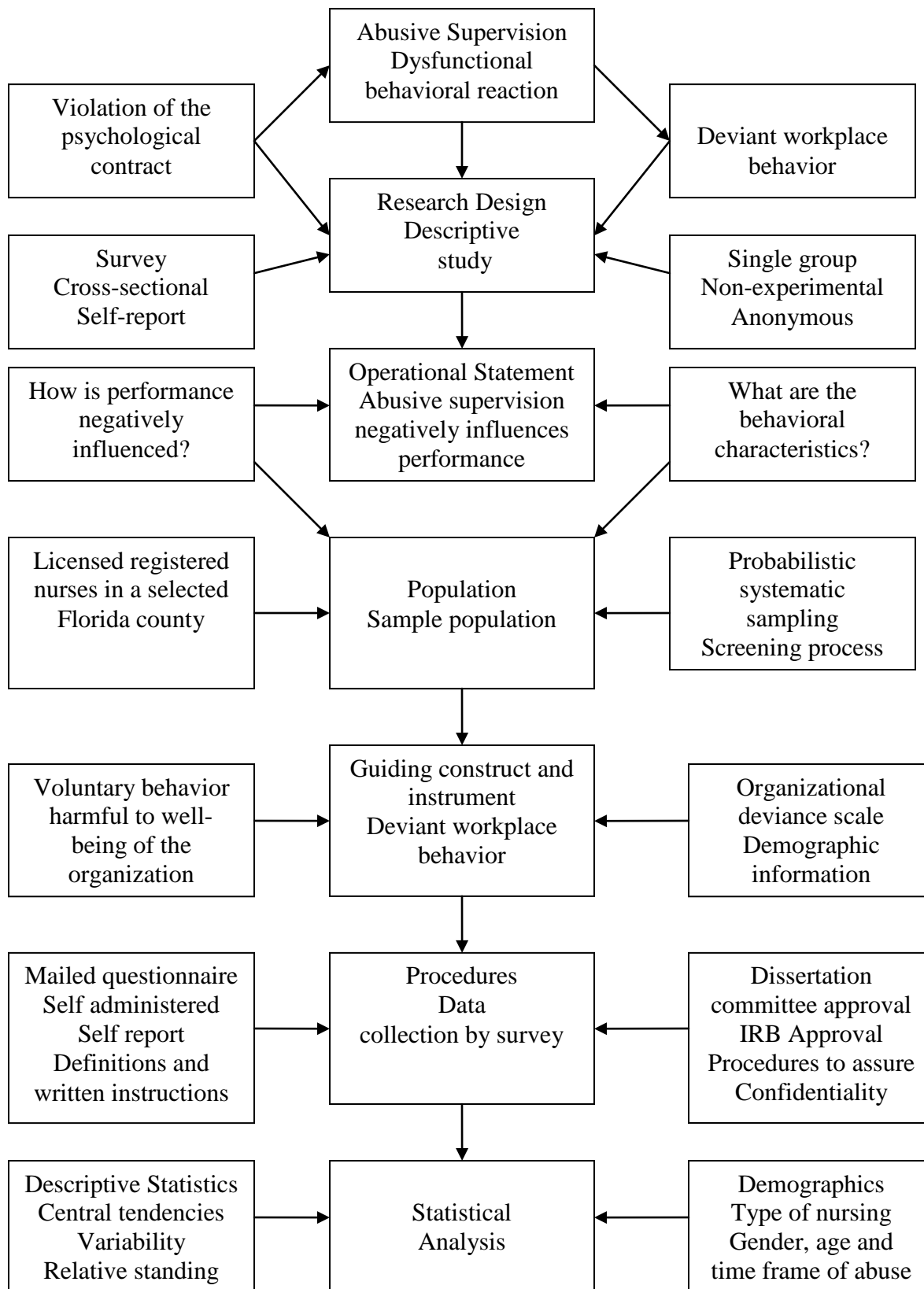


Figure 6. Description of the methodology, design, procedures and analysis

Population and Sample

The population for this study was the licensed registered nurses in a selected county in South Florida. There was no target population in this study as all names and addresses of the approximately 6,500 licensed registered nurses in this county were obtained from the public domain of the State of Florida Department of Health. The sample population included those nurses who responded to the survey and indicated by their questionnaire responses that they had experienced supervisory abuse which had negatively influenced their performance-related behavior. The sample population was identified by a screening question in the questionnaire which established the criterion for survey participation, having had experienced supervisory abuse which negatively influenced their performance. Those nurses indicating by their response that they did not meet the above criteria were asked to not participate in the behavior-related question and were not included in the sample population.

Registered nurses were selected as the study population for three reasons:

1. Studying registered nurses may make a greater contribution. Professional nursing care is a critical component to quality patient care with some evidence that a higher level of registered nursing staff nursing care is related to lower mortality (Tourangeau, Stone & Birnbaum, 2003). Nurses are especially critical to the health care system in Florida and the county selected for this study where the elderly population exceeds the national average (U.S. Census, 2000). There was a current nursing shortage in Florida. The Florida Center for Nursing (2007) reported Florida health care providers were experiencing 8.5% to 11% vacancy rates in nurses in 2006. In 2005, the demand for nurses due to growth and separations created about 13,000 vacancies with the nurse population only increasing by about 8,000. Job growth demands on registered nurses in

Florida are expected to increase about 3% per year through 2014, creating over 36,000 new nursing jobs. The national nursing shortage was also expected to worsen with the demand exceeding the supply by nearly 30% by 2020 (Andrews & Dziegielewski, 2005). In July, 2007, a major health care organization in the county selected for the study reported 220 nurse vacancies, an 11% nurse turnover rate, and expansion to international recruitment for nurses. Forty-four members of their nursing staff were already from India. This health care organization has dedicated an extra \$5.4 million to nurse salaries to meet national pay averages. Twenty beds at one of their hospitals were currently closed because of the nursing shortage.

2. Nursing is a stressful profession (McNeese-Smith, 1999). Bad patient outcomes, fear of making an error, lack of patient responses to care, feeling overloaded and stressful relations with coworkers, and physicians who blame nurses were among the themes of nurse job dissatisfaction. Environmental stress can be an antecedent to supervisory abuse (Hornstein, 1996).
3. As mentioned earlier, no studies were found related to supervisory abuse and negative performance among registered nurses.

The county in which the study occurred was selected because of its high population growth and elderly population, both placing stress on an ample supply of nurses. The county's population increased 33% between 2000 and 2006 or about 24,000 additional persons per year (Bureau of Business and Economic Research, 2007). This county was among the top five fastest growing counties in Florida based upon additional people. The elderly population (over age 65) was 32% higher than that in Florida and almost 80% higher than the elderly population in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Sample Size and Sampling

Surveying all members of a population provides the most accurate representation of the population. However, because of practical reasons, primarily time and cost, probability sampling is commonly used. Probability sampling has remarkable power to estimate closely the distribution of a characteristic in a population by obtaining information from relatively few elements of that population (Dillman, 2007). Sampling error is the type of error that occurs because information is not collected from every member of the population. Sampling error is highly dependent upon sample size and can usually be estimated with considerable precision. Dillman argues that relatively few completed questionnaires can provide surprising precision at a high level of confidence. Dillman suggests a 95% confidence level with three levels of precision, $\pm 10\%$, $\pm 5\%$, and $\pm 3\%$. The sample size for this study of approximately 6,589 licensed registered nurses in the selected county with a $\pm 3\%$ sampling error and a 95% confidence level would have been 924. The sample size would have been 364 for a $\pm 5\%$ sampling error and a 95% confidence level. The sample size would have been 95 with a sampling error of $\pm 10\%$ and a confidence level of 95%. After considering the cost of acquiring the required sample in relation to the degree of accuracy, Dillman's mid-level precision, $\pm 5\%$ with a confidence level of 95% was selected. Therefore, the sample size for this study was 364.

Systematic probability sampling was utilized. The Florida Health Department's list of license registered nurses provided the names of the potential respondents from which the sample was obtained using the nth technique.

Guiding Constructs and Instrumentation

Two constructs guided my study of influence of abusive supervision on performance-related behaviors, violations of the psychological contract (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994), and deviant

workplace behavior (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). These constructs are linked by perceptions of organizational injustice, especially interactional injustice, and the resulting frustration (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Robinson & Greenberg, 1998). I will first discuss the psychological contract, focusing on violations, and then instrumentation.

The Psychological Contract

As discussed in chapter 2, the psychological contract contains employee perceptions of the expectations regarding mutual obligations that characterize the employment relationship.

Abusive supervision negatively influences workers' attitudes, organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Tepper, 2000) and results in organizational deviance due to perceptions of injustice and self threat (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Organizational justice is a key element in psychological contracts (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). In the event of a violation of the psychological contract, subordinates who do not mitigate or moderate their reaction to the abuse (Tepper, 2001; Zellars et al., 2002) may have a dysfunctional reaction, engaging in acts harmful to the organization. Those acts may or may not be intentionally harmful (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Subordinate psychological stress resulting from frustrations relating to a sense of injustice was also commonly reported as consequence of abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000).

Deviant Workplace Behavior

Deviant workplace behavior, unlike workplace retaliation (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), revenge (Aquino, Tripp & Bies, 2001), and counterproductive workplace behavior (Fox & Spector, 2005), describes behavior as voluntary behavior either from lack of motivation to comply with organizational norms or motivation to violate norms (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Perceptions of injustice, unfairness and threats to self-esteem motivate workplace deviance

(Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Robinson & Greenberg, 1998; Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Mitchell and Ambrose (2007) reported a positive relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance in their study of the moderating effects of negative reciprocity beliefs, utilizing those reporting for jury duty as subjects.

Instrumentation

Of the three options regarding instrumentation (Creswell, 2005), I located an instrument versus developing an instrument myself or modifying an instrument. I used the 12-item organizational deviance scale from Bennett and Robinson's (2000) deviant workplace behavior scale. The organizational deviance scale measures one of two dimensions of deviant workplace behavior. The other dimension is interpersonal deviance which measures social interactions among coworkers, not a topic of this study. The organizational deviance scale measures quantity and quality of production. Organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance have been found to be separable constructs (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007).

Bennett and Robinson (2000) developed the workplace deviance measure with three-multiphase studies. In the first study, a pool of 314 deviant workplace behaviors was generated. These behaviors were reviewed and assessed by a panel of experts. In the second study, a subset of 58 of the deviant behavior items was further refined to 23 items by analyzing the inter-item correlations, variances, and factor loadings of each item. Lastly, a third study was conducted using confirmatory factor analysis to verify the dimensionality of the remaining 23 items and to begin the process of construct validation. The scales (organizational and interpersonal) were found to have internal reliabilities of .81 and .78 respectively. Confirmatory factor analysis verified that a 2-factor structure had acceptable fit. Preliminary evidence of construct validity was provided.

This instrument selection satisfied the six criteria Creswell suggests for assessing a good instrument:

1. The instrument has been developed recently, and the researcher can obtain the most recent version: The deviance behavior instrument was developed seven years ago, and the most recent version was available. Permission to utilize this instrument was granted by the co-author and authorized contact, Dr. Rebecca Bennett, on January 8, 2008.
2. The instrument was widely cited by other authors and has been frequently used by other researchers which provides some indication of endorsement: The scale was used by Dunlop and Lee (2004) in their study of workplace deviance and organizational citizenship behaviors among fast-food chain workers in Australia. Lee and Allen (2002) utilized both organizational and interpersonal scales in their study of organizational citizenship behaviors and workplace deviance among registered nurses in Ontario, Canada. The scale was also used by Judge, Scott and Ilies (2006) in their study of hostility, job attitudes and workplace deviance among workers in a variety of fields in the southeastern United States including information technology, administration and education. Mitchell and Ambrose (2007) utilized both scales to study abusive supervision, workplace deviance and the moderating effects of negative reciprocity beliefs among a variety of workers in the southeastern United States.
3. Published reviews are available for the instrument: Berry et al. (2007) reviewed the deviant workplace behavior instrument, concluding that their meta-analysis provided support for the usefulness of separating self-report workplace deviance scales into interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance dimensions. Although the interpersonal and organizational measures exhibited similar relationships with a number

of variables, they had clear differential relationships with the big five personality dimensions of agreeableness and conscientiousness and most organizational citizenship behavior variables.

4. There was information about the reliability and validity of scores from past uses of the instrument: The organizational deviance scale had an internal reliability of .78 in the initial validation study (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Dunlop and Lee (2004) reported that the coefficient alpha for the organizational deviance scale was .82 in later use.
5. The procedure for recording data fits the research questions and hypotheses: The research questions relate to the quantity and quality of production as demonstrated through performance.
6. The instrument contains an accepted scale of measure: The workplace deviance scale utilizes a seven-item Likert scale ranging from “never” to “daily” (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

The organizational deviance items included: (1) taking property from work without permission, (2) spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working, (3) falsified a receipt to get reimbursed for more money than you spent on business expenses, (4) taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at your workplace, (5) come in late to work without permission, (6) littered your work environment, (7) neglected to follow your boss’s instructions, (8) intentionally worked slower than you could have worked, (9) discussed confidential company information with an unauthorized person, (10) used an illegal drug or consumed alcohol on the job, (11) put little effort into your work, and (12) dragged out work in order to get overtime.

The Questionnaire

This section first discusses the questionnaire design then presents the questions and the rationale for each question. This discussion is followed by data collection procedures and measures to assure survey participant confidentiality.

The Questionnaire design rationale. As mentioned previously, a self-administered, self-report mail questionnaire utilizing self-report methodology was utilized to survey the systematically selected sample. The questionnaire was a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate to analysis (Babbie, 1992).

As mentioned previously, a mailed, self-administered questionnaire was selected to offer confidentiality due to the sensitive nature of this study. Respondents may give normative or socially-desirable answers to sensitive questions during personal or telephone interviews. Survey methods that offer the greatest confidentiality are better for sensitive questions with the more honest answers coming from self-administered questionnaires (Neuman, 2000).

Self-report questionnaires are vital to the well being of those who participant in providing sensitive information regarding workplace behavior (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). At the same time, there are those who are critical of self-report questionnaires which will be discussed in detail in the limitations section (Lee, 1993; Spector, 1994).

The questionnaire contents. The questionnaire had four questions (Appendix C). Initially, there was a screening question with three options, followed by a closed-end question with 12 items from Bennett and Robinson's (2000) organizational deviance scale and seven frequency-level options for each item. The third question was an open-ended question and offered the respondents the option to describe reactions to supervisory abuse not included in the organizational deviance scale. The fourth and final question asked respondents to identify the

type of organization for which they work, the time frame during which the abuse occurred and to provide personal demographics.

Throughout the questionnaire, information (definitions, examples, findings of other studies, and instructions) were provided within the questionnaire itself, immediately following the question but before the response. Providing background information and instructions within the questionnaire itself was consistent with Dillman's (2007) argument against a separate statement of questionnaire instructions at the beginning but rather placing instruction information at the point it is needed and is relevant, eliminating the need for respondents to refer back when answering questions,

No time constraints were established for the occurrence of the abuse as memory varies based upon characteristics of event, proximity to the temporal boundaries, distinctiveness, importance and emotional impact, number and type of cues, and the time allowed on the recall task. While events that happened long ago are harder to remember, important, emotionally-involving events are easier to recall (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski (2000)). The questions in the questionnaire were as follows:

The first question: A screening question identified the study sample population, those who currently have or have had a negative relationship with a supervisor which negatively influenced performance. It was as follows: Do you currently work for or have you worked for an abusive supervisor who has negatively impacted your job performance while employed as a registered nurse in xxxxx County?

Respondents had three options in which to respond: (1) "yes," they have had an abusive supervisory experience which negatively impacted their performance, (2) "yes," they have had an abusive supervisory experience but the abuse did not negatively impact their performance, or

3. “no,” they have not had an abusive supervision experience. Those responding “yes” to option 1. were asked to complete the entire questionnaire. Those responding “yes” to option 2. or “no” to option 3. were asked to stop at that point, and return the survey.

Screening questions select respondents for whom a second question was relevant. On the basis of the answer to a first question, the respondent is instructed to go to another or to skip certain questions (Neuman, 2000).

The second question: The second question, designed for use by only those who responded positively to the screening question with option 1. utilized the deviant workplace behavior measurement questions and the Likert scale. It was as follows:

Thinking about your reaction or reactions to abusive supervision, please rate the frequency that you have engaged in any of the 12 work-related behaviors below. If you have worked for more than one abusive supervisor, please respond based upon the experience you best remember.

A seven-item Likert scale provided respondents options for rating their behaviors from “never” to “daily.”

The third question: The third question was an open-ended question and as follows: “The above list may not describe how you reacted to abusive supervision which related to your job performance. If that is the case, please list and describe other reactions you had. However, please do not name your employer, supervisor, or include any other information that might compromise your confidentiality in this survey. Feel free to attach additional sheets of paper to provide ample space for what you wish to say.”

An open-ended question provides an opportunity for respondents to be free to offer any answer they wish to the question (Neuman, 2000). A total reliance on closed-end questions can distort results. Respondents only tend to work within the options provided by the closed-ended

questions. Neuman suggests the disadvantages of a questionnaire format can be reduced by mixing open-ended and closed-ended questions. Periodic probes with open-ended questions can help by offering the respondent the opportunity to explain his or her answers or offer optional answers.

Also with regard to the third question, Bennett and Robinson (2000) developed the organizational deviance scale from deviant behavior items suggested by a myriad of workers. Nurses were not identified as among them, although all professions and occupations were not identified. Therefore, the scale may not contain behaviors unique to the nursing profession. This question affords the opportunity for respondents to identify other behaviors. Thematic analysis of the responses to this question will be discussed later in this chapter.

The fourth question: The fourth question asked survey participants to identify the type of nursing in which they are engaged when the abusive supervision occurred, to identify the approximately time frame in which the abuse occurred, and to describe themselves personally. The fourth question was as follows:

Please check the box that most closely describes the type of nursing work you do or did when the abusive supervision occurred, the time frame of the abuse and your personal information when the abuse occurred.

Eight options were provided for the type of nursing with a ninth option provided for respondents to write in the type of nursing if it was not listed among the eight provided. Personal demographics were aligned with the intention to analyze the data in relation to respondents' demographics: male or female, age by generation intervals (Zemke, Raines & Filipczak, 2000), and length of employment as a registered nurse.

Questionnaire measurements. The questionnaire was designed to include nominal, interval, and ordinal levels of measurement. Nominal was utilized for questions concerning some personal demographics, such as gender. Interval was used for questions such as age. Ordinal was used relating to questions concerning the frequency of behaviors related to individual performance.

Questionnaire methodology. The self-administered mail questionnaire, to the extent possible, utilized the Tailored Design Method (TDM) (Dillman, 1991, 2007) to minimize non-responses and thus assure participation met study requirements. A greater response rate also would reduce the cost of conducting the survey.

TDM is based upon social exchange theory. Questionnaire recipients are most likely to respond if they expect that the perceived benefits of doing so will outweigh the perceived efforts of responding. Dillman (1991, 2007) argued that among TDM's strengths is that it is theoretically driven with the emphasis placed on how procedures can be linked to positively influencing questionnaire recipients. Dillman (1991) reported that a Spearman rank-difference correlation of .81 confirmed that adherence to TDM details correlated with final response rates.

TDM focuses on three design considerations: (a) making the questionnaire appear easier and less time-consuming to complete and information, (b) making the questionnaire itself interesting to fill out by adding interest-getting questions, and (c) increasing trust by using official stationery and sponsorship. Dillman's (1991, 2007) research has found mail survey response rates from 50% to 70% for general public surveys when TDM was used.

With regard to the design consideration, TDM (Dillman, 1991, 2007) suggested several approaches. The following methods were utilized for this survey:

1. Identification of the survey with a recognized institution or organization.

2. Use of graphical design and numerous question-writing principles to ease the task of reading and answering questions such as large, capital or dark letters contrasting with small letters, use of directional arrows, and placing instructions inside the questionnaire instead of on a separate page.
3. Using a booklet questionnaire form.
4. Using individually printed, addressed and signed letters to potential respondents.
5. Printing addresses on envelopes rather than using address labels.
6. Inclusion in the cover letter a statement about the study's social usefulness and why it is important for the recipients to respond. This was repeated in different ways in each of the subsequent mailings.
7. Explanation of the lack of identification numbers and how anonymity is protected.
8. Folding of outgoing materials in a way that contrasts with advertising mail.
9. Including a self-addressed, stamped return envelope.
10. Use of up to four carefully-spaced mailings: pre-mailing letter (Appendix A), questionnaire mailing (Appendices B and C), first follow-up letter to be sent one week after the original mailing (Appendix D), and a possible final follow-up letter (Appendix E) to be sent with a replacement questionnaire and another informed consent form about four weeks after the initial questionnaire mailing.

The fourth mailing was not utilized except for the pilot test as it became unnecessary to satisfy the response requirements.

Data Collection

The mailed packet contained a survey cover letter (Appendix B), the questionnaire (Appendix C), and a stamped, pre-addressed return envelope for the returned mailing of the

questionnaire. The packet was sent in a #10 white envelope. The return envelopes was #9 white envelope. The cover letter and questionnaire were each “z” folded outward to provide immediate awareness to the potential respondents of the envelope’s contents. The questionnaire was in booklet form, printed on an 11 x 17 sheet, front and back, which provided four standard letter-sized pages, adequate for the four-page questionnaire. Each cover letter was personally addressed to potential respondents and was personally signed by this researcher in contrasting ink.

These mail procedures were generally consistent with those recommended by Dillman (2007) with the exception of the first follow-up correspondence by a post card and a financial reward. Dillman suggested a post card reminder. A letter enclosed in a personally-addressed envelope was used instead to afford anonymity of even the request to participate. Dillman suggested a token financial reward included with the initial mailing of the questionnaire, such as a \$1 or \$5 bill, can enhance response. The idea is to establish a feeling of obligation, although questionnaire recipients have the option to keep the money and not participate. That option was not utilized for this survey because of the possibility that any remuneration may encourage survey recipients to participate when they do not wish to.

Procedures to Assure Minimal Risk for as Human Participants

This study’s objective was the collection and analysis of sensitive information from the survey participants regarding the influence of abusive supervision. Both the participation in this study and the information provided might result in workplace retribution. Protection from retribution was provided by participant anonymity to those on the survey mailing list and those who responded to the survey. This researcher is only aware of the identity of those invited to participate in the study but not those returning the questionnaires. There were no established

methods to connect the identity of those who participated in the survey and those on the survey mailing list. Findings of the study were published using group averages. No one was identified by name. To further assure confidentiality, the following nine methods were utilized:

1. The computerized data base, established for mail merge from a systematically selected sample of licensed registered nurses in the selected South Florida county, is only being maintained on portable memory devices which remain locked in this researcher's office file cabinet. A print version of that data base is and also will be maintained in the locked file cabinet. This researcher only has the key which is being kept in his personal possession. The electronic data base will be kept for five years from the date of its creation and then electronically erased by reformatting at the end of the five-year period. The printed version of the data base will be shredded based upon the same time frame identified above.
2. Respondents were cautioned not to identify themselves on the questionnaire, either directly by signing or identifying themselves on the questionnaire or by placing identifying information such as the name of their employer or supervisor. These cautions were placed in the study's cover letters and within the questionnaire itself.
3. There was no coding or other methods utilized to identify those who responded among the random sample. The questionnaire was coded, nor was the return envelope. No other means were utilized to identify the participants' questionnaire responses. The respondents' questionnaires are being maintained in a locked file cabinet in this researcher's office, will be maintained for five years and destroyed at the end of that time. The researcher only has the key to this file cabinet which is being kept in his personal possession.
5. Each licensed registered nurse provided an address of record which was accessible in the public domain on the State of Florida, Department of Health's web site. It appeared from a

cursory examination that some of the addresses of record may have been addresses of employers. To assure no mailings were made to employers' addresses, the addresses of records of the random sample were compared to the county property records to assure they were not addresses of employers of potential participants. Post office boxes were considered to be employers' addresses because they cannot be verified in either way. There were no reports from participants that questionnaires had been received at a potential participant's employer's address.

5. All outbound mailings had a notice on the envelope to not forward if a forwarding order was on file with the postal service in case the forwarding address was that of an employer. The postal service was requested to return these letters.

6. Mailed envelopes returned marked non-deliverable by the postal service were placed in a locked file with the other records and after the names were removed from the sample data base.

7. A postal service box was utilized for in-bound mail instead of delivery to this researcher's address to assure there was no access to the returned questionnaires other than by this researcher. There were no indications of a breach of security.

8. Any information identifying a participant or providing any other identifying information on the returned questionnaire or the return envelope provided for the questionnaire was immediately didacted with an indelible pen which obscured any information that may compromise anonymity of personal identity. Some participants returned materials which contained personal information or identities of employers. That information was immediately didacted and no record was made of the information provided.

Mail Procedures

First class mail with the United States Postal Service was utilized. The State of Florida address of record for registered nurses was the address used unless an employer's address, a post office box or could not be verified by the county's property records. The self-addressed return envelope contained the return address of this researcher's post office box acquired for this survey's purpose to assure anonymity of the responses in case some information on the return envelope might identify the respondent and to assure secured delivery of the returned questionnaires. While no return envelopes had Barry University's Ft. Myers site address, the out-going letters did. In the case a recipient of the questionnaire sent correspondence or the survey to Barry University's Ft. Myers office address, office personnel were advised of that possibility and asked to immediately contact this researcher. This did not occur.

Pilot Testing

Pilot testing was utilized to test the survey procedures, effectiveness of the questionnaire, clarity of the instructions, and outbound and inbound mail procedures. Measures to assure anonymity of the study sample and participants were the same as those for the primary survey mailing. One-hundred randomly-selected participants were mailed the pre-mail letter, the cover letter and questionnaire, the reminder letter, and a second reminder letter and a replacement questionnaire. The pilot testing did not indicate any need for changes in survey design or procedures.

Data Analysis

This study was a descriptive study. Data analysis utilized measures of central tendencies, variability and relative standing. As previously mentioned, several studies have found correlations between abusive supervision and negative subordinate reactions (Ashforth, 1997;

Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Blase & Blase, 2003; Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2001; Zellars et al., 2002; Valle, 2005). A more recent study reported a relationship between abusive supervision and aggregated deviant workplace behavior (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Thus this study focused on identifying the characteristics, demographics and frequencies of performance-related behaviors. The statistical analysis focused on answering the research questions:

1. How did abusive supervision influence performance-related behaviors?
2. What were the characteristics of the behaviors influenced by abusive supervision?

First, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the overall trends or tendencies in the data, provide an understanding of how varied the scores might be, and provide insight into where one score stands in comparison with others resulting from the deviant workplace scale and the screening question. Analyses were conducted in three areas, central tendencies, variability, and relative standing.

An analysis of central tendencies was utilized with regard to the responses on Likert's seven-option scale (never to daily) to show the distribution of scores. Each Likert option was given assigned a number for analytical purpose. This analysis provided ranked and mean scores for the more frequent behaviors reported on the DWB scale.

An analysis of variability indicates the spread of scores in the distribution (Creswell, 2003). Range displays the difference between the highest and lowest scores of items on the instrument. Variance indicates the dispersion of the scores around the mean.

The data provided in the open-ended question was analyzed utilizing coding and themes. A code is a label used to describe a segment of text or an image. A theme is similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea (Creswell, 2005).

While not an objective of this study, data concerning non-performance-related reactions was reported. This data was analyzed and included in the report.

Employer Concerns and Media Interest

Having a study done by someone outside an organization seeking sensitive data on supervisory abuse might have caused concern among some employers. Sofield and Salmond (2003) reported some participating organizations raised concerns that their study on verbal abuse would create greater dissatisfaction within environments that tolerated verbal abuse. This survey might have generated some media interest if a questionnaire was provided to the media by one of the recipients. This did not occur. No contacts were received by this researcher or this researcher's supervisor.

In preparation for any concerns that may still develop, the following measures will be utilized:

1. A spokesperson for Barry University will be identified. I will refer media questions I might receive as the researcher to the designated spokesperson.
2. The objectives and limitations of the study for public disclosure are as follows:
 - (a) The survey was for educational purposes only.
 - (b) The survey was anonymous.
 - (c) Data has been published in summary form only. No organizations, employers or individuals were identified. No specific data will be released to the media, and
 - (d) The county in which the study was conducted has not and will not be specifically identified if requested in the future.

The Survey Sample Development and Mail Timetable

The survey sample development and mail timetable were as follows:

1. Identification of population list and selection of pilot test sample: April 21-24, 2008.
2. Pilot test mailed, 100 pieces (four mailings): April 25-May 21, 2008.

Four returned undeliverable.

34.5% response rate.

3. Evaluation of mail procedures and questionnaire instructions: Completed by May 31, 2008.

No changes necessary as indicated by pilot test.

4. Selection of main survey sample: June 7-10, 2008.
5. Main survey mailing, initially 1277 pieces (three mailings): June 16-July 24, 2008.

92 returned undeliverable—net received 1185.

22.7% response rate.

Responses not adequate for required sample.

6. Selection of second sample: July 20, 2008.
7. Second survey mailing: 257 pieces (three mailings): July 22-August 1, 2008.

13 returned undeliverable--net received 243.

33.3% response rate.

8. Cut-off date for receipt of questionnaires to be included in study: August 18, 2008.

Total questionnaires received: 419.

Unresponsive: 28.

Usable responses: 391.

Total mailed and not returned: 1524.

Response rate: 25.7%.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter will present the findings of my study of abusive supervision among registered nurses in a South Florida county. As outlined in chapter 1, my objective was to answer these research questions: (1) How did abusive supervision influence performance-related behaviors? (2) What were the characteristics of the behaviors influenced by abusive supervision? The framework of this chapter will be guided by answering the research questions.

Summary

The participants of this study were currently-licensed State of Florida registered nurses who were selected by systematic random sampling from the public domain licensing records maintained by the State of Florida Department of Health. My literature review indicated that a comprehensive understanding of the influences of abusive supervision and performance-related behavior did not exist. That lack of understanding also existed for registered nurses.

Registered nurses were selected because of their critical importance to quality patient care (Tourangeau et al., 2003) and the current nursing shortage (Andrews & Dziegielewski, 2005). Nurses were especially critical in the chosen South Florida county because of its high population growth and elderly population, both of which exceeded the national averages (Bureau of Business and Economic Research, 2007; U.S. Census, 2000).

The participating nurses responded to a self-administered, self-report anonymous questionnaire which was sent and returned using the United States Postal Service. The questionnaire contained an initial screening question with three options, 12 closed-end behavioral questions with seven-frequency options for each item obtained from Bennett and

Robinson's (2000) organizational deviance scale, an open-ended question for respondents to describe reactions to supervisory abuse not in the scale, and three demographic questions.

The survey administration utilized the Tailored Design Method to minimize non-responses (Dillman, 1991, 2007). A pilot test was utilized to test the survey mail procedures and clarity of the instructions and questionnaire. The pilot test indicated no need for adjustments of the survey design or procedures.

The required sample size was 364 for a $\pm 5\%$ sampling error at a 95% confidence level. Surveys mailed to the sample and not returned by the postal service totaled 1524 with 391 usable responses. This response exceeds the sample size requirement by 27 responses. The survey return rate was 25.7%.

Screening questions were utilized to identify those who have had an abusive supervisory experience which negatively impacted performance. Those responding affirmatively to that question became the study's participants.

This research was a descriptive study. Data analysis utilized the measures of central tendency, variability, relative standing and relationship. Several studies have previously found correlations between abusive supervision and negative subordinate reactions (Ashforth, 1997; Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Blase & Blase, 2003; Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2001; Valle, 2005; Zellars et al., 2002).

Study Participants

Study participants totaled 143 and only included those who responded affirmatively to having experienced supervisory abuse. Of that number, 112 nurses responded to one or more of the items in the deviant behavior scale. Another 41 nurses responded to the open-ended

question, indicating their reactions to abusive supervision were not among the 12 items on the scale used. Some described other behaviors.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis utilized SPSS (Green, Salkind & Akey, 2000). All data was entered and analyzed by this researcher to assure the anonymity of the responses. No other individuals saw the raw data which remains inaccessible to others. The qualitative data was analyzed using coding and a thematic approach (Creswell, 2005).

Reliability

The internal consistency estimate of reliability for Bennett and Robinson's organizational deviance scale was .81 (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). The reliability estimate for this study's utilization of the scale was .7495, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Participant Demographics

The majority of respondents worked for a general medical and surgical hospital. Ninety-one, 63.6%, of the 143 total study participants reported such employment, followed by nursing care facilities, 8.4%; home health care agencies, 6.3%; outpatient care centers, 4.2%; physicians' offices, 4.2%; a public health agency, .7%; and/or a school, college, or university, .7%. Fifteen nurses, 10.5%, reported working for various other employers such as mental health treatment facilities, urgent care centers and other specialized medical service providers. Two respondents did not report an organizational type.

Survey respondents were predominately females, 128 or 89.5%. Fourteen, 9.8%, of the participants were male. One respondent did not report a gender. Age was categorized and reported utilizing four ranges: less than 20 years of age (none), 21 to 40 years, 23.8%; 41 to 57,

54.5%; and over 57, 21%. One respondent did not report his or her age. The average nursing experience was 20.3 years. Five nurses did not report their years of experience.

Supervisory Abuse's Influence on Performance and Behavioral Characteristics

Almost one half, 46.6%, of the nurses participating in this study reported experiencing supervisory abuse. More than 40% reported that the abuse occurred within the past year with 21.7% reporting the abuse as “currently occurring” and 19.6% reporting the abuse “occurred within the past year” as indicated in table 6 on the following page.

Of that total, 102, 21.7%, of the participants reported that they reacted with one or more of the 12 behaviors included in the deviant workplace scale utilized. The other 41 of the 143 respondents reported their performance was negatively influenced but in ways other than by the 12-items utilized by the scale. The results of the screening questionnaire are presented below:

Table 5

Frequency of Supervisory Abuse

Screening questions	Number	%
1. “Yes” relationship negatively impacted performance	143	36.6%
2. “Yes” but relationship did not negatively impact performance	39	10.0%
3. “No” have not worked for an abusive supervisor	209	53.4%
Total Respondents	391	

The comparative significance of the reported frequency of abusive supervision was unknown as the literature review discovered no similar studies. A nursing literature review found studies on verbal abuse but none on abusive supervision.

Abusive supervision's influence on performance-related behaviors. As mentioned previously, the characteristics of behaviors influenced by abusive supervision were measured utilizing the

deviant workplace behavior scale (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). The behaviors in the scale, listed in order of the presentation on the questionnaire, included: (1) spent too much time fantasizing or day-dreaming instead of working, (2) littered the work environment, (3) falsified a receipt to get reimbursed for more money than they spent on business expenses, (4) took an additional or longer break than is acceptable in their workplace, (5) came in to work late without permission, (6) intentionally worked slower than they could have worked, (7) discussed confidential company information with an unauthorized person, (8) put little effort into work, (9) dragged out work in order to get overtime, (10) neglected to follow a supervisor's instructions, (11) used an illegal drug or consumed alcohol on the job, and (12) took property without permission.

Time frame occurrence. This study also asked participants to provide the time frame of their experience with abusive supervision. Time frame occurrence refers to the period of time in which the abusive supervision occurred. If participants worked for more than one abusive supervisor, they were directed to report the experience they best remembered.

Respondents were given four options, ranging from the abuse “currently occurring” to the abuse having “occurred more than five years ago.” This table shows the distribution of those responses:

Table 6

Supervisory Abuse Occurrence Time Frames

Time frame	Number of respondents	% Distribution
Currently Occurring	31	21.7%
Occurred in past year	28	19.6%

Time frame	Number of respondents	% Distribution
Occurred more than 1 year but less than 5 years ago	48	33.6%
Occurred more than 5 years ago	33	23.1%
Not reporting time frame	3	2.1%

Rankings of behaviors. The following table displays the rankings of the reported behaviors:

Table 7

Rankings of Behaviors by Number and Percentage of Respondents

Rank	Behavior	Respondents	% of total
1	Taking longer breaks	75	73.5%
2	Neglecting to follow supervisor's instructions	72	70.6%
3	Fantasizing or daydreaming	60	58.8%
4	Intentionally working slower	57	55.9%
5	Putting little effort into work	56	54.9%
6	Being late for work	42	41.2%
7	Discussing confidential information	35	34.3%
8	Dragging out work to get overtime	32	31.4%
9	Taking property without permission	30	29.4%
10	Littering workplace	22	21.6%
11	Falsifying receipt for reimbursement	6	5.9%
12	Using illegal substance on job	4	3.9%

Rankings based on occurrence frequencies. Each of the 12 behaviors in the scale had frequency options so participants could report the frequencies of the behaviors. The options ranged from “daily” as the most frequent to “never” as the least frequent.

For data analysis purposes, each of the options was later assigned a numerical value ranging from “6” being the highest for a “daily” occurrence of the behavior and “0” being the lowest when the behavior “never” occurred. The in-between scores included “2.0” if the behavior occurred “twice yearly,” “3.0” indicating “several times yearly,” “4.0” for “monthly,” and a score of “5.0” for “weekly.” The following table presents the means of the frequencies ranked in order of frequency in each behavioral category.

Table 8

Ranked Behaviors Based Upon Means of Frequencies

Rank	Behavior	Frequency means	Corresponding category
1	Using illegal substance on job	4.5	Monthly
2	Fantasizing or daydreaming	3.9	Several Times Yearly
3	Littering workplace	3.7	Several Times Yearly
4	Intentionally working slower	3.6	Several Times Yearly
5	Taking longer breaks	3.5	Several Times Yearly
6	Putting little effort into work	3.2	Several Times Yearly
7	Not following supervisor’s instructions	3.1	Several Times Yearly
8	Discussing confidential information	3.0	Several Times Yearly
9	Taking property without permission	3.0	Several Times Yearly

Rank	Behavior	Frequency means	Corresponding category
10	Dragging out work to get overtime	2.9	Twice Yearly
11	Being late for work	2.8	Twice Yearly
12	Falsifying receipt for reimbursement	.7	Less Than Yearly

Only four nurses reported using an illegal substance or drinking alcohol on the job but with considerable frequency, resulting in a higher mean.

The following histograms demonstrate the frequency distribution among the top six reported behaviors as presented in table 8. The figures at the bottom of the histograms are the numerical ratings of the frequency occurrence categories. For example, “3.0” refers to an occurrence of “several times yearly.” The figures to the left of the histograms are the number of participants reporting the particular behavior.

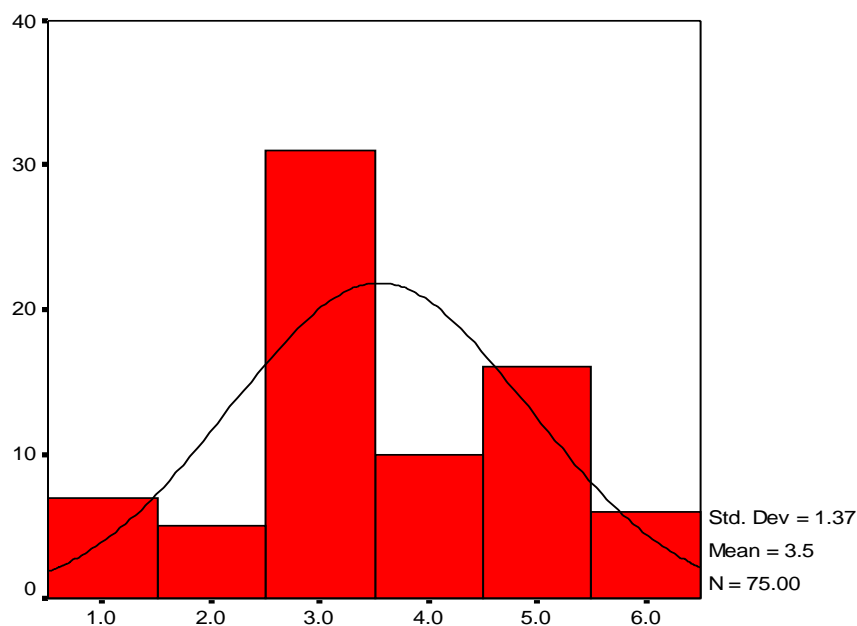


Figure 7. Ranked #1--Taking longer breaks than is acceptable.

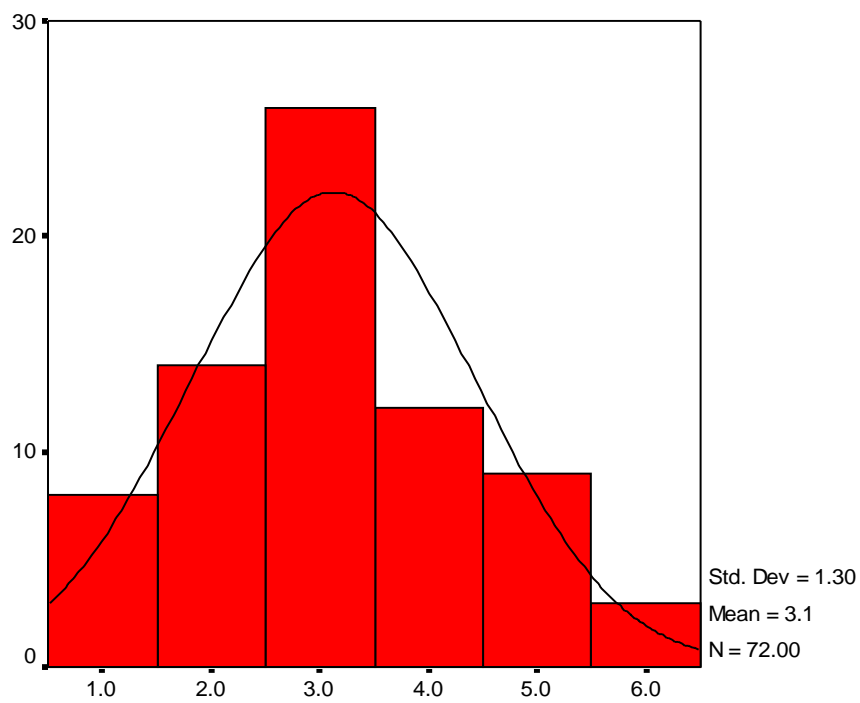


Figure 8. Ranked #2—Neglecting to follow the supervisor's instructions.

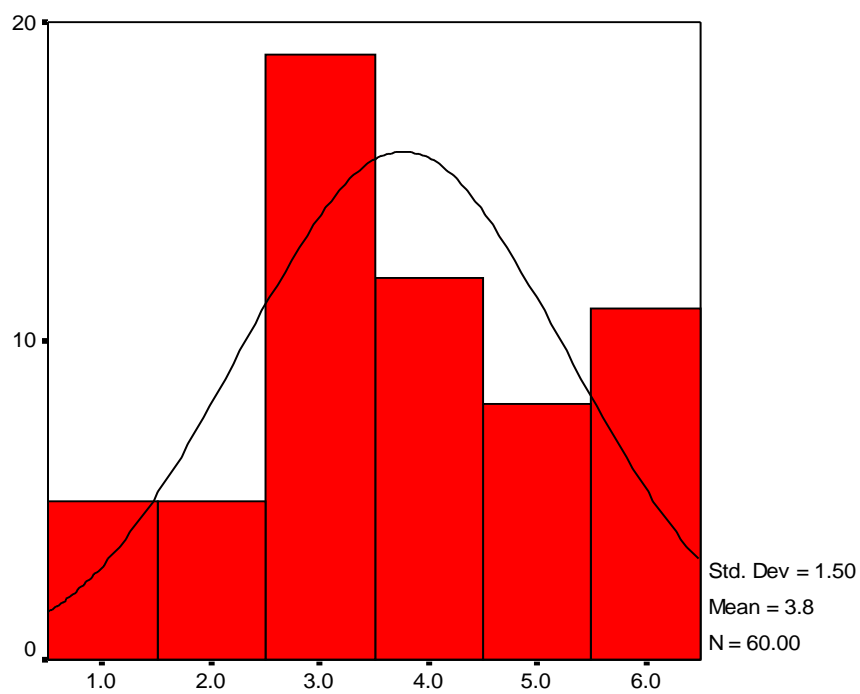


Figure 9. Ranked #3--Spending too much time fantasizing and daydreaming.

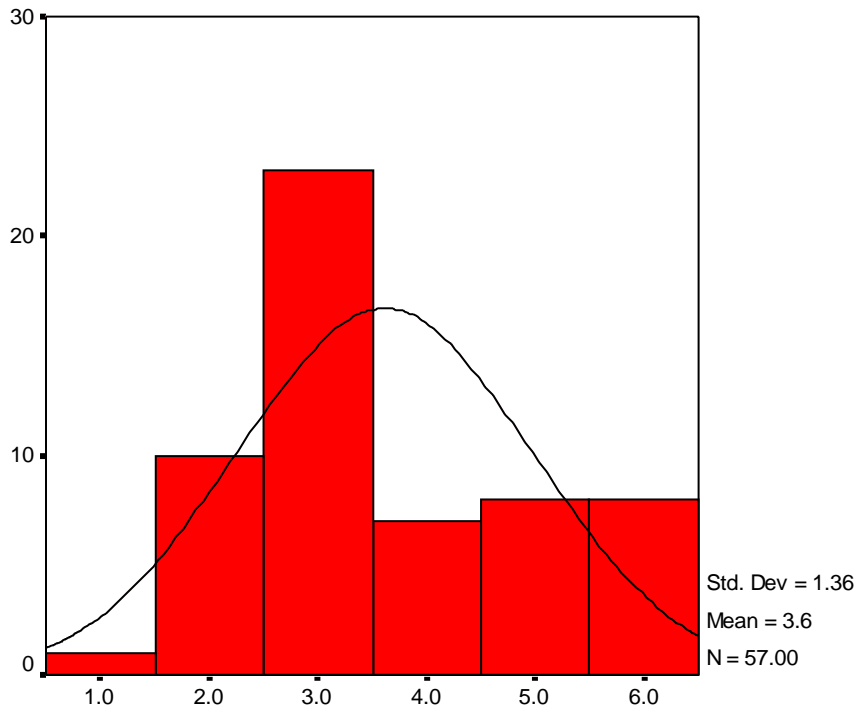


Figure 10. Ranked #4--Intentionally working slower.

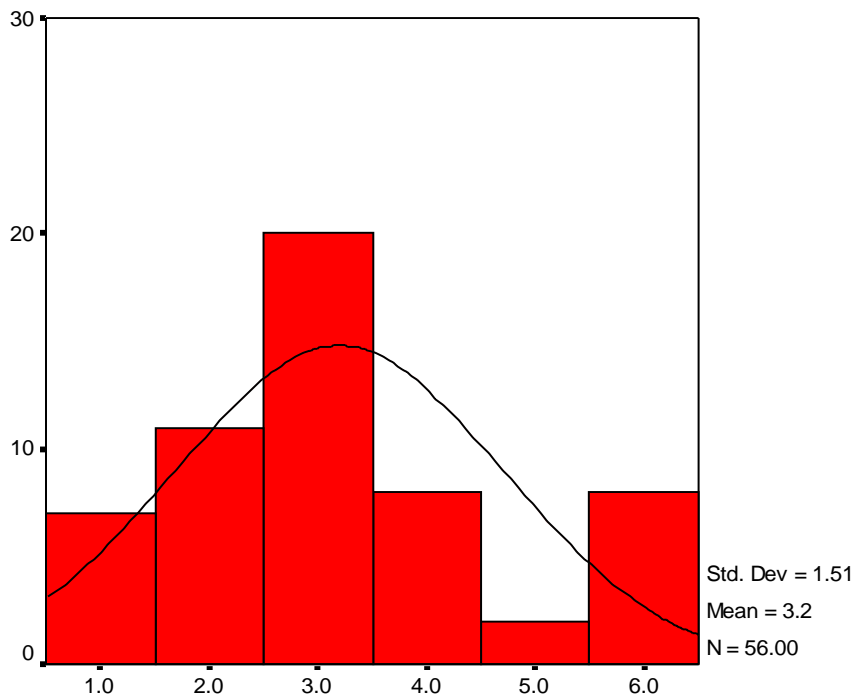


Figure 11. Ranked #5--Putting little effort into work.

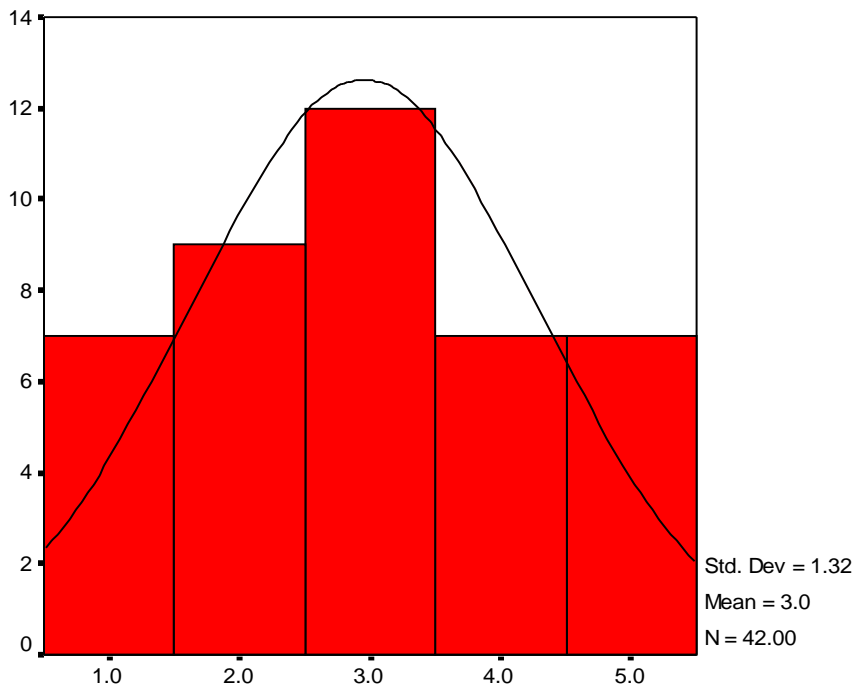


Figure 12. Ranked #6—Being late for work

Relationship

While this was a descriptive study, some of the data was analyzed for relationship using the Pearson product-moment correlation between two variables (Green, Salkind & Akey, 2000).

Correlations were calculated on the six most frequent behaviors and one demographic variable, years in nursing. The years in nursing was the only variable reported as an integral.

Correlational analysis can only be utilized with integral data.

Prior to conducting the correlational analysis, it was determined that each of the behavioral variables had normal distributions. All standard deviations were less than 2.0. For behavioral sciences, correlational coefficients of .10, .30, and .50, are typically interpreted as small, medium and large coefficients, respectively (Green, Salkind, & Akey, 2000).

The correlation analysis presented in table 9. shows that three out of six correlations between the behaviors and years had a small relationship, greater than .10 but less than .30. These were

negative relationships indicating that when nurses' years of service increased, the three behaviors, fantasizing, taking longer breaks and being late for work, declined . The other three behaviors listed below had coefficients of less .10.

Table 9.

The Bi-variate Correlations Among Behaviors and Years of Nursing

	Fantasizing	Longer breaks	Late for work	Intentionally worked slower	Little effort in work	Failed to follow Instructions
Years of Service	-.203*	-.141	-.104	.021	.034	-.089

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Other Performance-Related Behaviors

All respondents were provided an option of reporting other performance-related behavioral reactions to abusive supervision. The objective was to determine if the 12-items in the scale were inclusive of all behaviors and, if not, to identify those behaviors for this research. A coding and thematic approach was utilized to scan the data and evaluate the descriptions for common meanings or themes (Creswell, 2003). Because of an Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirement to protect participant anonymity, specific participant comments cannot be used in this or any report. The IRB was concerned that participation in this study might expose participants to employer retaliations. As a result, participant information will be summarized in categorical themes without the usual direct quotations typically utilized in qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2005).

Additional reported behaviors. One hundred and twelve of the 143 survey participants responded to the open-ended question, many describing reactions not contained in the 12-items in the deviant workplace scale. However, most reactions reported by participants were not behaviors directly related to performance. They will be discussed later in this chapter.

However, one additional reaction emerged from the data analysis. In coding the data, re-occurring similar data emerged with twenty, 17.8%, of the nurses using similar phrases or wording concerning a reaction. These descriptions included “avoidance,” “withdrawal,” “less belonging,” “discouraged,” and “less caring.” The word “avoidance” was used most frequently. When aggregated, they formed a major idea or theme (Creswell, 2005). Blase and Blase (2003) reported similar reactions among teachers experiencing abuse from principals. Otherwise, this behavioral description was not found by this study’s literature search.

In searching for a construct or theory to aid in the understanding of this theme, Kahn’s (1990) theory of personal engagement offers both. Kahn described engaged workers as those who place themselves fully into their task performance and are cognitively vigilant and emphatically connected to others. They freely display what they think and feel, expressing their creativity, their beliefs and values and their personal connections to others. On the other hand, Kahn described disengagement as uncoupling themselves from the role, displaying evacuation or suppression in expression and energy. He suggests that the psychological conditions essential for engagement include: (a) meaningfulness (feeling worthwhile and valued), (b) safety (perceived trustworthy, secure and predictable situations), and (c) availability (having physical, intellectual and emotional energies). Kahn’s conclusions are consistent with Maslow’s (1970) assertion that personal need levels are hierarchical with progression occurring only when lower-level needs are satisfied. Maslow placed self-actualization, where learning occurs, at a higher level than safety and security.

As the following section demonstrates, nurses repeatedly reported conditions the opposite of those described by Kahn (1990), especially lack of psychological safety. One might argue with some credibility that disengagement is a state of mind and an antecedent to certain performance-

related behaviors such as fantasizing and daydreaming, working slower and putting little effort into work. But the most common underpinning description, “avoidance,” does not apply to all of those behaviors. Disengagement will be mentioned as a topic for additional research in chapter five.

Non-performance related behaviors. While non-performance related behaviors are not a topic of this study, summarized descriptions are included to provide a full representation of the views of the nurses in this study. However, the data reported below does not convey the numerous comments from nurses about the humiliation and degradation they experienced working for abusive supervisors. A lack of consideration and respect for human dignity best summarize their experiences.

Leading the list of the most commonly reported reactions to abuse was departure. Forty 40, 35.7%, of the reporting nurses either resigned, expressed their intent to resign or transferred to another department as a result of the supervisory abuse. Five of the 40 stated they left the nursing professional because of the abuse. This data is consistent with the findings of Tepper (2000) in his study of midwestern workers who expressed greater intentions to resign in abusive supervisory situations.

The second most frequent personal consequence of supervisory abuse was psychological distress. Many of the nurses reported anxiety and stress to the point of needing counseling and medication. Several reported dreading going to work. Others reported lowered self-esteem and less self-confidence in their work. Twenty three, 20.5%, reported these consequences. Personal consequences of abusive supervision is the most researched topic with findings similar to those just reported (Ashforth, 1994; Blase & Blase, 2003; Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Hornstein, 1996; Tepper, 2000).

Nine, 8.0%, of the participants reported they volunteered less, helped out less when not required to, did only what they had to do, and generally reduced their teamwork efforts. These behaviors were categorized as organizational citizenship behaviors. Previous research discovered that engaging in fewer citizenship behaviors were reactions to abusive supervision (Tepper et al., 2002). As mentioned earlier, organizational citizenship behaviors are extra-role activities not generally formally required by the job role but important to the success of organizations (Organ et al., 2006).

The fourth most prevalent reported behavior was retaliation. Eight, 10.8%, reported initiating union activities, vandalizing, criticizing the supervisor in front of co-workers, and not reporting important information to the supervisor. Researchers have found retaliation can be a reaction to feelings of injustice, especially injustice in interpersonal relations (Skarlicki & Folger, 2004).

Other less prevalent reactions reported included lost time due to absenteeism and telling coworkers about the abuse, 5.4%; anger directed toward the supervisor, 5.4%; reduced patient care, 1.4%; and mistakes, 1.4%.

Summary of Results and Analysis

Exploring abusive supervision's influence on performance was the objective of this study. The intended result was a better understanding of that influence. This study adds to that understanding.

The data demonstrates that abusive supervision results in a myriad of behaviors which diminish performance. The most-commonly reported behaviors were productivity related. The data also revealed that subordinates of abusive supervisors commonly neglected to follow the instructions of their supervisors, thus reducing organizational control.

The open-ended question discovered a possible 13th deviant behavior, most commonly characterized by the avoidance type of behaviors. Lastly, this study discovered many of the same behaviors and personal consequences that other researchers have found.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the study's findings and implications. The discussion also includes recommendations related to those findings. Among the recommendations will be a comprehensive methodology to respond to concerns about abusive supervision. I also will address the study's limitations and make recommendations for further research. Implications and recommendations will be framed in the context of maintaining a healthy organizational culture which provides a work setting conducive to performance and performance improvement.

Summary

This study found that 46.6% of its participants experienced supervisory abuse with 36.6% of the participants reporting negative influences on performance. Up to 73.5% of those reporting negative influences engaged in behaviors reducing productivity. The study's purpose was to answer two research questions: (1) How did supervisory abuse influence performance-related behavior? (2) What were the characteristics of that behavior? The literature search conducted on this topic found little research. The study population was Florida licensed registered nurses in a South Florida county. The deviant workplace behavior scale (Bennett & Robinson, 2000) was utilized.

This study provided data which answered both research questions. First, supervisory abuse resulted in deviant workplace behaviors. Six out of 12 of the reported behaviors had characteristics that could be significantly harmful to productivity and to organizational control. Additional data suggested that another reaction to abusive supervision, disengagement, may exist in addition to the 12 included in the scale.

Supervisory abuse is a subordinate's perception of the extent to which supervisors engage in the display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact (Tepper, 2000). Deviant workplace behavior is voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in doing so, threatens the well-being of the organization (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Healthy organizational cultures are best characterized as "successful, human institutions" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 7).

Implications

This study's findings indicated that supervisory abuse may interfere with HRD's core objectives, performance and performance improvement. Organizational control may also be diminished. The discussion will first address performance and performance improvement and then organizational control.

Performance and performance improvement. HRD practitioners may be significantly impaired in their ability to influence performance and performance improvement if abusive supervision exists. This study's findings suggested that abusive supervisors may create a climate in which performance was intentionally diminished by subordinates. As mentioned earlier, 36.6% of the respondents reported their performance was negatively influenced by abusive supervision. Five out of the six most frequent behaviors related to intentionally-reduced productivity.

Performance improvement may not be possible in an abusive supervisory climate. The focus of abused subordinates may be on retaliation (Skarlicki & Folger, 2004) or self-preservation (Maslow, 1970) as they struggle to deal with feelings of injustice rather than on training, learning and performance improvement. Study participants indicated that the workplace climate was negative if not outright hostile. A conducive workplace climate is critical to effective HRD

interventions (Knowles et al., 2005) and other opportunities for learning and improving performance such as informal and incidental learning (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). The climate and the underlying emotions may present major, if not impossible, hurdles for HRD to overcome in its performance improvement initiatives. Knowles et al. write:

...climate setting is probably the most crucial element in the whole process of HRD. If the climate is not really conducive to learning, if it doesn't convey that an organization values human beings as its most valuable asset and their development its most productive investment, then all the other elements in the process are jeopardized. There isn't much likelihood of having a first-rate program of educational activities in an environment that is not supportive of education. (p. 122)

Even if an abused subordinate participates in training, the climate may negatively influence the implementation through diminished transfer of the training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988) due to the perceived lack of support of the supervisor (Yamhill & McLean, 2005). The influence of the supervisors in training transfer has been widely supported by research although some studies yielded mixed results.

The study's findings may be particularly troublesome to informal and incidental learning (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). About 10% of the participants in this study reported that they avoided the supervisor. This finding is consistent with that of Ashforth (1997) who reported alienation between subordinates and tyrannical supervisors. Even if the supervisory-subordinate contact does occur, it may be characterized by defensiveness and subordinate stress, not the openness and willingness to acquire and implement new knowledge about which Knowles et al. (2005) write.

The supervisor may even be unable to identify the education and training needs of subordinates because of their alienation and fear of vulnerability in acknowledging areas in which knowledge and skills may need to be improved. In addition, even if the supervisor requires training, the subordinate may retaliate (Skarlicki & Folger, 2005) either failing to implement the training or only implementing it while being monitored by the supervisor. A mitigating factor may be the individual's conscientiousness (Tepper et al., 2001).

Organizational Control. Non-compliance with supervisory instructions was another finding of this study. This may result in a diminished level of organizational control. Organizational control is essential in order to align inputs, human effort, with outputs, the product or service (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Organizational control is especially critical to organizations such as hospitals where procedures and protocols are important to positive outcomes. As noted earlier in this report, professional nursing care is a primary component of quality patient care, including influencing patient outcomes (Tourangeau et al., 2003). Overall, 70.7% of this study's respondents reported neglecting to follow the instructions of their abusive supervisors. Diminished patient care may not have resulted due to the professional requirements of nursing and the conscientiousness of the nurse. However, the lack of compliance with supervisory instructions may extract the supervisor from the patient-care equation, thus removing the organization's influence from that equation.

As was mentioned earlier, supervisors are a key component of the organizational management system, achieving desired organizational and subunit outcomes through utilization of front-line employees. Supervisors are the ones who hold employees accountable (Chruden & Sherman, 1984). The non-compliance reaction to abusive supervisors may extend to employees

who are not targets of their supervisors but may have witnessed the non-compliance or learned out it from the targeted employee or others (Hornstein, 1996).

Conclusions

There should be considerable concern over the findings of this study which may indicate both a lack of enlightened management practices and the misalignment of current practices with current challenges. This study's data suggest several contradictions.

Enlightened management practices. This report included a review of classical organizational theory and the early efforts of reformers such as Chester Barnard (1938), Elton Mayo (1945), Rensis Likert (1967), Douglas McGregor (1960), Edgar Schein (1965) and Abraham Maslow (1970). They exposed the harsh treatment of workers by their bosses, the arbitrary decision making, the sole focus on economics, and the inadequacy of assumptions concerning human nature and behavior. Each, from their own perspective, argued that a better understanding of and consideration for the social and psychological needs of workers would improve performance and economic results. Contemporary organizational behavior theory eventually emerged incorporating human relations as a component of management considerations. The nursing profession, especially in acute care facilities, requires hard physical, emotional and intellectual work (Rowe, 2003). Nurses are expected to simultaneously provide empathetic care for many patients, including those who may be difficult, who have fearful families and whose doctors may be demanding. Some patients are dying. Some may never regain the life they had before their illness. With every pin prick, nurses face the threat of AIDS. New strains of antibiotic-resistant microorganisms have appeared that expose nurses to difficult-to-treat tuberculosis, hepatitis and pneumonia (Rowe). Besides the usual consideration of human needs afforded by contemporary

management, these workplace conditions seem to warrant special support and consideration for the workers. But the study's findings may indicate otherwise.

The nursing shortage. While a nursing shortage exists within the county in which this study was conducted, this study indicates supervisory abuse created turnover. Thirty-eight, 33.4%, of the 112 nurses responding to the open-ended question reported they resigned or expressed their intent to resign because of the abuse. This trend appears inconsistent with resolving the major nursing shortage problem health care faces.

Medical errors. The health care industry has been under pressure to reduce medical errors which claimed about 98,000 lives in 2006 and would rank sixth among the most common causes of death if included on the Center for Disease Control's annual list of leading killers in the United States (Kumar & Steinebach, 2008). Yet, this study's participants reported stress, anxiety, lower self confidence, anger, personal disengagement and lower compliance with instructions due to negative relationships with a supervisor. All may contribute to more mistakes, not less. This study's findings appear contradictory to efforts to reduce medical errors.

Granted, the above statements are generalizations regarding health care providers in the county in which the study was conducted. Some may provide carefully-screened, well-trained, competent and caring supervisors for their nursing staffs. However, the fact that 182 out of 391 participants reported experiencing supervisory abuse warrants an evaluation or re-evaluation on the scale suggested in this report to determine if abuse exists and, if so, where and to what extent.

Recommendations

Responding to supervisory abuse may be as simple as reminding well-selected, conscientious, and well-trained supervisors that they are expected to be caring, supportive and respectful of their subordinates. Or the response may involve removing supervisors without the

essential attributes or desire to be effective supervisors. This discussion suggests a seven-element intervention for supervisory abuse with a multi-disciplinary approach.

A Collaborative, Evidence-Based Approach

The approach was grounded upon: (1) a more eclectic role for HRD (Gilley, Quatro & Lynham, 2003; Swanson & Holton, 2001; Yorks, 2005), (2) the influence of organizational culture and managerial assumptions on workplace behavior (Likert, 1967; McGregor, 1960; Schein, 1965), (3) the impact of personal mental disorders (Davison & Neal, 1986; Zimbardo et., 2003) and inappropriate moral maturity (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977), and (4) the systems-view and approach to organizational improvement initiatives (Rummler & Brache, 1995). These topics and research findings were discussed in detail in chapter 2.

The systems-view approach by Rummler & Brache's nine-variable performance improvement model is suggested for a systems-view analysis of supervisory abuse.

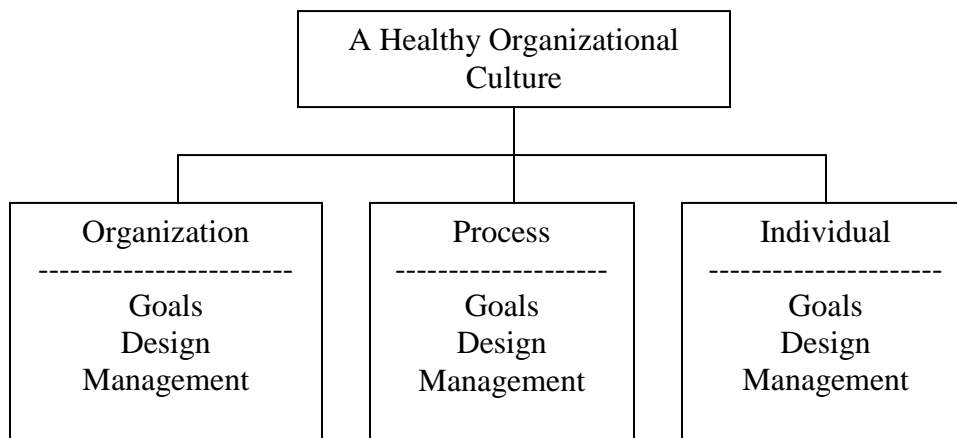


Figure 13. A systems-view approach to organizational review for abusive supervision

The proposed use of Rummler & Brache's framework will be discussed in more detail in elements three and five of the proposed response.

First, obtaining management's attention. Obtaining management's attention for supervisory abuse may be among the HRD's greatest challenges. What may be obvious to HRD practitioners

who may have a more objective, educated perspective may not be so obvious to management. At times, management's eyes are only opened by a unionization effort, common when employees are not treated with dignity (Hobson, 2001). Most likely, HRD probably will only obtain senior management's attention with evidence that abusive supervision is diminishing performance, thus preventing the organization from being as financially successful as possible.

With the findings of this study, research has associated supervisory abuse with (1) intentional reduction of work effort, (2) greater absenteeism and tardiness, (3) higher turnover rates, (4) stress and anxiety requiring treatment, (5) family problems, (6) problem drinking, (7) less willingness to volunteer, and (8) failing to follow directions of supervisors (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Blase & Blase, 2003; Hornstein, 1996; Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2001; Tepper, 2008; Zellars et al., 2002). These behaviors will be hereinafter referred to as indicators of abusive supervision.

There is also data which provides an understanding of characteristics of abusive supervisors (Ashforth, 1997; Bies & Tripp, 1998; Blase & Blase, 2003; Hornstein, 1996).

The inquiry into supervisory practices may illuminate the "dark side" of the organization. Supervisory abuse is described among "dark side" behaviors, defined as motivated behaviors that have negative consequences on an individual within the organization or the organization itself (Griffin & O'Leary-Kelly, 2004, p. 4).

Senior management may be aware of supervisory abuse and overlooked it in the past. Senior management's philosophy may be to focus on outcomes, not the details on how subordinate managers and supervisors function. Senior management's behavior may be abusive which is simply reflected in the supervisory conduct.

HRD, by discipline, may have the least threatening approach to supervisory abuse, focusing on awareness education, organizational costs, adverse personal impacts on employees, and detection and curtailment.

Second—HRD facilitates a multi-disciplinary response to supervisory abuse. Some HRD scholars and practitioners may suggest that resolving supervisory abuse issues is not HRD's function, arguing that it is the domain of human resource management (HRM), organizational developers, behavioralists or management. From an application viewpoint, there is no way to dichotomize between HRD, HRM and senior management. The lines are being blurred and blended (Yorks, 2005). Performance and performance improvement do not recognize arbitrary boundaries base upon skill sets. HRD, HRM, organizational development and senior management each have their own distinctive disciplines, but all have the same objective, organizational success. The roles and perspectives may be different, but are all important to resolving supervisory abuse as proposed herein.

Swanson and Holton's (2001) performance-based HRD suggests that HRD's role may range from meeting personal development needs of individuals to serving a variety of organizational needs involving everyone in the organization. This perspective is consistent with results-driven versus activity-driven HRD (Gilley, Quatro, & Lynham, 2003). Yorks (2005) argues that "root-cause analysis should identify the proper solution or interventions, some of which may nothing to do with training per se" (p. 128).

With this having been said, the elimination of supervisory abuse from an organization should be a collaborative partnership. HRD should be the facilitator as its practitioners have the greatest multi-disciplinary knowledge, especially in etiological analysis. HRD practitioners also may have been the least personally involved with supervisors, thus having the least bias.

The role of each is suggested as:

- (1) Senior management: (a) establishing and/or reaffirming the desired organizational culture, including the expected behaviors of supervisors regarding relationships with their subordinates, (b) communicating those objectives and expectations, (c) serving as an example of the espoused philosophies and the behaviors expected, and (d) providing oversight and general direction for the analyses, findings, intervention implementations, outcome measures and follow-up.
- (2) Human resource management: (a) providing information regarding trends and concerns indicated by employee complaints, grievances, absenteeism and tardiness trends, disciplinary actions, productivity problems, turnover rates, requests for transfers, and health and worker compensation insurance claims, (b) providing HRM's personal perspectives and insights, (c) representing the employee viewpoints, (d) assuring compliance with all regulations, statutes and laws, and (e) protecting employee identities and employees from retaliation.
- (3) Human resource development: (a) obtaining senior management's attention on the supervisory abuse issue, (b) educating senior management and HRM on the dynamics of abusive supervision, its characteristics and harmful effects to the organization, (c) collecting and interpreting the data, (d) presenting conclusions and intervention options and recommendations, (e) proposing the desired outcome measures, and measurement methods, (f) implementing the interventions for education and training, (g) collecting the post-intervention data, and (h) analyzing the results compared to the desired outcomes.
HRD practitioners may have helpful perspectives and insights acquired from training

needs analyses or from training sessions wherein they gained a sense of organizational or subunit culture.

Other disciplines may need to be added to the team such as: (a) a facilitator with HRD, HRM and organizational behavior expertise if it is determined that in-house expertise is not adequate or the desired degree of objectivity is not possible, (b) legal advice if the review findings indicate that a legally-protected group or individual were singled out for abuse by a supervisor, and/or (c) counseling interventions if the review uncovers psychological trauma among subordinates who need counseling or if the review discovers abusive supervisors with symptoms of mental disorders or inappropriate moral maturity.

In addition to the above comments, there are two additional recommendations related to this element. A key aspect of any planned intervention will be to first determine whose perspective will prevail in determining human relation expectations. Will it be management's perspective on how employees ought to be treated? Or will it be the employees' perspective on how they want to be treated? It is critical that there be alignment between the two, otherwise a fundamental misalignment within the organization will exist from the beginning.

It is strongly recommended that employees not be involved in the determination of whether or not supervisory abuse exists. Employees will have made known their feelings about their supervisors by their actions such as mentioned above in the HRM section. Involving employees in providing data may expose them to direct or proxy supervisory retaliation and reduce the review to one individual's word against another. The focus should be on the frequencies and patterns of the eight indicators of abuse.

Third—incorporating the systems view. The systems view needs to be embedded in the approach so all aspects are considered at every level of consideration. Abuse also may exist in

what is not done, such as lack of recognition. Abuse may exist in unfair work schedules and assignments, job descriptions, work processes and workloads, equipment and materials, training, the way coworkers are allowed to treat each other, leave requests, and supervisory avoidance. The systems viewpoint will identify abuses not readily apparent. Supervisors, while viewed as abusive by subordinates, may be simply implementing elements of abusive systems or processes within those systems. Abuse may be a component of the system.

Fourth--conducting the pre-analysis. Assuming the effort to obtain management's attention as to the possibility of abuse, the next question will be, does supervisory abuse actually exist. Complaints, accusations and rumors may unto themselves be misleading and offer inadequate evidence to warrant the level of analysis being suggested. This is not intended to suggest that subordinate abuse complaints not be taken seriously, but they may be motivated by other factors such as retaliation for a poor performance review, properly administered disciplinary action for a legitimate reason, being passed over for a promotion, or union-urged actions. Thus, the pre-analysis should focus on the existence and trends of the eight indicators of abuse mentioned earlier, the results of which should serve as the threshold for further review. A thorough review should not advance without evidence, thus supervisors will not become unjustly accused.

Fifth—collection and analyzing the data collection. Assuming the pre-analysis provides evidence of supervisory abuse, Rummler and Brache (1995) provide a systems-view framework for HRD's collection and analysis of the supervisory abuse data at all levels and in all directions. "Before we can effectively analyze the human dimension of performance, we need to establish a macro-level context" (p. 20). Since the ultimate goal of interventions regarding supervisory abuse is performance improvement, Rummler and Brache's model of the nine performance variables provides an appropriate template for inquiry and analysis, modified to specifically

inquire about the health of the organizational culture related to supervisory practices. The Rummler and Brache model would be modified to provide a framework for the supervisory abuse inquiry with the model, assuring the systems view. The model provides for a two-component inquiry methodology, including three levels of performance and three levels of performance needs. These questions are suggested at each of the levels:

Table 10

Questions at Each Level of Rummler and Brache's Model Related to Human Systems

Organizational goals	Organizational design	Organizational management
Do the goals embrace the core value of providing a healthy organizational culture?	Does the organizational design embrace a core value of providing a healthy organizational culture?	Do management practices embrace a core value of providing a healthy organizational culture?
Do the goals include a commitment that workers be provided a healthy organizational culture?	Does the organizational design incorporate a commitment that workers be provided a healthy organizational culture?	Do management practices incorporate a commitment that workers be provided a healthy organizational culture?
Does that commitment exist throughout all levels of the organization?	Does that commitment exist by design throughout all levels of the organization?	Does that commitment exist by practice throughout all levels of the organization?
Are those goals communicated to all in the organization?	Is that design communicated to all in the organization?	Is that commitment communicated to all in the organization?
Process goals	Process design	Process management
Do the process goals include a commitment that workers be provided a healthy culture?	Does the process design include the commitment for a healthy culture?	Does the process management include the commitment to provide a healthy culture?
Job/Performer goals	Job design	Job/performer management
Do the goals for the job incorporate an assurance to maintain a healthy culture?	Does the design of the various jobs assure providing a healthy culture?	Do job assignments, training, feedback and incentive activities assure a healthy culture?

The questions suggested above are very broad. It is assumed that the collaborative team will be asking very specific underlying questions, first related to the findings of the review related to the indicators of the abuse and, second the causation of the abuse. The indicators have already been discussed. Related to causation, questions might include: (1) the existence of an accountability system to assure power given supervisors is not being misused, (2) the validity of the criteria for appointments to supervisory positions, (3) the screening process for selecting supervisors, (4) the orientation, training and mentoring of new supervisors, (5) the updating and enhancement of knowledge and skills of experienced supervisors, (6) the supervision of supervisors, and (7) the treatment of supervisors themselves by their supervisors related to assuring they too have a healthy organizational culture within which to work.

Once this analysis is completed, the team may have specific insights as to the impacts and cause of abusive supervision. In addition to identifying supervisors of concern, a broad array of issues may need to be addressed.

Sixth—implementing interventions. Implementing interventions could be very unlike the typical HRD intervention, training to eliminate a gap in knowledge and/or skills. The interventions could be uni-dimensional or multi-dimensional depending upon the findings of the analysis. Interventions might be restricted to just creating awareness and training for supervisors who unintentionally were abusive. Or interventions might include removal of intentionally abusive supervisors, obtaining counseling for subordinates or reparations for unfair treatment of those subordinates such as undeserved poor performance reviews which resulted in lower pay increases, an undeserved demotion, being passed over for a promotion, and other implications.

Interventions may also involve organization-wide announcements by senior management regarding the review findings with a possible apology for past oversights and a commitment to improve.

In conclusion, the review may find that the organization needs major macro-level revisions such as major changes in the organizational culture.

Seventh—post-intervention follow-up. As will be the case in interventions, the post-intervention follow-up may be an anomaly to typical HRD activities which should continue to work closely with HRM and senior management. As noted earlier, decisions need to be made before the interventions begin as to desired outcomes. Those will be important for guidance. There will be no beginning or end for the post-intervention follow up. Focus needs to be at both the macro and micro levels, viewing trends and characteristics of the eight indicators mentioned earlier as well as any other indicators discovered during the review.

Limitations

This study has four limitations. First, the perception of abuse by a subordinate is based upon a subjective assessment (Tepper, 2000), both from the standpoint of context in the case of the same subordinate or the evaluation of the same behavior by different subordinates. Therefore, one nurse could have viewed a supervisor's behavior as abusive while another may not have.

Secondly, this study's findings are limited to responding nurses in a South Florida county. Its generalizability is limited to nurses in that county.

Thirdly, self-report instruments are not without criticism. Respondents may under report their deviant behaviors because of fear of being punished or caught (Lee, 1993) or for ego-protective or ego-enhancing biases (Spector, 1994). However, the anonymous nature of the survey may diminish the fear of being caught (Neuman, 2000).

Fourth, due to the Institutional Review Board's requirement of anonymity, there have been no strategies undertaken to assure authenticity and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the qualitative data such as member checking or triangulation. The quantitative data is also without an independent party verification to assure anonymity.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are a number of areas in which future research is needed on supervisory abuse. This study is apparently the first of its kind to explore specific performance-related behaviors resulting from supervisory abuse. Thus, replication of this study is a future research need. There also are a number of additional areas in which research attention is needed:

Obtaining senior management's attention. As previously suggested, senior management's involvement in preventing and resolving supervisory abuse is important. The literature search for this study found no studies related to how to impress upon senior management the importance of monitoring and responding to abusive supervision. This study found a number of reactions to supervisory abuse that may reduce organizational effectiveness. Other studies have discovered the same reactions and others. Future topics of study could address the financial costs and other risks such as a diminished ability to react to competitive threats.

Personal reactions and performance. Several researchers have identified personal reactions to supervisory abuse such as aggression toward the supervisor (Day & Hamblin, 1964), poor job attitude (Tepper, 2000), problem drinking (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006), and lower self esteem (Burton & Hoobler, 2006). Participants in this study reported similar personal reactions, including the need for counseling and medications because of those reactions. However, there appears to be no research to provide an understanding of the specific implications of personal reactions on performance, if any.

Trends in other professions, occupations and locations. This study only addressed license registered nurses in a South Florida location. Do those in other professions and occupations have similar reactions to abuse? Would similar or different reactions be found in a different geographic location such as a different region of the United States or another country? These are possible research topics.

Gender and abusive supervision. The vast majority of those in this study were female. Would study results be different if male participants were more proportionate to the female participation?

Supervisory abuse trends in organizations. Organizational antecedents to supervisory abuse have been the subject of limited research with mixed results. Ashforth (1997) examined organizations with bureaucratic styles and theory-X oriented managers but found no relationship to managerial petty tyranny. However, Ayree et al. (2007) found that authoritarian leadership may influence the perception of abusive supervision. Future research might further examine leadership styles as well as other organizational characteristics such as culture, senior management behaviors, supervisory hiring, orientation, and training, including the impact of the existence or absence of a human relations component in management and supervisory training. Research might also investigate if supervisory abuse varies among certain types of industries.

Disengagement and abusive supervision. This study reported data that suggested personal disengagement as a possible reaction to supervisory abuse. As questioned earlier, are engagement and disengagement underlying emotions from which behavior emerges or are they behaviors themselves? Can individual disengagement exist as a construct with no behavioral expression?

Integrated theory. Tepper (2007), the predominate researcher in abusive supervisor and whose definition of supervisory abuse and research are utilized throughout this report, characterizes the research stream on supervisory abuse as more phenomenon driven than theory driven. “The problem is that there is little in the way of integrated theory underlying these works” (p. 285) with the resulting danger that research findings will not particularly be useful from a practical perspective as the literature grows and becomes unwieldy. Additional research might identify the theoretical underpinnings of supervisory abuse.

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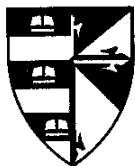
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Appendix A



Barry University

12381 South Cleveland Ave., Suite 502
Fort Myers, FL 33907

Date

First Name Last Name, RN
First Address Second Address
City, FL Zip

Dear Nurse Last Name:

A few days from now you will receive by mail a request to fill out a brief anonymous questionnaire for an important research project. The study examines the negative influence of supervisory abuse on the individual performance of licensed registered nurses in Lee County. You were selected to be in our sample from the State of Florida public licensing records. *Should you choose to participate, there will be no means to personally identify information you provide on the questionnaire.*

I am writing to you in advance because people usually like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. This study's objective is to help organizations better understand the negative influence abusive supervision may have on performance. Registered nurses were selected because of their critical importance to quality health care, the nursing shortage and the need to examine any workplace condition which may result in lower performance. Lee County was selected because of its high population growth and older population.

This research is under the auspices of Barry University of Miami. Barry offers programs in Fort Myers including a human resource development program in which I am a Ph.D. candidate. The survey is strictly voluntary. Additional details about participation will be provided when the questionnaire is mailed to you in a few days.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. When I send the questionnaire, you will be provided details concerning abusive supervision, performance-related reactions and additional details regarding participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Brad Estes



Appendix B

Barry University

12381 South Cleveland Ave., Suite 502

Fort Myers, FL 33907

Date

First Name Last Name, RN
 First Address Second Address
 City, FL Zip

Dear Nurse Last Name:

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is “Abusive Supervision and Its Impact on Performance.” The research is being conducted by Brad Estes, a student in the Adrian Dominican School of Education, Human Resource Development Department, at Barry University, Fort Myers, Florida. This researcher is seeking information that may be useful in the field of human resource development. The aim of this research is to increase the understanding of the influence of supervisory mistreatment on subordinate performance. In accordance with this aim, the following procedure will be used: an anonymous questionnaire with approximately 365 participants in the study.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following: complete a four-page, truly anonymous questionnaire, which should only take a few minutes (5-15), and return the questionnaire by United States Postal Service mail. Because of the sensitivity of the information you will provide, please do not include your name or return address on the return envelope provided. By returning the questionnaire, you are consenting to participate in this study. Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate there will be no adverse effects on your employment or in any other way. There are no known risks to you for participating in this study. Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation in this study may help our understanding of the influence of abusive supervision on subordinate performance. No names or other identifiers will be collected on the questionnaire. There will be no means to identify information provided on the questionnaire to a particular study participant. Any published results of the research will refer to group averages only. No names will be used in this study. Questionnaires will be kept locked in this researcher’s office for five years after which they will be destroyed.

As mentioned in my earlier letter, registered nurses were selected for this study because of their critical importance to quality health care, the nursing shortage and the need to examine any workplace condition which may result in lower performance. Lee County was selected because of its high population growth and the greater health care needs of Lee County’s older population. You were randomly selected to be in our sample from public licensing records.

Thank you for helping with this study. Should you have questions or comments, I will welcome a telephone call at 239 564-4089 or you may contact my supervisor, Dr. David M. Kopp, at 305 899-3708, or the Barry University Institutional Review Board contact, Ms. Nildy Polanco, at 305 899-3020. If you contact me, please identify yourself by first name only to assure anonymity if you plan to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Brad Estes

Appendix C

Questionnaire

Q1. Do you currently work for or have you worked for an abusive supervisor who has negatively impacted your job performance while employed as a registered nurse in ____ County?

But first, some information:

A supervisor is someone who, *acting on behalf of management, directs and controls what a subordinate does, including assuring that standards are being met and policies, procedures and regulations are being followed.* The term supervisor is meant in a generic sense. Supervision could be provided by a manager, director, physician, etc.

Supervisory abuse is defined as sustained hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors excluding physical contact. Abuse is a subjective judgment by the targeted subordinate who may have *feelings of unfairness and/or personal threat. Anger, fear and/or frustration may result.* Examples of abuse include favoritism, unreasonable demands, offensive personal conduct, public criticism, explosive behavior, lying, making threats, unfair evaluations, arbitrariness and harassment (from a national study of school teachers).

A negative impact on work performance means that your relationship with your supervisor is resulting in personal behaviors *that negatively impact the quality or quantity of your work.* Examples of negative impacts include intentionally not working as hard, not doing what your supervisor asks, or taking longer breaks without permission (from studies of a variety of professional, technical, and other types of jobs).

Q1. Answers. Please check the best answer below:

If "Yes"
Go To
Q2 On The
Next Page

- Yes, I currently work for or have worked for an abusive supervisor who has negatively impacted my job performance while employed as a registered nurse in ____ County.

If you responded "Yes" above, please go to question Q2

If "No"
please stop
and mail
the
question-
naire

- Yes, I currently work for or have worked for an abusive supervisor *but that experience does not/has not* negatively impacted my job performance while employed as a registered nurse in ____ County.

If you responded "Yes" above, please stop & mail this questionnaire

If "No"
please stop
and mail
the
question-
naire

- No, I currently *do not work and have not worked for an abusive supervisor* while employed as a registered nurse in ____ County.

If you responded "No" above, please stop & mail this questionnaire.

Q2. Thinking about your reaction or reactions to abusive supervision, please rate the frequency that you have engaged in any of the 12 work-related behaviors below. If you have worked for more than one abusive supervisor, please respond related to the experience you best remember.

But first, some information:

People may react to frustration relating to abusive supervision in a variety of ways. Reported reactions have included higher turnover, less favorable attitudes toward the job, the organization and life in general, greater conflict between work and family, and greater psychological distress. *Studies have also found that workers stopped doing things they are not required to do such as volunteering for extra work or committee assignments. Another study reported abuse of drugs and alcohol.*

Few studies have examined the influence of supervisory mistreatment on performance-related behaviors. Performance simply means accomplishing expected results which may vary from one job to another. This question is intended *to better understand the negative influence* of a supervisory-subordinate abusive relationship on your day-to-day performance.

The following 12 items represent frequently-reported behaviors resulting from workplace frustrations. They were developed and validated by several studies with the intention of measuring reactions to feelings of unfairness and/or personal threat.

They may or may not describe your reactions. This question intends to determine which, if any of these reactions, describe your reactions and the frequency of those reactions. *If none do, the next question provides an opportunity for you to describe your reaction or reactions.* We acknowledge that this information may be sensitive and you may be reluctant to disclose it. This disclosure is truly anonymous. No names or other identifiers are collected in connection with this survey. Your candid responses are critical to this study and are appreciated.

Please Circle Your Best Response

2-1. Spent too much time

fantasizing or day-

dreaming instead of

working.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Twice Once Never

Yearly Yearly Yearly

2-2. Littered your work

environment.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Twice Once Never

Yearly Yearly Yearly

2-3.

Falsified a receipt to get

reimbursed for more

money than you spent

on business expenses.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Twice Once Never

Yearly Yearly Yearly

2-4. Taken an additional

or longer break than

is acceptable in your

workplace.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Twice Once Never

Yearly Yearly Yearly

Question Q2 Continues on the Next Page

Q2 Continued

Please Circle Your Best Response

2-5. Came into work late without permission.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Yearly Twice Yearly Once Yearly Never Yearly

2-6. Intentionally worked slower than you could have worked.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Yearly Twice Yearly Once Yearly Never Yearly

2-7. Discussed confidential company information with an unauthorized person.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Yearly Twice Yearly Once Yearly Never Yearly

2-8. Put little effort into your work.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Yearly Twice Yearly Once Yearly Never Yearly

2-9. Dragged out work in order to get overtime.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Yearly Twice Yearly Once Yearly Never Yearly

2-10. Neglected to follow your supervisor's instructions.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Yearly Twice Yearly Once Yearly Never Yearly

2-11. Used an illegal drug or consumed alcohol on the job.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Yearly Twice Yearly Once Yearly Never Yearly

2-12. Taken property without permission.....Daily Weekly Monthly Several Times Yearly Twice Yearly Once Yearly Never Yearly

Q3. The above list *may not describe* how you reacted to abusive supervision related to your job performance. If that is the case, please list and describe *other reactions you had*. However, please do not name your employer, supervisor, any colleague or include any other information that might compromise the anonymity of this survey. Feel free to attach additional sheets of paper to provide ample space for what you wish to say.

Please Go To Question Q4 On The Next Page

Q4. Please check the boxes that most closely describe the type of nursing work you do or did when the abusive supervision occurred, the time frame of the abuse and your personal information when the abuse occurred.

But first, some explanation.

As a part of the analysis of the questionnaires, the responses will be viewed from different perspectives. The analysis will include looking for trends in supervisory-abuse related to the various types of nursing, gender, age and your years in nursing. Therefore, your responses to these questions are also very important to this study.

4-1. What type of nursing do you/did you do when the supervisory abuse occurred? (please check one)

- General medical and surgical hospital
 Physician's office
 Home health care service
 Nursing care facility
 Outpatient care centers
 Corrections
 Public health agency
 School, college or university
 Other, please describe _____

4.2. When did the abusive supervision occur? (please check one)

- Occurring currently
 Occurred within the past year
 Occurred more than 1 but less than 5 years ago
 Occurred more than 5 years ago

4-3. Please describe yourself when the abusive supervision occurred.

Male Female

Age: Less than 20 21 to 40 41 to 57 Over 57

_____ Years working as a registered nurse?

This is the End of the Questionnaire

Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed addressed and stamped envelope. To maintain the anonymity of your response, please do not sign or place your name on this questionnaire or your name nor return address on the return envelope. Thank you for your participation!

Brad Estes

Barry University, P.O. Box 60697, Fort Myers, FL 33906-0697

Appendix D

Barry University

12381 South Cleveland Ave., Suite 502
Fort Myers, FL 33907



Date

First Name Last Name, RN
First Address Second Address
City, FL Zip

Dear Nurse Last Name:

Last week a questionnaire on abusive supervision and performance was mailed to you. If you have returned the questionnaire, please disregard this letter and accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. I will be especially grateful.

Sincerely,

Brad Estes

P.S. Your participation in this survey will assist in developing a better understanding of abusive supervision's impact on performance. Your viewpoint will be helpful to this study.

Appendix E



Barry University

12381 South Cleveland Ave., Suite 502
Fort Myers, FL 33907

Date

First Name Last Name, RN
First Address Second Address
City, FL Zip

Dear Nurse Last Name:

I am writing in regard to the questionnaire sent to you recently regarding supervisory abuse and performance. Approximately ___% of those I contacted have returned the questionnaire. My goal is to have ___% in responses. If you have returned your questionnaire, please disregard this letter and accept my sincere thanks. If you haven't returned the questionnaire, I will greatly appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete and mail the questionnaire. I am enclosing another copy and a stamped return envelope in case the first mailing has been misplaced. *Please be assured that if you choose to participate, your questionnaire responses will be truly anonymous and not be personally identifiable to any particular study participant.*

As mentioned in my earlier mailing, this research is under the auspices of Barry University. Barry offers programs in Ft. Myers including a human resource development program in which I am a Ph.D. candidate. *Participation in this research is strictly voluntary, anonymous, without known risks and only involves completing and mailing the attached questionnaire which only should take a few minutes. You may decline to participate without any negative consequences.* There are no direct benefits for participation. My goal is for at least 365 nurses to participate. No names or other identifiers will be collected on any of the materials used. Findings of the study only will be published using group averages. No information which may reveal participant identity will be used. You are asked to not include any information on materials you return which may reveal your identity such as including a supervisor, colleague or employer's names.

Thank you for helping with this study. Should you have questions or comments, I will welcome a telephone call at 239 564-4089 or you may contact my supervisor, Dr. Betty Hubschman, at 305 899-3724, or the Barry University Institutional Review Board contact, Ms. Nildy Polanco, at 305 899-3020. If you contact me, please identify yourself by first name only to assure anonymity if you plan to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Brad Estes

P.S. Your viewpoint is important to my study even if you have not worked for an abusive supervisor or if you did, and it did not impact your performance. Your information will be helpful in determining the frequency of and reactions to abusive supervision among licensed registered nurses.