

RESEARCH REPORT

Blaming the Organization for Abusive Supervision: The Roles of Perceived Organizational Support and Supervisor's Organizational Embodiment

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Why do employees who experience abusive supervision retaliate against the organization? We apply organizational support theory to propose that employees hold the organization partly responsible for abusive supervision. Depending on the extent to which employees identify the supervisor with the organization (i.e., supervisor's organizational embodiment), we expected abusive supervision to be associated with low perceived organizational support (POS) and consequently with retribution against the organization. Across 3 samples, we found that abusive supervision was associated with decreased POS as moderated by supervisor's organizational embodiment. In turn, reduced POS was related to heightened counterproductive work behavior directed against the organization and lowered in-role and extra-role performance. These findings suggest that employees partly attribute abusive supervision to negative valuation by the organization and, consequently, behave negatively toward and withhold positive contributions to it.

Keywords: abusive supervision, perceived organizational support, workplace victimization

Supervisors play an important role in the direction, evaluation, and coaching of employees. Some supervisors are supportive, fostering subordinates' abilities and empowering them to achieve their goals (House, 1996). In contrast, other supervisors humiliate, belittle, or otherwise treat subordinates derisively (i.e., abusive supervision; Tepper, 2000). Subordinates who perceive their supervisors as abusive are more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors directed toward both the supervisor and the organization (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Restubog, Scott, & Zagenczyk, 2011), as well as to reduce discretionary behaviors

carried out on behalf of the organization (Aquino & Bommer, 2003; Tepper, 2007).

Prior research has largely viewed the organization as an "innocent bystander" of employees' displaced aggression and impaired self-regulation following abusive supervision (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Restubog et al., 2011; Thau & Mitchell, 2010). However, recent research suggests that recipients of abusive supervision hold the organization itself partly responsible. Specifically, abusive supervision was found to be negatively related to affective organizational commitment (Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008) and was more strongly related to organization-directed counterproductive work behavior among those who made organizational attributions for the abuse (Bowling & Michel, 2011).

Because damaged relationships between employees and the organization are harmful to both parties, these findings emphasize the importance of advancing theory and research concerning why and to what degree employees hold the organization responsible for abusive supervision. Indeed, Levinson (1965) argued that because the organization is morally and legally responsible for the actions of supervisors in their role of directing and evaluating subordinates, employees attribute this treatment partly to the organization. This assumption is embedded in organizational support theory (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), which holds that favorable treatment by supervisors enhances employees' perception that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (*perceived organizational support* or POS). In

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the research reported here, we draw from organizational support theory to provide insight into why and to what extent victims of abusive supervision retaliate against the organization for treatment received from their supervisors. In doing so, we offer organizational support theory not as a replacement of previous theoretical perspectives but rather as a complementary theory that adds depth to researchers' understanding of why abusive supervision results in employee behaviors harmful to the organization.

Although many studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between favorable treatment by the supervisor and POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), the impact of negative treatment by supervisors on POS has received little attention. This is significant because negative experiences should not be regarded merely as a deviation from the positive, but rather viewed as a separate phenomenon (Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004). Actions by the organization and its representatives that are viewed as discretionary are much more strongly associated with POS than actions over which the organization has limited control (e.g., the favorableness of union contracts or health and safety regulations; Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). Abusive supervision similarly involves *willful* mistreatment of subordinates (Tepper, 2007). From the employees' viewpoint, if the organization assigns supervisory responsibilities to an individual who humiliates and insults them, the organization as well as the supervisor acts willfully and holds them in contempt, which should relate negatively to POS. Likewise, the organization's failure to take corrective action to lessen or prevent the abuse may suggest to employees that the organization does not value their well-being (i.e., low POS).

Hypothesis 1. Abusive supervision is negatively related to POS.

Organizational support theory also suggests that employees may differ in the extent to which they ascribe responsibility to their organization for abusive supervision. Employees recognize that supervisors act in part toward them on the basis of distinctive motives and values as well as their common interests with the organization. Thus, employees vary in the extent to which they identify their supervisor with the organization (*supervisor's organizational embodiment*, SOE; Eisenberger et al., 2010). Eisenberger and colleagues found that the relationship between leader-member exchange and affective organizational commitment was stronger among employees who believed that their supervisor embodied the organization to a greater degree. Adopting similar logic here, we suggest that supervisor's organizational embodiment strengthens the *negative* relationship between abusive supervision and POS.

Hypothesis 2. SOE moderates the abusive supervision-POS relationship such that high SOE strengthens the negative relationship between abusive supervision and POS.

Intentional devaluation by others, including one's employer, is demeaning and challenges one's status as a worthwhile individual (Restubog, Hornsey, Bordia, & Esposito, 2008). Just as there is a positive reciprocity norm that calls for the return of favorable treatment, there is a negative reciprocity norm that validates and invites the return of mistreatment (Eisenberger,

Lynch, Aselage, & Rohdieck, 2004; Gouldner, 1960). Where high POS conveys the organization's positive valuation of the employee's contributions and concern about the employee's well-being, low POS tends to evoke revenge by (a) disregarding the organization's social responsibility to act supportively to those dependent on it (cf. Berkowitz & Daniels, 1964), (b) failing to maintain commonly accepted standards of humane treatment of employees, and (c) providing an external threat to self-esteem (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). A longitudinal investigation by Ferris, Brown, and Heller (2009) revealed that employees with low POS had low organization-based self-esteem, which, in turn, was related to increased counterproductive work behavior.

Thus, we expected POS to mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' counterproductive work behaviors directed against the organization. We also expected POS to mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' in-role and extra-role work performance. Decreased POS resulting from abusive supervision likely lessens employees' motivation to help the organization achieve its objectives. As previously noted, we expected SOE to moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and POS. That is, when employees identify the supervisor with the organization, they are likely to view the organization as treating them poorly and retaliate accordingly.

Hypotheses 3–5. The conditional indirect effect of abusive supervision on (Hypothesis 3) organization-directed counterproductive work behavior, (Hypothesis 4) in-role performance, and (Hypothesis 5) extra-role performance via POS will be stronger when SOE is high than when SOE is low.

In sum, the present research draws from organizational support theory to provide insight into why and to what extent abusive supervision is associated with employees' less favorable orientation toward the organization. In particular, support for our hypotheses would suggest that, to the extent that employees view their supervisor as representative of the organization, abusive supervision plays a more central role in employees' view of the organization than previously considered. Specifically, when a supervisor's organizational embodiment is high, abusive supervision is likely to be strongly associated with employees' perceptions that they are devalued by the organization. We expected to find that this harm to the employee-organization relationship leads to important negative consequences for the organization. While our hypotheses propose full mediation, in future research, other possible mediators of the relationship between the Abusive Supervision \times SOE interaction and performance harmful to the organization (including such emotional reactions as anger and depression) should be considered.

We tested our hypotheses in three samples, using constructive replication (Lykken, 1968) to obtain a wider diversity of measurements of the key work outcomes and to reduce possible concerns regarding method variance (see Table 1). As shown in Table 1, Sample 1 was used to test Hypotheses 1–3; Samples 2 and 3 were used to test all hypotheses. In Sample 1, we assessed the outcome variable (supervisor-rated counterproductive work behavior) 3 months after the assessment of the other variables. In Sample 2, we

Table 1
Summary of Research Design for Each Sample

Variable	Sample 1 Hypotheses 1–3 tested	Sample 2 Hypotheses 1–4 tested	Sample 3 Hypotheses 1–4 tested
Outcome assessed	CWB	CWB, in-role performance, and extra-role performance	CWB, in-role performance, and extra-role performance
Outcome rating source			
CWB	Supervisor report	Self-report	Peer report
In-role performance		Supervisor report	Supervisor report; archival performance data
Extra-role performance		Supervisor report	Peer report
Research design	3-month lag for supervisor report of CWB	Cross-sectional	1 year between assessment of abusive supervision/SOE and remaining variables

Note. CWB = counterproductive work behavior (specifically, we assessed organization-directed counterproductive work behavior); SOE = supervisor's organizational embodiment.

used a cross-sectional design. Finally, in Sample 3, we assessed employees' perceptions of abusive supervision and SOE at Time 1 and assessed perceptions of POS a year later at Time 2. With Sample 3, we also obtained peer reports of counterproductive work behavior and extra-role performance at Time 2 because peers may be able to more readily observe these behaviors than supervisors. Thus, the use of peer reports constructively replicates findings from Samples 1 and 2. To further strengthen our confidence in our findings, we also obtained archival performance records that capture specific dimensions of work performance over a 12-month period in Sample 3, which may be more accurate than a one-shot assessment of performance obtained in supervisor ratings. Across the three samples, we obtained constructive replications as we used self-reports (because employees have more accurate knowledge of their counterproductive work behavior; Berry, Carpenter, & Barratt, 2012) as well as supervisor and peer ratings of work behaviors, which are likely to yield more comprehensive evidence than using self-reports alone. Thus, we are able to corroborate the moderated mediation effects across three sample groupings, three different designs, and various construct operationalizations (self-ratings, peer ratings, supervisor ratings, and archival performance data).

Method

Participants and Procedure

Sample 1. English language surveys were distributed to 326 full-time employees enrolled in part-time master's of business administration (MBA) programs in a large university in the Philippines. The vast majority of Filipinos, especially in business organizations, speak English (Bernardo, 2004). We assessed abusive supervision, POS, and SOE at Time 1. We obtained supervisor ratings of employees' counterproductive work behavior 3 months later at Time 2.

Of 326 part-time MBA students who received questionnaires, 239 returned the surveys (73.3% response rate). Three months later (Time 2), each of the 239 participants received a behavioral rating form to be completed by their supervisor. One hundred fifty-nine supervisors completed surveys (66.5% response rate). Eleven surveys were disregarded because of incorrect or missing identity codes. Thus, the two waves of data collection resulted in 148

matched employee-supervisor dyads. A series of *t* tests established that participants who had supervisor reports did not differ significantly from those without supervisor reports in terms of gender, age, tenure, and perceptions of abusive supervision. Two research assistants randomly contacted 10% of the participating supervisors; all provided accurate information supporting the integrity of the data.

Approximately half of the participants were male (51.4%). The average age of employees was 28.3 years ($SD = 4.14$, range = 23–41). Participants' tenure was reported as follows: 1–5 years: 51%; 6–10 years: 44.8%; and 11–15 years: 4.2%. Participants worked in a variety of occupations, such as human resources and administration, marketing and sales, engineering and operations, and information technology. Among the supervisor participants, 53.4% were men. Average age and tenure were 34.96 years ($SD = 5.26$) and 5.43 years ($SD = 4.00$), respectively.

Sample 2. Surveys were distributed to 565 full-time working professional members of a large professional organization in the Philippines. Surveys were completed by 372 employees (65.84% response rate) as well as 273 supervisors, who provided behavioral ratings of their employee's performance (48.3% response rate), yielding a total of 254 employee-supervisor dyads after those with missing data were removed (no supervisor rated more than one employee). Participants with and without supervisor reports did not differ in terms of gender, age, tenure, and perceptions of abusive supervision. To ensure the integrity of the data, two research assistants randomly contacted 10% of the participating supervisors; all supervisors provided information that matched the information provided in the surveys. Employees were 63% female, averaged 30.8 years old, and worked in a wide variety of occupations. Employees' organizational tenure were as follows: less than 1 year: 12%; 1–5 years: 55%; 6–10 years: 15%; 11–15 years: 4%; 16–20 years: 6%; 21–25 years: 4%; more than 30 years: 0.4%; and 0.8% failed to report their tenure. The majority of the employees (87%) held college/university degrees.

Sample 3. At Time 1, surveys were administered to 1,310 full-time employees from a large financial organization in the Philippines via the interoffice mailing system and were completed during lunch breaks. We received 428 employee surveys, representing a response rate of 32.7%, which is acceptable for mail

questionnaires (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). The Time 1 survey assessed demographic variables, abusive supervision, and SOE.

A second wave of data (Time 2) was collected approximately 12 months after the first survey was disseminated. At this point, we collected data on mediator (i.e., POS) and outcome variables (i.e., in-role performance, organizational citizenship behaviors [OCBs], and counterproductive work behaviors). The Time 2 survey was administered to 428 employees who participated in the Time 1 survey. In addition, the personnel division of the organization identified one peer or coworker who worked closely with the focal employee on a regular basis to provide ratings on the extent to which the employee had engaged in extra-role and organization-directed counterproductive work behaviors. A total of 266 employee surveys were retrieved for a response rate of 62.15%. In addition, we received 195 supervisor surveys and 235 peer surveys. After removing target employees, peers, and supervisors who inattentively filled out the survey, we had 187 employees with complete Time 1 and Time 2 data. One month after Time 2 data collection, we obtained archival performance records from the organization for these employees. With the exception of tenure, $t(423) = -2.89, p < .01$, there were no significant differences between those who participated in Time 1 data collection only and those who participated in both time points in terms of gender, $t(426) = 1.87, p = .06$, and age, $t(426) = -1.38, p = .17$. Of the final sample, 55.1% were female; the average age was 30.95 years. Most (94.1%) of the participants were permanent employees and had worked for their organization between 1 and 5 years (77.3%).

Measures

For all of the scales except counterproductive work behavior, respondents rated their agreement with each statement using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1, *strongly disagree*; 7, *strongly agree*). We used a 5-point Likert-type scale to assess counterproductive work behavior in Sample 1 (1, *never*; 5, *every day*) and a 7-point scale in Samples 2 and 3 (1, *never*; 7, *daily*).

Abusive supervision (Sample 1, $\alpha = .91$; Sample 2, $\alpha = .91$; Sample 3, $\alpha = .87$). We measured abusive supervision using eight items from Tepper's (2000) Abusive Supervision Scale. Bivariate correlations in an independent sample of 97 call center employees in the Philippines indicated that the shortened and full versions of this scale are highly related ($r = .97, p < .01$).

POS (Sample 1, $\alpha = .80$; Sample 2, $\alpha = .69$; Sample 3, $\alpha = .74$). In line with prior work in POS, we assessed employees' POS using the eight highest loading items of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

SOE (Sample 1, $\alpha = .95$; Sample 2, $\alpha = .94$; Sample 3, $\alpha = .92$). We used five items to assess the extent to which employees identified their supervisor with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2010). We took the four items from the original scale that assesses the core construct of the employees' perception that the supervisor shares the identity of the organization and added a fifth, similar item to increase potential scale reliability (Hellman, Fuqua, & Worley, 2006).

Counterproductive work behavior. In Sample 1, supervisors were asked to rate their employees' counterproductive behaviors using eight behavioral checklist items from the Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (CWB-C; Spector et al., 2006) at Time 2. Seven of the items came from the production deviance (e.g., "Purposely failed to follow instructions") and withdrawal (e.g., "Came to work late without permission") subscales. The final item reflected speaking negatively about the organization ($\alpha = .85$). We selected these behaviors because they are less strongly associated with concerns about being punished than more serious forms of organization-directed counterproductive work behavior (Fox & Spector, 1999); therefore, supervisors may more readily observe or otherwise be informed about them. Bivariate correlations in an independent sample of 158 full-time employees in the United States indicate that the shortened and full versions of this scale are highly correlated when self-reported ($r = .88, p < .01$). In Sample 2, employees were asked to respond to Aquino, Lewis, and Bradfield's (1999) eight-item measure of organization-directed counterproductive work behavior ($\alpha = .84$). In Sample 3, peers provided reports of employees' organization-directed counterproductive work behavior by responding to the five highest factor-loading items in the organizational deviance measure developed by Aquino et al. (1999; $\alpha = .75$). Bivariate correlations in an independent sample of 158 employees in the Philippines indicate that the shortened and full versions of this scale are highly correlated ($r = .93, p < .01$).

In-role performance. We assessed in-role performance in two ways. First, supervisors in Samples 2 ($\alpha = .90$) and 3 ($\alpha = .94$) assessed their subordinates' in-role performance with the four highest loading items from Williams and Anderson's (1991) in-role performance scale. We used this four-item measure due to survey length restrictions. Prior research has demonstrated that the shortened version has good reliability (e.g., Podsakoff, Bommer, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006; Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2006). Bivariate correlations in an independent sample of 180 employees in the Philippines revealed that the shortened scale and the full scale were highly correlated ($r = .85, p < .01$). Second, we obtained archival performance data in Sample 3 one month after Time 2 data collection. The archival performance records provide an overall performance measure based on an assessment of critical work behaviors (e.g., planning and organization, communication skills) and performance of key result areas using a 5-point behaviorally anchored rating scale (1, *needs improvement*; 5, *excellent*). This overall rating encompasses ratings made over a 12-month work period (beginning shortly after the Time 1 data collection).

Extra-role performance. In Sample 2, supervisors assessed their subordinate's extra-role performance using a four-item scale designed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990; $\alpha = .94$). We chose to assess the civic virtue dimension of OCBs because of length restrictions imposed by the participating organization and because civic virtue has been argued to assess behavior most clearly directed to aid the organization (Organ, 1988; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995), which should be influenced by POS. Consistent with the meta-analytic finding that the OCB dimensions are closely related (LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002), we found with an independent sample of 138 bank employees in the Philippines that the

four-item Civic Virtue Behavior subscale and the 20-item OCB full scale were highly correlated ($r = .80, p < .01$). In Sample 3, peers provided ratings on this measure ($\alpha = .90$).

Control variables. In order to rule out alternative explanations for our findings, we examined employee age, gender, and tenure as potential control variables in all three samples because they have been linked to counterproductive work behavior (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007). In Sample 1, because tenure was significantly related to POS ($r = -.22, p = .01$), we included it in the analyses (Becker, 2005). In Sample 2, because gender was significantly related to counterproductive work behavior ($r = -.21, p < .01$), we controlled for gender. In Sample 3, no controls were significantly related to the outcomes; thus we did not include them in the analyses.

Results

Measurement

We conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) in order to assess the measurement model involving the self-rated variables for Samples 1 and 2 as the key study variables were assessed at the same time. As recommended by Byrne (2012), we used MLM estimation as it is robust against nonnormality in

the data and allowed the errors for the negatively worded POS items to covary to take into account the fact that the similarity in wording causes additional covariance to that of the focal factor (Reeve et al., 2007). The hypothesized model fit the data reasonably well: Sample 1, $\chi^2(180) = 313.69, p < .01$, confirmatory fit index (CFI) = .92, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .07; and Sample 2, $\chi^2(365) = 692.86, p < .01$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .06. For both samples, the models fit better than the alternative nested models at $p < .01$, supporting the discriminant validity of these constructs. In line with the procedures proposed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) and by Williams, Cote, and Buckley (1989), we tested for the influence of common method variance with a separate CFA model wherein the self-reported items loaded both on their respective factors and on a method factor. The average variance explained in the items by the method factor in Sample 1 was 17% and in Sample 2 was 14.5%, which is below the 25% median reported by Williams et al. (1989) for studies using self-reported variables.

Zero-Order Correlations and Hypotheses Testing

We present descriptive statistics, variable intercorrelations, and scale reliabilities (α) for all three samples in Table 2. Consistent

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics and Variable Intercorrelations in Samples 1, 2, and 3

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sample 1												
1. Gender	1.49	0.50	—									
2. Age	28.30	4.14	-.13	—								
3. Tenure ^a	1.49	0.58	-.07	.75**	—							
4. Abusive supervision	2.18	1.20	-.11	-.15	-.15	(.91)						
5. SOE	5.13	1.27	-.08	.10	-.01	-.48**	(.95)					
6. POS	5.01	0.95	-.11	-.07	-.22*	-.34**	.34**	(.80)				
7. CWB	1.63	0.65	.08	.06	.10	.38**	-.12	-.32**	(.85)			
Sample 2												
1. Gender	1.63	0.48	—									
2. Age	30.84	8.28	.14*	—								
3. Tenure ^a	2.58	1.39	.12	.61**	—							
4. Abusive supervision	2.26	1.12	.03	.15*	.11	(.91)						
5. SOE	4.43	1.46	-.03	.09	-.06	-.25**	(.94)					
6. POS	4.76	0.85	.12	.10	-.02	-.23**	.42**	(.69)				
7. CWB	1.78	0.82	-.21**	-.09	-.07	.17**	-.07	-.19**	(.84)			
8. Extra-role performance	5.00	1.20	.04	-.03	.01	-.16**	.23**	.31**	-.04	(.94)		
9. In-role performance	5.24	1.21	.02	-.04	-.09	-.20**	.24**	.30**	-.02	.70**	(.90)	
Sample 3												
1. Gender	0.45	0.50	—									
2. Age	30.95	4.89	.19*	—								
3. Tenure ^a	1.98	0.51	.02	.47**	—							
4. Abusive supervision	2.36	1.02	.00	.08	-.02	(.87)						
5. SOE	4.45	1.27	.12	-.01	-.07	-.28**	(.92)					
6. POS	4.78	0.78	.06	.06	.00	-.18*	.39**	(.74)				
7. CWB	1.52	0.75	-.07	-.03	.00	.22**	-.24**	-.30**	(.75)			
8. Extra-role performance	5.08	1.17	-.04	.00	-.06	-.17*	.14	.32**	-.10	(.90)		
9. In-role performance	5.25	1.23	-.10	-.02	-.03	-.17*	.14	.34**	-.12	.68**	(.94)	
10. Archival performance rating	3.72	0.78	-.02	-.05	-.05	-.12	.13	.35**	-.08	.54**	.64**	—

Note. Reliability coefficients are displayed in the diagonal. SOE = supervisor's organizational embodiment; POS = perceived organizational support; CWB = counterproductive work behavior.

^a Tenure was coded as follows: 1 = 1–5 years, 2 = 6–10 years, 3 = 11–15 years, 4 = 16–20 years, 5 = 21–25 years, 6 = 26–30 years, 7 = more than 30 years.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

with Hypothesis 1, there was a significant negative relationship (Sample 1, $r = -.34, p < .01$; Sample 2, $r = -.23, p < .01$; Sample 3, $r = -.18, p < .05$) between abusive supervision and POS.

Our hypothesized model reflects Edwards and Lambert’s (2007) *first stage moderation model*. That is, POS mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and performance, and SOE moderates the path from abusive supervision to POS. Thus, the indirect effect of abusive supervision is conditional on SOE. Testing this model involves estimating the following equations:

$$DV = b_0 + b_1Control + b_2Abusive\ Supervision + b_3POS + e; \tag{1}$$

$$POS = a_0 + a_1Control + a_2Abusive\ Supervision + a_3SOE + a_4AS * SOE + e. \tag{2}$$

DV refers to the dependent variable; control to any control variable; e to an error term, SOE to supervisor’s organizational embodiment; and AS to abusive supervision. Substituting Equation 2 into Equation 1 gives equations to obtain the estimates for the conditional indirect effect (Edwards & Lambert, 2007).

Edwards and Lambert (2007) recommended generating 95% bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals to assess the significance of the conditional indirect effect. We used Hayes’s (2012) PROCESS macro (Model 7) for SPSS to estimate the equations presented earlier and obtain bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals (using 5,000 bootstrap samples)

for the conditional indirect effect. Predictors were mean-centered (Aiken & West, 1991).

As seen in Table 3, the abusive supervision–SOE interaction was statistically significant in all three samples. We explored the nature of the interaction by calculating simple slopes at ± 1 standard deviation of SOE (Figure 1). Abusive supervision was negatively related to POS for employees with high SOE (Sample 1: $B = -0.40, SE = 0.10, p < .01$; Sample 2: $B = -0.26, SE = 0.06, p < .01$; Sample 3: $B = -0.24, SE = 0.07, p < .01$) but was not for employees with low SOE (Sample 1: $B = -0.14, SE = 0.07, ns$; Sample 2: $B = 0.07, SE = 0.06, ns$; Sample 3: $B = 0.14, SE = 0.07, ns$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

The estimates and bias-corrected bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals for the conditional indirect effects are presented in Table 4. As expected, the conditional indirect effects of abusive supervision on organization-directed counterproductive work behavior and on in-role and extra-role performance were significant when SOE was high (+1 SD). In Sample 3, the conditional indirect effect of abusive supervision on the archival performance rating was also significant when SOE was high. The conditional indirect effects for all of the outcomes across the three samples were not significant when SOE was low (–1 SD). Thus, Hypotheses 3–5 were supported. We also note that the significant coefficient for abusive supervision in the models predicting organization-directed counterproductive work behavior (see Table 3) indicates partial mediation across all three samples. The nonsignificant direct effect of abusive supervision in the models predicting extra-role performance

Table 3
Regression Results in Samples 1, 2, and 3

Predictor	POS		CWB		Performance					
	B	SE	B	SE	Extra-role		In-role		Archival	
					B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Sample 1										
Tenure	–0.42**	0.12	0.13	0.09						
ABS	–0.27**	0.07	0.18**	0.04						
SOE	0.18**	0.06								
ABS*SOE	–0.11*	0.04								
POS			–0.12*	0.06						
R ²	0.26**		0.20**							
Sample 2										
Gender	0.22*	0.10	–0.33**	0.10	0.01	0.15	–0.02	0.15		
ABS	–0.10*	0.04	0.11*	0.05	–0.11	0.07	–0.15*	0.07		
SOE	0.23**	0.03								
ABS*SOE	–0.11**	0.03								
POS			–0.13*	0.06	0.40**	0.09	0.38**	0.09		
R ²	0.26**		0.09**		0.10**		0.11**			
Sample 3										
ABS	–0.05	0.05	0.12*	0.05	–0.13	0.08	–0.14	0.08	–0.04	0.05
SOE	0.23**	0.04								
ABS*SOE	–0.15**	0.04								
POS			–0.26**	0.07	0.45**	0.11	0.50**	0.11	0.34**	0.07
R ²	0.23**		0.12**		0.12**		0.13**		0.12**	

Note. ABS = abusive supervision; SOE = supervisor’s organizational embodiment; POS = perceived organizational support; CWB = counterproductive work behavior.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

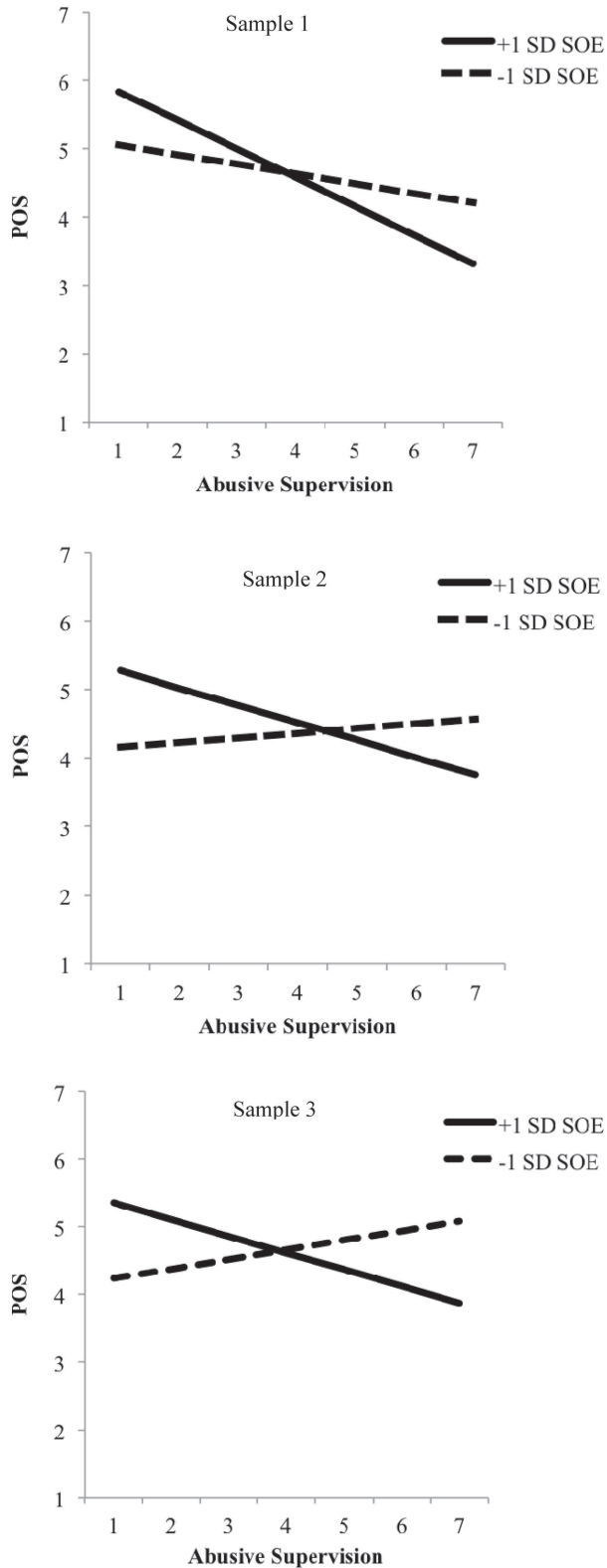


Figure 1. Interaction between abusive supervision and supervisor's organizational embodiment (SOE) predicting perceived organizational support (POS) in Samples 1 (top), 2 (middle), and 3 (bottom). The x- and y-axes reflect the Likert scale points of the measures. SD = standard deviation.

(Samples 2 and 3) and the archival performance measure (Sample 3) suggests full mediation for these outcomes.¹ The results of these analyses are displayed in Figure 2.

General Discussion

Across three samples, we found that, to the extent SOE was high, employees' abusive supervision was related to reduced POS, which in turn was associated with increased counterproductive work behavior (Samples 1, 2, and 3) and reduced in-role and extra-role performance (Samples 2 and 3). In other words, when employees strongly identified their supervisors with the organization, abusive supervision was positively related to POS and performance harmful to the organization. However, when employees identified their supervisors with the organization to a lesser extent, abusive supervision was not significantly related to POS or performance harmful to the organization.

We advance prior findings on abusive supervision by providing evidence on why and to what extent abusive supervision leads to counterproductive work behavior and performance decrements. Whereas research on abusive supervision has drawn primarily on social exchange theory (to explain retribution directed at the supervisor; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007) or displaced aggression (to explain negative behaviors directed toward other targets, such as family members; Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Restubog et al., 2011), the present findings suggest that blame specifically against the organization in the form of decreased POS plays an important role in counterproductive work behavior (Bowling & Mitchell, 2011; Tepper et al., 2008). Further, whereas organizational support theory previously focused mostly on favorable treatment by supervisors, the present findings indicate that abusive supervision has the converse effect, leading employees to believe that the organization cares little for them and producing a negative outlook on their organizational role. These results suggest that when employees strongly identify their supervisors with the organization, they may view abusive supervision not merely as aberrant behavior by a particular individual but as behavior representing their relationship with the organization itself. Low POS may be experienced as aversive because it represents the organization's violation of norms of social responsibility (cf. Berkowitz & Daniels, 1964) and acceptable treatment and thus constitutes a threat to employees' self-esteem (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

We found evidence suggesting full mediation by POS between the Abusive Supervision \times SOE interaction and detrimental behavior with regard to extra-role performance and partial mediation concerning counterproductive work behaviors, with evidence of

¹ We tested for potential endogeneity-related bias in our coefficients using the methods proposed by Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, and Lalive (2010), wherein each of the models was tested in a path model (using Mplus software program) both with and without allowing the disturbances to correlate. The disturbances did not significantly correlate in any of the models across the three samples—(a) Sample 1: $B = -0.01$, $SE = 0.18$; (b) Sample 2 counterproductive work behavior: $B = -0.02$, $SE = 0.08$, extra-role performance: $B = -0.04$, $SE = 0.12$, and in-role performance: $B = -0.06$, $SE = 0.12$; (c) Sample 3 counterproductive work behavior: $B = 0.05$, $SE = 0.08$, extra-role performance: $B = 0.20$, $SE = 0.13$, in-role performance: $B = 0.18$, $SE = 0.13$, and archival performance: $B = 0.11$, $SE = 0.08$; all $p = ns$)—indicating nonsignificant Hausman (1978) tests and suggesting that our coefficient estimates were unbiased with respect to endogeneity.

Table 4

Estimates and Bias-Corrected Bootstrapped 95% Confidence Intervals for the Conditional Indirect Effect of Abusive Supervision on Performance at ± 1 Standard Deviation of Supervisor’s Organizational Embodiment

Level of SOE	Counterproductive work behavior		Performance					
			Extra-role		In-role		Archival	
	Estimate (SE) ^a	CI	Estimate (SE) ^a	CI	Estimate (SE) ^a	CI	Estimate (SE) ^a	CI
Sample 1								
-1 SD SOE	.02 (.01)	[.00, .05]						
+1 SD SOE	.05 (.03)	[.01, .12]						
Sample 2								
-1 SD SOE	-.01 (.01)	[-.03, .00]	.03 (.03)	[-.02, .09]	.02 (.03)	[-.02, .08]		
+1 SD SOE	.03 (.02)	[.01, .07]	-.10 (.03)	[-.18, -.05]	-.10 (.03)	[-.18, -.04]		
Sample 3								
-1 SD SOE	-.04 (.02)	[-.09, .00]	.06 (.04)	[.00, .16]	.07 (.04)	[.00, .17]	.05 (.03)	[.00, .11]
+1 SD SOE	.06 (.03)	[.02, .12]	-.11 (.05)	[-.22, -.03]	-.12 (.05)	[-.23, -.03]	-.08 (.03)	[-.16, -.02]

Note. SOE = supervisor’s organizational embodiment; CI = confidence interval.

^a Bootstrapped estimates for the standard error (SE) are presented.

both partial (Sample 2) and full (Sample 3) mediation with regard to in-role performance. These findings suggest a process by which employees appraise the implications of their treatment for POS, as influenced by SOE, where low POS is associated with behaviors harmful to the organization. Additionally, employees’ perceptions of abusive supervision may contribute to negative affective responses (e.g., anger and depression) that may harm the organization independently of direct blame. Displaced aggression and impaired self-regulation previously have been found to induce harmful behavior that may spill over to the organization (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Restubog et al., 2011; Thau & Mitchell, 2010); these may help explain the partial mediation findings.

The present results reinforce the importance of finding ways to reduce abusive supervision including (a) evaluation procedures designed to prevent the placement of authoritarian individuals in supervisory positions (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debra, 2007) and (b) fair treatment of supervisors to prevent its occurrence (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006). Additionally, the present findings suggest that the organization’s espousal of a culture that values supportive employee treatment may both decrease the occurrence of abusive supervision and increase the likelihood that those practicing it are viewed as outliers and not representative of the organization. Initial evidence suggests that SOE and POS are malleable, which implies that organizations can engage in multi-pronged strategies to lessen abusive supervision and reduce the blame for its occurrence. For example, in a quasi-experiment, Gonzalez-Morales, Kernan, Becker, and Eisenberger (2012) found that training supervisors to replace abusive supervision with supportive treatment of subordinates and to give credit to the organization for favorable treatment served to increase SOE and POS. Thus, practical steps may be taken to minimize the harm done to organizations by the combination of abusive supervision and high SOE.

The limitations and advantages of our methodology should be considered. While we assessed the presence of other mechanisms besides POS by examining the direct effect of abusive supervision on counterproductive work behavior and additional performance outcomes, we did not (as previously noted) explicitly address other factors that potentially may influence organization-directed behav-

ior such as lessened self-regulatory resources and negative emotional responses. Future research should investigate the possibility that abusive supervision may lead to emotional reactions such as anger, disappointment, and depression that influence organization-directed behavior independent of POS (Wang, Liao, Zhan, & Shi, 2011). Future research might also examine outcomes of abusive supervision on other types of OCB besides civic virtue, as mediated by POS. We also did not directly ask employees about the extent to which they blamed the organization for their mistreatment. Future research might examine blame attributions as a mediator between the abusive supervision × SOE interaction and POS; this would lend additional credence to our proposition that employees retaliate against the organization for abusive treatment because they view the organization as responsible and, therefore, not caring about their well-being (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Bowling & Michel, 2011). While we found evidence suggestive of mediation, more complex experimental and longitudinal designs are needed to provide stronger conclusions (Maxwell & Cole, 2007; Stone-Romero & Rosopa, 2008). Nevertheless, our multi-source ratings of performance involving self, peers, and supervisors and the year lag between reports of abusive supervision/SOE and the remaining variables in Sample 3 help to assuage concerns stemming from common-method bias. As previously noted, each source of evaluation of counterproductive work behavior and performance has its own benefits and drawbacks. Yet, our convergent findings with the three sources lend credence to the overall findings. Finally, although our three studies provide convergent evidence for our hypotheses, the relatively small sample size in Sample 1 suggests there may be less than optimal accuracy in estimated effect sizes in this case.

Finally, we investigated our proposed model in the Philippines, which is a high power-distance culture. Power distance refers to “the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, 1980, p. 45). Abusive treatment by more powerful individuals may be condoned to a greater degree in high power-distance cultures, while low power-distance cultures are less tolerant of abuse in any form (Loh, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2010). Thus, the relationships found here may be even more profound in low power-distance

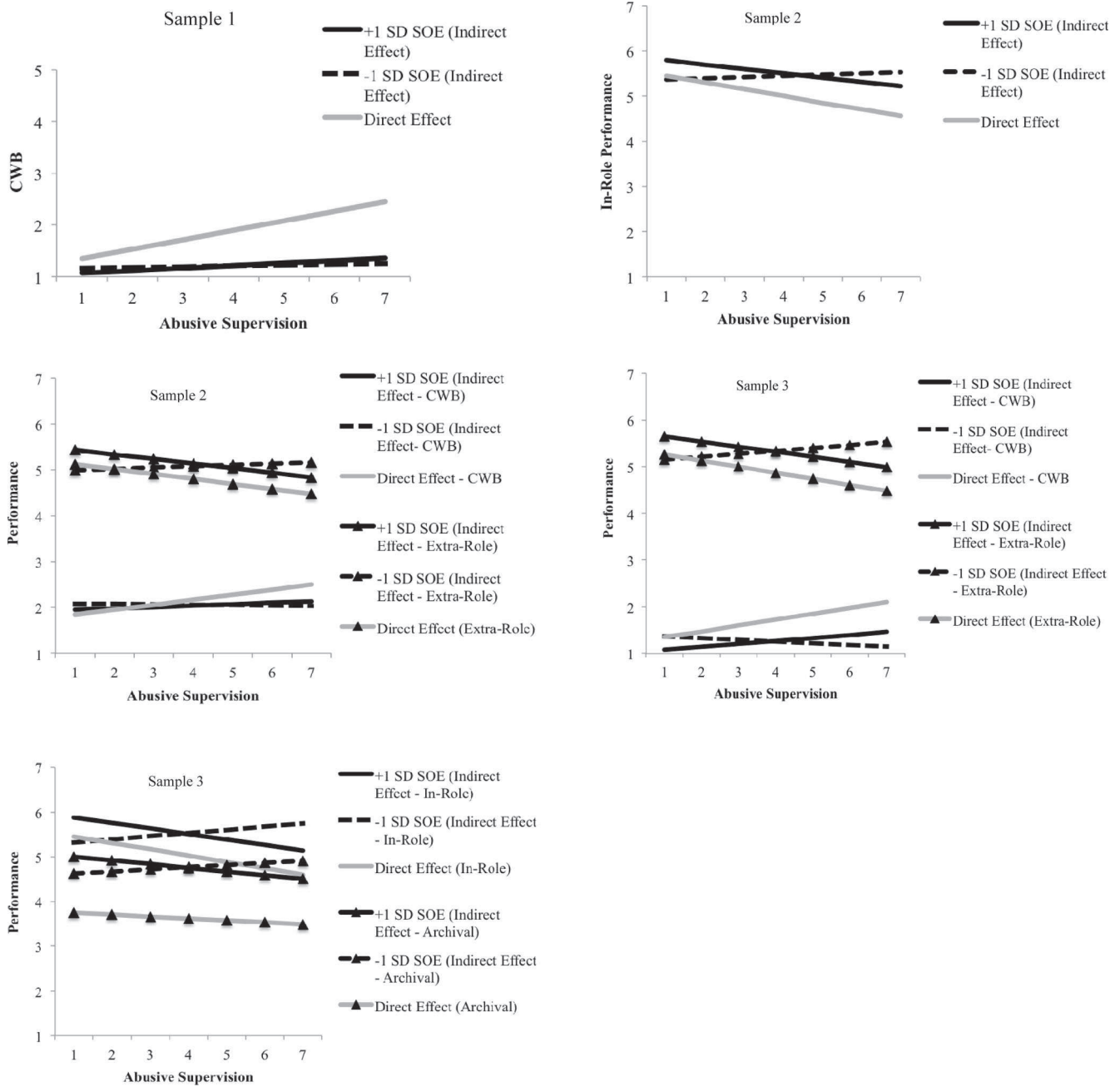


Figure 2. Conditional indirect and direct effects of abusive supervision on performance outcomes. Direct effects are presented at mean perceived organizational support (POS). The x- and y-axes reflect the Likert scale points of the measures. SD = standard deviation; SOE = supervisor's organizational embodiment; CWB = counterproductive work behavior.

cultures. Additionally, this suggests that the processes involving the attribution of supervisor treatment to the organization, which has primarily been studied in Western contexts, may be similar across cultural contexts.

In summary, our research sheds new light on the mechanisms that lead employees who experience abusive supervision to engage in harmful or unproductive behaviors specifically directed against the organization. Results from three samples indicated that abusive

supervision was associated with lessened POS, which was related to employees' counterproductive work behaviors and in-role and extra-role performance. Further, these relationships were stronger to the extent that employees identified the supervisor with the organization.

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