

Precipitating Abusive Supervision: Target Factors and Supervisor Blame Attributions

by

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### Abstract

The purpose of the proposed study is to consider *why* and *under which conditions* do supervisors engage in abusive behaviours towards their subordinates. To answer my first research question, *why do supervisors engage in abusive supervision*, I draw on victim precipitation (e.g., Sparks, Glenn, & Dodd, 1977) and conservation of resources (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) theories to argue that certain subordinate performance-related behaviours and characteristics threaten supervisor resources leading to abuse as a stress reaction. To answer my second research question, *under which conditions do supervisors engage in abusive supervision*, I draw on attribution theory (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1986). I argue that supervisors abuse subordinates when they attribute responsibility, or blame subordinates for negative performance-related behaviours and characteristics, as a means of protecting or guarding against future resource loss. To answer my research questions, I developed measures for self- and other-perceived general mental ability (GMA) and blame attributions. I obtained data from 211 supervisor-subordinate dyads in Canada and the United States. Respondents were surveyed for information about their work behaviours, characteristics, and relationships. Using Hayes (2013) PROCESS macros, I found partial support for the proposed model and offer refinements to COR and victim precipitation theories. I found relationships between both self- and supervisor-reported subordinate behaviours and characteristics and abusive supervision, largely in the direction hypothesized. I also found supervisor-reported subordinate performance behaviours and perceived GMA to share a stronger relationship with subordinate reports of abusive supervision than subordinate reported behaviours and characteristics in many instances.

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## Table of Contents

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 KEY CONCEPTS AND OVERVIEW .....	3
1.1.1 Workplace Aggression.....	3
1.1.2 Abusive Supervision.....	4
1.1.3 Victims and Victimization.....	10
1.2 ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND VICTIM PRECIPITATION.....	12
1.3 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS .....	13
1.4 DISSERTATION OUTLINE .....	16
<b>CHAPTER 2: WHY DO SUPERVISORS AGGRESS AGAINST SUBORDINATES.....</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES THEORY .....	18
2.1.1 Conservation of Resources Theory and Victim Precipitation.....	20
2.2 SUBORDINATE PERFORMANCE .....	21
2.2.1 Task performance .....	23
2.2.2 Counterproductive work behaviours .....	24
2.2.3 Organizational citizenship behaviours .....	25
2.3 SUBORDINATE PERFORMANCE RELATED CHARACTERISTICS .....	25
2.3.1 Subordinate self-efficacy.....	26
2.3.2 Subordinate conscientiousness .....	27
2.3.3 Subordinate general mental ability.....	28
2.4 THE MODERATING ROLE OF SUPERVISOR RESOURCES .....	28
2.5 STRESS, RESOURCE THREAT, AND ABUSIVE SUPERVISION.....	30
<b>CHAPTER 3: UNDER WHICH CONDITIONS DO SUPERVISORS AGGRESS AGAINST SUBORDINATES .....</b>	<b>33</b>
3.1 ATTRIBUTION THEORY .....	35
3.1.4 Responsibility/Blame Attributions .....	38
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODS.....</b>	<b>40</b>
4.1 METHOD .....	40
4.1.1 Participants and Procedure.....	40
4.1.2 Measures.....	44
<b>CHAPTER 5: GMA CONSTRUCT VALIDATION STUDY .....</b>	<b>54</b>
5.1.1 Stage 1: Instrument Development.....	55
5.1.2 Stage 2: Item Refinement .....	56
5.1.3 Stage 3: Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	58
5.1.4 Stage 4: Construct Validation.....	60
<b>CHAPTER 6: RESULTS .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>71</b>
7.1 IMPLICATIONS.....	83
7.2 STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS .....	87
7.3 CONCLUSION .....	94

<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>MODELS.....</b>	<b>119</b>
MODEL 2.1.....	119
MODEL 3.1.....	120
<b>TABLES .....</b>	<b>121</b>
TABLE 2.1: KEY STUDY VARIABLES .....	121
TABLE 4.1: INDEPENDENT T-TESTS AND MANN-WHITNEY U TESTS .....	122
TABLE 5.1: GMA FACTOR LOADINGS.....	123
TABLE 5.2: CFA RESULTS FOR SELF- AND OTHER-PERCEIVED GMA .....	124
TABLE 5.3: SELF-PERCEIVED GMA CORRELATIONS .....	124
TABLE 5.4: OTHER-PERCEIVED GMA CORRELATIONS.....	124
TABLE 6.1: ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS AND MEASURE DESCRIPTIVES .....	125
TABLE 6.2: RESULTS OVERVIEW FOR H1-H6 .....	127
TABLE 6.3: RESULTS OVERVIEW FOR H7 AND H8 .....	128
TABLE 7.1: MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS IN ABUSIVE SUPERVISION RESEARCH .....	129
<b>FIGURES .....</b>	<b>130</b>
FIGURE 6.1: HYPOTHESIS 7C .....	130
FIGURE 6.2: HYPOTHESIS 7C .....	131
FIGURE 6.3: HYPOTHESIS 8B .....	132
FIGURE 6.4: HYPOTHESIS 11A .....	133
FIGURE 6.5: HYPOTHESIS 11C .....	134
FIGURE 6.6: HYPOTHESIS 11C .....	135
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>136</b>
APPENDIX A: SAMPLE CONSENT FORM .....	136
APPENDIX B: MEASURES .....	138

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Workplace aggression, defined as efforts to harm the organization or its employees (Neuman & Baron, 2005), is a serious problem for organizations. There is considerable research suggesting that workplace aggression results in generally negative outcomes for victims, such as increased anxiety and depression (e.g., Cortina Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001), diminished well-being (e.g., LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002), burnout syndrome (exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished professional fulfillment; e.g., Leiter & Maslack 2004, Leiter, Gascon, & Marinez-Jarreta 2008), decreased performance (e.g., Pearson & Porath, 2005; Schat & Frone, 2011), and decreased job satisfaction (e.g., Tepper, 2000; see Bowling & Beehr, 2006 for a meta-analytic review). Abusive supervision is a type of workplace aggression in which the perpetrator is in a supervisory position over the target. When the perpetrator is in a supervisory position, the target of the aggression experiences stronger negative outcomes than when aggression stems from a coworker (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010), possibly due to the supervisor's authority to grant promotions, raises, and assign punishments (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002).

Abusive supervision is a pervasive problem, estimated to affect over 13% of American workers (Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006) and is estimated to cost organizations tens of millions of dollars annually (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006). According to Pearson and Porath (2009), one consistently abusive top-level executive can cost his or her organization millions in losses related to employee turnover, lost customers, and reductions in productivity. Considering the prevalence of abusive supervision and the negative impact of abusive supervision on organizations and their

members, learning more about this phenomenon and its determinants is important for both researchers and practitioners.

In this dissertation, I ask the questions “why do supervisors behave aggressively?” and “under which conditions do supervisors behave aggressively?” To examine these research questions, I draw on conservation of resources (COR; Hobfoll, 1989), victim precipitation (e.g., Sparks, Glenn, & Dodd, 1977), and attribution theories (e.g., Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1986) to investigate why and when subordinate performance-related behaviours and characteristics increase the likelihood subordinates will be targeted with abuse by supervisors. Research to date has investigated the first question by focusing largely on situational determinants (e.g., workplace injustice; Hershcovis et al., 2007, Inness, Barling, & Turner, 2005, Skarlicki & Folger, 1997) and individual differences (e.g., trait anger; e.g., Hershcovis et al., 2007). In this dissertation, I focus on the role that target behaviours and characteristics play in determining the likelihood of subordinates being abused. Further, I will explore my second research question by examining how blame attributions for negative subordinate performance-related behaviours influence when supervisors abuse subordinates. As I argue in more detail in chapter 3, when supervisors attribute responsibility or blame subordinates for negative behaviours they are more likely to react abusively toward them.

This dissertation will proceed as follows. In the remainder of this chapter, I will describe in more detail why examining the relationship between subordinate behaviours and characteristics and abusive supervision is important. I will also explore how supervisor stress and supervisor attributions for subordinate behaviour affect these relationships. I will begin by describing key concepts, followed by existing research,

identifying potential contributions, and conclude with a brief overview of the remaining chapters.

## **1.1 Key Concepts and Overview**

Before explaining the importance of this research, I will briefly explain some of the key concepts that are central to my research questions. In particular, I will provide a basic background of workplace aggression, abusive supervision, and victims and victimization.

### **1.1.1 Workplace Aggression**

Neuman and Baron (2005) defined workplace aggression as purposeful actions intended to harm an organization or its employees. Although this definition incorporates aggression targeted at both the organization and at individuals (i.e., employees), prior research has suggested that these targets should be studied separately (e.g., Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Hershcovis et al., 2007). Schat and Kelloway (2005) further argued that workplace violence is a specific form of workplace aggression that should be regarded separately, as physical and non-physical are related yet separate empirical constructs (e.g., LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002; Schat & Kelloway, 2003). For the purpose of the current research, I will use the term workplace aggression to describe negative, non-physical acts directed towards other individuals with whom the perpetrator works.

Other terms used to describe workplace aggression include workplace incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), social undermining (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002), workplace harassment (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1994), verbal abuse (Cox, 1991), mobbing (Leymann, 1990), emotional abuse (Keashly, 1998), workplace bullying (Adams & Crawford, 1992), and psychological abuse (Sheehan, Sheehan, White,



Leibowitz, & Baldwin, 1990). Given the numerous terms used to describe mistreatment in the workplace, Hershcovis (2011) and others (e.g., Aquino & Thau, 2009) have suggested that these varying labels fragment the field and should be studied together. In this dissertation, I will use the term workplace aggression as an umbrella term to refer to all of the above forms of mistreatment at work. Hershcovis and Barling (2010) also suggested that aggression stemming from a coworker and that stemming from a supervisor should be studied separately as abuse stemming from a supervisor tends to have stronger negative consequences for the target.

### **1.1.2 Abusive Supervision**

Abusive supervision is a form of poor leadership (Kelloway, Sivanathan, Francis, & Barling, 2005) and refers to a subordinate's perception of sustained nonphysical, non-sexual mistreatment by someone they report to, such as a manager or a supervisor (Tepper, 2000). Abusive supervision describes a subordinate's perceptions of purposeful negative behaviours targeted toward him or her by his or her supervisor, although the purpose was not specified by Tepper (2000). That is, although the goal of abusive supervision might be to harm the subordinate, it may also be to punish the subordinate, send a signal to others that certain subordinate actions have severe consequences, or for some other reason (Tepper, 2007). Abusive supervision includes supervisor behaviours such as putting subordinates down in front of others, being rude to, and making negative comments to others about a subordinate.

Kelloway et al., (2005) argued that poor leaders (e.g., supervisors, managers) are supervisors who are either abusive/overly punitive or are passive and lack the skills necessary to lead. Abusive supervisors actively engage in negative behaviours toward their subordinates, whereas passive leaders are concerned with avoiding responsibility

related to subordinates. Passive supervisors are poor leaders because they provide insufficient direction, feedback, and social support to their subordinates (Bass, 1990; Kelloway et al., 2005). Poor leaders who are passive harm subordinates through their perceived inaction, whereas poor leaders who are abusive harm subordinates through their perceived actions. Although Kelloway et al. concluded that both forms of poor leadership relate to negative subordinate health and wellbeing outcomes, each is a distinct construct and likely to have a number of unrelated antecedents and outcomes. For example, research on antecedents of abusive supervision has linked both target (e.g., Tepper, et al., 2006; Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011) and supervisor (e.g., Ayree Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007) characteristics to abuse as a form of poor leadership, whereas research on passive leadership suggests this form of poor leadership results from the supervisor's lack of skills or ability (Kelloway et al., 2005). Additionally, although some overlap is likely, outcomes of abusive supervision have significant consequences for the target (for a review see e.g., Tepper, 2007; Martinko, Harvey, Brees, & Mackey, 2013), whereas consequences of passive leadership are likely more global (e.g., safety-specific passive leadership negatively predicted safety climate; Kelloway, Mullen, and Francis, 2006).

Although research suggests that the outcomes related to both passive and abusive supervisors are negative (e.g., Kelloway et al., 2005), passive and abusive forms of poor supervision should be considered separately for several reasons. First, passive supervisors are poor supervisors because they lack the skills necessary to support, motivate, and provide feedback to subordinates, whereas abusive supervisors purposefully harm subordinates by withholding support, ignoring, and ridiculing subordinates (e.g., Tepper, 2000). Second, although it is likely that both forms of poor leadership will be ongoing,

the definition of abusive supervision includes that the hostile behaviour is ongoing (Tepper, 2000). Poor leadership due to passive supervision is also likely ongoing, as the supervisor does not possess the skills or ability necessary to manage effectively (e.g., Kelloway et al., 2005). Third, Kelloway et al. (2005) do not identify whose perspective is relevant in identifying passive leadership, whereas Tepper's (2000) definition of abusive supervision includes that the hostility is perceived by the abused subordinate (Tepper, 2000). Therefore, because abusive supervision considers only the subordinate's perception of intentionally mistreatment from his or her supervisor, it is possible that a supervisor's innocuous behaviours are interpreted as abusive and vice versa. For the purpose of my dissertation, I will focus on abusive supervision.

Research on abusive supervision has tended to focus on its outcomes rather than its antecedents. For example, abusive supervision is negatively related to job attitudes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction and positively related to intention to quit (Tepper, 2000). Targets of abusive supervision suffer from greater anxiety, depression (Tepper, 2000) and problem drinking (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006), increased negative feelings (Frone, 1999), health consequences (Duffy, Ganster, & Shaw, 1998), psychological distress (Tepper, 2000; 2007), work-family conflict (Hoobler & Brass, 2006), and decreased satisfaction with one's job and life (Tepper, 2000). Abusive supervision is also related to negative subordinate behaviours such as interpersonal deviance (towards both supervisor and coworkers) and organizational deviance (e.g., stealing; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), and negatively related to positive organizational behaviours (e.g., organizational citizenship behaviours; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002). In 2006, Tepper et al. conservatively estimated that abusive supervision cost organizations over \$23.8 billion annually due to increased absenteeism, health costs, and

decreased productivity, further emphasizing the magnitude of this issue and importance of research in this area.

Tepper, Moss, and Duffy (2011) asserted that considering the role of the target in predicting abusive supervision is important because certain target characteristics put the target at greater risk for abuse. In fact, research in the areas of psychology and criminology suggest that victims can put themselves into situations in which they can be abused, or act in a manner that increases the likelihood that they will be abused (e.g., Sparks et al., 1977). Investigating target behaviours and characteristics that increase the likelihood that abuse will occur is important for researchers and practitioners considering why certain individuals are targeted with abuse while others are not. Moreover, because individual behaviours and characteristics are generally stable overtime, it is likely that the supervisor's abusive reaction to subordinate behaviours and characteristics will also be stable, predicting an ongoing cycle of abuse.

Recently, Hershcovis and her colleagues (Bozeman & Hershcovis, 2012, 2015; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Hershcovis & Rafferty, 2012; Reich & Hershcovis, 2015) argued that because aggression occurs in the context of a relationship, one has to examine both sides of the relationship to gain a better understanding of it. That is, it is important to investigate the roles of both the perpetrators and victims because learning about the role each actor plays in the relationship will lead to a greater understanding of why abusive supervision occurs and strategies to prevent it.

Although abusive supervision research has largely focused on its outcomes, researchers have recently begun examining its antecedents. Hershcovis and Rafferty (2012) reviewed research on determinants of abusive supervision and found only six studies at that time. Those studies focused primarily on organizational situational

characteristics, and perpetrator characteristics as determinants of abusive supervision. Tepper et al., (2006) found that for subordinates high in negative affect, supervisor depression partially mediated the effect of supervisor procedural justice and reported instances of abusive supervision. Hoobler and Brass (2006) found subordinates reported more abusive supervision when supervisors perceived that their organizations were in breach of their psychological contract and the supervisor had hostile attribution bias. Ayree et al. (2007) found that when supervisors were high in authoritarian leadership style, interactional injustice predicted abusive supervision. Most recently, Rafferty et al. (2010) found that interactional and distributive injustice led to abusive supervision, and this relationship was stronger for supervisors who were experiencing high levels of psychological distress.

In addition to the above focus on situational and perpetrator characteristics, Herscovis and Rafferty (2012) found two studies that examined target characteristics as predictors of abusive supervision. First, Kiazad, Restubog, Zagenczyk, Kiewitz, and Tang (2010) looked at supervisor and target characteristics, and found that the relationship between supervisor Machiavellianism and abusive supervision was mediated by authoritarian leadership style, with subordinates low in organizational based self-esteem perceiving authoritarian leaders the most abusive. This study showed that personality can affect perceptions of abusive supervision. Second, Tepper et al., (2012) found deep-level dissimilarity between a supervisor and subordinate results in relationship conflict, which decreases subordinate perceived performance, increasing the likelihood that the supervisor will become abusive. That same study demonstrated that actual subordinate behaviours, specifically performance, influences the extent to which supervisors abused subordinates.

A year later in a review of the abusive supervision literature, Martinko et al. (2013) identified several additional studies on antecedents of abusive supervision, although considerably fewer than on its consequences, further indicating both scholarly interest and the need for more research in this area. Among the studies Martinko et al. identified, only Kiazad et al. (2010) considered target characteristics. Other determinants of abusive supervision included supervisor experiences of coworker conflict (Harris, Harvey, & Kacmar, 2011), supervisor stress (Burton, Hoobler, & Scheuer, 2012), supervisor experiences of abusive supervision (Liu, Liao, & Loi, 2012), witnessing successful high-level managers behaving abusively (Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne, & Marinova, 2012), history of family undermining (Kiewitz, Restubog, Zagenczyk, Scott, Garcia, & Tang, 2012), and low supervisor emotional intelligence (Xiaqi, Kun, Chongsen, & Sufang, 2012).

Even more recently, Mawritz, Folger, and Latham (2014) found that when supervisors were assigned excessively difficult goals by their superiors, they were more abusive toward subordinates. Courtright, Gardner, Smith, McCormick, and Cobert (2015) drew on resource drain theory (which stipulates work and family domains compete for finite resources such as time and energy, resulting in disproportionate resource allocation and resource drain; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) to argue and found that family-to-work conflict predicts abusive supervision by depleting self-regulatory resources and that this relationship was stronger for female supervisors and those with high situation control. Henle and Gross (2014) considered subordinate characteristics as antecedents of abusive supervision, namely emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness, and found emotional stability and conscientiousness negatively predicted subordinate reports of abusive supervision. Taken together, this research demonstrates the importance of

considering target characteristics along with situational and perpetrator characteristics as antecedents of abusive supervision.

### **1.1.3 Victims and Victimization**

Interpersonal workplace aggression has at least one perpetrator and at least one victim. Victims of workplace aggression are generally individuals who believe that they are or have been mistreated by another or others at work (Aquino, Grover, Bradfield, & Allen, 1999). Therefore, some individuals may perceive themselves as victims when others have not intentionally mistreated them, while other individuals may not perceive themselves as victims when others have intentionally mistreated them. Following Aquino et al., I use the term victim to refer to an individual who perceives that he or she is or has been mistreated.

Research in the workplace aggression literature has examined both target individual characteristics and behaviours as predictors of victimization. Research on victimology suggests that victims often fall into one of two categories: provocative and submissive (Olweus, 1978). Whereas submissive victims present themselves as easy targets for would be aggressors, provocative victims play a more active role in their mistreatment, often acting in a manner that irritates or annoys potential aggressors leading to increased instances of victimization (Olweus, 1978). Submissive victims can be vulnerable to aggressive others as they appear less able to defend themselves. For example, Einarsen, Raknes, and Matthiesen (1994) found those who are shy and lack coping skills are frequently targeted, as are those who are less assertive and less competitive (Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000). Aquino and Byron (2002) found that individuals who are very low in dominating behaviours (unassertive) and those who are very high in dominating behaviours (overly forceful) are likely to report victimization.

Individuals high in negative affect (i.e., predisposition to emotions such as anger, fear, anxiousness, and sadness; Watson & Clark, 1984) are more likely to be targeted with aggression, possibly because they display fear and sadness and present as “easy” targets, or because they display anger and anxiety, irritating others resulting in mistreatment (e.g., Aquino & Bradfield, 2000). Bowling and Beehr (2006) found meta-analytic evidence that negative affect is the dispositional characteristic most related to victimization.

In personality research, Milam, Spitzmueller, and Penney (2009) found a negative relationship between agreeableness and victimization. Extroversion was related to victimization in some studies (e.g., Glaso, Matthiesen, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2007), while introversion was related to victimization in others (e.g., Coyne, Craig, & Chong, 2004). More recently, cognitive ability was linked to victimization: Kim and Glomb (2010) hypothesized and found that individuals with high cognitive ability would be victimized more often than their lower cognitive ability counterparts. These researchers suggested that those with high cognitive ability are often top performers and therefore set the bar, leading to unfavourable comparisons from coworkers.

In addition to individual characteristics, certain behaviours are linked to victimization. For example, several researchers have suggested that victims sometimes act aggressively playing both the role of the aggressor and target (e.g., Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Aquino & Lamertz, 2004), and research on revenge suggests that aggressive actions often result in retaliatory reactions (e.g., Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001; Bies & Tripp, 1996).

Research on victim precipitation in organizations supports earlier findings on victim precipitation in criminology and psychology— in that victims are not targeted at random (e.g., Sparks, Genn, & Dodd, 1977). To gain a more complete understanding of



workplace aggression, it is important to consider the role the victim behaviours and characteristics play in determining who is mistreated in the workplace.

## **1.2 Abusive Supervision and Victim Precipitation**

Although research on victim precipitation from coworkers is growing (for a review see Aquino & Thau, 2009; Bozeman & Hershcovis, 2012, 2015), less is known about characteristics that precipitate mistreatment from a supervisor (Tepper, 2007). One exception is recent research by Tepper et al. (2011), who posited that when supervisors view their subordinates as holding differing views and attitudes than themselves, they act in an abusive manner towards them. These researchers argued, based on Opatow's (1995) principles of moral exclusion, that supervisor perceptions about certain subordinate characteristics, namely perceived deep-level dissimilarity from the supervisor, relationship conflict with the supervisor, and poor subordinate performance, would morally exclude the subordinate from the supervisor's scope of justice. Once the subordinate is deemed to be outside of the supervisor's scope of justice, the supervisor can exclude the subordinate from fair and civil treatment, which increases the likelihood that the subordinate will be abused. Tepper et al. found that when deep-level differences are perceived by the supervisor between him or herself and his or her subordinate, these perceptions foster conflict, which leads to greater instances of abusive supervision. When supervisors perceived the subordinate as a lower performer, the effects of deep-level differences and abusive supervision were stronger when mediated by relationship conflict.

In addition to Tepper et al. (2011), Henle and Gross (2014) predicted and found subordinate emotional stability and conscientiousness were negatively related to abusive supervision, and that these relationships were mediated by negative emotions. In a survey

of 222 employees, Henle and Gross found that subordinates low in emotional stability and conscientiousness experienced more negative emotions resulting in higher levels of abuse from supervisors. Further, Zhang and Bednall (2015) meta-analytically examined the relationship between subordinate characteristics and abusive supervision and found negative affectivity and narcissism were positively related and conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness were negatively related to abusive supervision.

Building on this earlier research, this dissertation investigates stress as the mechanism through which negative subordinate performance-related behaviours and characteristics threaten supervisor resources, resulting in abusive supervision. According to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), resource threats result in increased psychological stress. According to COR, when resources are threatened, individuals attempt to minimize the loss and replace lost resources, which can lead to abusive reactions toward the source of the resource threat.

In addition to considering how stress mediates the relationship between resource threat and abusive supervision, I examine when resource threat and supervisor stress are likely to result in abuse toward subordinates exhibiting negative performance behaviours. Based on attribution theory (e.g., Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1986), I expect negative performance-related behaviours to predict abusive supervision only when the supervisor holds the subordinate responsible for the behaviours that threaten resources.

### **1.3 Research Contributions**

The contributions of my dissertation are fourfold. First, whereas most research considers the outcomes of abusive supervision, I examine its antecedents. Although a handful of studies have examined abusive supervision antecedents, more research is needed to fully understand the reasons why supervisors become abusive. Second, I

consider why target behaviours and characteristics may be uniquely provocative to supervisors. Third, I investigate why supervisors abuse subordinates. Last, I examine when supervisors abuse subordinates. I elaborate on each of these contributions below.

In terms of the first contribution, most previous research on abusive supervision considers its negative outcomes, largely overlooking its antecedents. Gaining insight into outcomes of abusive supervision is important; however, for researchers and practitioners intent on minimizing the occurrence of abusive supervision, it is equally, if not more important, to uncover its antecedents. With few exceptions (e.g., Henle and Gross, 2015; Tepper et al., 2011), empirical research on the antecedents of abusive supervision has examined abusive supervision as a reaction to perceived unjust organizational treatment (e.g., Aryee et al., 2007; Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Tepper et al., 2006). This, however, does not explain why some subordinates are abused and some are not abused. Often subordinates are singled out by their supervisors for abuse (e.g., Duffy, Ganster, Shaw, Johnson, & Pagon, 2006; Tepper et al., 2011), suggesting research on victim precipitation may provide valuable insight into why particular individuals are targeted while others are not. Since supervisor dispositional characteristics and situational characteristics should remain relatively stable for all subordinates, subordinate characteristics are likely to play some part in abusive supervision.

Second, although researchers have unveiled a good deal of information about behaviours and characteristics that increase the likelihood of victimization from a coworker, less is known about how subordinate behaviour and characteristics factor into abusive supervision. Given that there are different consequences associated with abuse from a coworker and supervisor (e.g., Hershcovis & Barling, 2010), it seems reasonable to examine separately the antecedents associated with aggression from supervisors. For

example, the behaviours and characteristics I will consider in this dissertation are related to subordinate performance. Inconsistent findings from Tepper et al. (2011) and Kim and Glomb (2010) are suggestive of the importance of considering factors that precipitate abuse from a coworker and from a supervisor independently. Tepper et al. found that poor subordinate performance was related to abusive supervision. Kim and Glomb, on the other hand, found that individuals with high cognitive ability are targeted more than their low cognitive ability counterparts, suggesting individuals with high mental ability are often top performers who are abused by coworkers for setting the bar too high. Taken together, these studies suggest that certain target characteristics are more likely to precipitate abusive supervision while others are likely to precipitate aggression from coworkers. Therefore, one intention of the proposed research is to gain insight into behaviours and characteristics that precipitate mistreatment from a supervisor, providing researchers and practitioners with a better understanding of this phenomenon.

Third, the proposed research will contribute to the abusive supervision literature by investigating *why* supervisors become abusive toward subordinates. I propose that supervisors become abusive because they experience stress caused by resource loss or the threat of resource loss. Subordinates who display negative performance related behaviours and characteristics threaten supervisor resources leading to stress. Supervisors then react abusively toward the source of their stress to protect further resource loss or threat. Understanding why target characteristics precipitate abusive supervision will advance our ability to prevent it. For instance, if my research shows that stress explains the relationship between target characteristics and abusive supervision, then stress management training for supervisors may prove helpful in reducing the incidence of abusive supervision.

Fourth and finally, the proposed research will also contribute to abusive supervision research by investigating when supervisors become abusive toward subordinates. As supervisors are likely to find subordinate performance and performance-related characteristics particularly salient, supervisors are more likely to make blame attributions about why a subordinate is not performing adequately. I propose that when supervisors hold subordinates responsible for their behaviours and characteristics (i.e., blame them), supervisors are more likely to react to the ensuing stress with abuse. Alternatively, if supervisors do not find the subordinate accountable or to blame for the negative performance-related behaviours or characteristics, then the supervisor is less likely to react to stress by abusing his or her subordinate. An investigation of the role of attributions will help us understand one key boundary condition to the relationship between target characteristics and abusive supervision.

#### **1.4 Dissertation Outline**

My dissertation addresses the following two research questions: (1) why do supervisors aggress against subordinates? and (2) under which conditions do supervisors aggress against subordinates? My dissertation will proceed as follows. In Chapter 2, I address my first research question. One reason that a supervisor may behave aggressively towards a subordinate is because he or she is reacting to stress caused by the subordinate. COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests that stress is a response to resource loss or threat of resource loss and that individuals are motivated to minimize loss and maximize resource gain. My research will investigate subordinate performance-related behaviours (task performance, counterproductive work behaviours, and organizational citizenship behaviours) and characteristics (self-efficacy, conscientiousness, and general mental ability) as resource threats leading to abusive supervision via supervisor stress.

In Chapter 3, I address my second research question. To answer this question, I turn to attribution theory (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1986). Attribution theory holds that individuals make causal inferences for their own behaviour and the behaviour of others, particularly when the outcomes are negative or unexpected (Wong & Weiner, 1981). Supervisor attributions about whether or not a subordinate is responsible for poor performance can affect whether or not supervisors abuse subordinates. In addition, I develop a series of hypotheses that draw on attribution theory to explain when supervisors might behave aggressively toward their subordinates.

Chapter 4, I describe my research method. In particular, I collected self- and other-report data from supervisor and subordinate dyads who work together to answer my research questions. In Chapter 5, I identify, define, and validate a new construct for self- and other-report general mental ability before outlining my results in Chapter 6, and discussing my findings and theoretical implications in Chapter 7.

## **Chapter 2: Why Do Supervisors Aggress Against Subordinates**

In the previous chapter, I outlined the anticipated research contributions of my dissertation, reviewed relevant literature, and outlined my key research questions. This chapter will address my first research question by considering why supervisors behave abusively. To answer this question, I draw on COR and victim precipitation theories to suggest that employees may engage in behaviours that threaten supervisor resources, causing stress that may lead to stress reactions such as abusive supervision.

### **2.1 Conservation of Resources Theory**

I begin this chapter by asking the question “why do supervisors behave aggressively?” Research to date has primarily examined the role of situational factors such as organizational injustice (e.g., Aryee et al., 2007) and psychological contract breach (Hoobler & Brass, 2006), as well as perpetrator personality factors such as hostile attribution style, trait anger, and revenge attitudes (Douglas & Martinko, 2001); however, few studies have examined the role of the victim. As described in Chapter 1, victims may contribute to their own mistreatment by presenting themselves as either an active or passive target to a potentially abusive supervisor.

One plausible explanation for abusive supervision is that the supervisor may perceive a resource threat, leading to a stress reaction. COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests that individuals are motivated to minimize resource loss and maximize resource gain. Resource loss or threat of resource loss is considered to be a major contributor to the stress process (Hobfoll, 2001). According to Hobfoll (1989; 2001; Diener & Fujita, 1995), resources include objects (e.g., home, food), individual characteristics (e.g., self-esteem), conditions (e.g., employment), and energies (e.g., wealth, time), that are either internal (e.g., self-esteem, knowledge) or external (e.g., employment, wealth) and are

either valued because they have actual value or because they assist in gaining or maintaining valued resources. COR theory hinges on the idea that individuals are motivated to acquire, preserve, guard, and cultivate valued resources (Hobfoll, 1989; 1998; 2001) and that experiencing actual resource loss, the threat of resource loss, or investing more resources than are gained results in increased stress (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Jackson, 1991).

COR theory has two principles, the first of which is the primacy of resource loss (Hobfoll, 2001), which stipulates that a particular level of resource loss has more of an impact than the same level of resource gain. This notion is consistent with research suggesting that negative experiences have significantly stronger overall outcomes than do positive experiences (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Taylor, 1991). The second principle of COR is resource investment, which stipulates that it is necessary for individuals to invest resources to guard against future loss, recuperate subsequent to a loss, and increase overall resources.

COR theory suggests that threats to resources cause stress. Supervisors are especially susceptible to resource threats. The role of the supervisor differs from that of a subordinate, as supervisors are responsible for those who work under them. Supervisory responsibilities often include exerting energies, allocating tasks among subordinates, ensuring subordinates are properly trained, and making sure tasks are performed in accordance with organizational standards. According to Hobfoll (1998; 2001), there are at least 74 resources that if threatened, lost, or invested without sufficient gain will lead to psychological stress. Many of the items on Hobfoll's comprehensive list of resources are pertinent to individuals in a supervisory position. For example, "feeling that I am successful" and "feelings that I am accomplishing my goals" (Hobfoll, 1998; p.



71) are resources that are affected, not only by the supervisor's individual effort, but also by the effort of his or her subordinates. If subordinates are impeding the success or goal attainment of their supervisors through their behaviours or attitudes, then supervisors will perceive a resource threat that may result in a stress reaction. Similarly, if negative subordinate attitudes or behaviours affect a supervisor's "role as a leader" or "status at work" (Hobfoll, 1998; p. 71), by for example creating a bad work environment, then the supervisor will perceive a resources threat leading to increased stress.

### **2.1.1 Conservation of Resources Theory and Victim Precipitation**

According to COR theory, when individuals lose resources or are threatened with resource loss, they take action to prevent the potential loss or to gain resources to replace those lost (Hobfoll, 1989). One way supervisors may protect resources against resource loss is to react aggressively toward the source of the resource threat. Research on victim precipitation has led to many insightful findings concerning how the behaviour of one person can illicit a negative reaction from another (for a review see Aquino & Thau, 2009; Bozeman & Hershcovis, 2012; 2015, Hershcovis & Rafferty, 2012).

Research on victim precipitation suggests that individuals sometimes act in a manner that encourages their mistreatment (e.g., Sparks et al., 1977). According to Sparks et al., there are several ways that a victim can precipitate his or her mistreatment, often by behaving in a manner that irritates or annoys others. In the workplace aggression literature, there is a sizable body of research suggesting that some targets actively or passively provoke aggression. For example, as argued in the previous chapter, targets can behave in a provocative or aggressive manner that increases the likelihood they will be mistreated. Aquino and his colleagues found that those who reported the highest incidents of aggression were most likely to be aggressive themselves (Aquino & Bradfield, 2000),

that mistreatment leads to revenge behaviours (Aquino et al., 2001), and that both those who were extremely high in dominating behaviours (socially forceful) and those extremely low in dominating behaviours (unassertive) were more likely to be targets (Aquino & Byron, 2002).

In the context of my research, a subordinate's behaviour or personality can drain supervisor resources, leading to abusive supervision. For example, low performers (Tepper et al., 2011) and those who performed fewer citizenship behaviours (Aquino & Bommer, 2003) are more likely to be victimized than their higher performing counterparts. In addition to behaviours, characteristics such as negative affectivity (Bowling & Beehr, 2006), high neuroticism, and low agreeability (Milam et al., 2009) have been linked to victimization.

In the next section, I will look at how three subordinate performance behaviours (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002; i.e., task performance, organizational citizenship behaviours, and counterproductive work behaviours) and three subordinate individual characteristics (i.e., self-efficacy, conscientiousness, and general mental ability) may relate to a gain or loss in supervisor resources, leading in turn to supervisor psychological stress. I chose to examine these three behaviours and characteristics because of their relationship to job performance. In particular, certain performance behaviours and characteristics that increase the likelihood of negative performance outcomes may threaten supervisor resources (e.g., success, leadership), resulting in supervisor psychological stress and aggressive responses (see Model 2.1 on page 119).

## **2.2 Subordinate Performance**

By virtue of their roles, supervisors are only able to achieve their goals through the effective performance of subordinates. Rotundo and Sackett (2002) conceptualized

job performance as behaviours that are controllable by the employee and related to organizational goals. They argued that job performance consists of three dimensions: task performance, counterproductive work behaviours, and organizational citizenship behaviours (see Table 2.1 on page 121 for a summary of key variables). These authors found empirical evidence supporting the idea that raters consider task, counterproductive, and citizenship performance when making overall performance judgements, suggesting the importance of considering these three constructs when investigating performance.

Using a sample of actual supervisors in a variety of fields rating hypothetical subordinate performance profiles, Rotundo and Sackett found all three facets of performance were related to overall performance ratings. Specifically, they found task and counterproductive performance ratings explained greater variance than citizenship performance in all three rater clusters identified. They suggested that the relative importance of each type of performance on overall performance ratings depended on rater assessment of importance. The three clusters identified included one cluster where task performance was weighted highest; a second, where counterproductive work behaviours were rated highest; and a third, where task performance and counterproductive work behaviours were weighted equally with less reliance placed on organizational citizenship behaviours in determining overall performance. One possible interpretation of Rotundo and Sackett's findings supports COR theory's notion that resource loss is more salient than resource gain: poor task and counterproductive performance are more threatening to supervisor resources than citizenship behaviours are at replenishing them.

Supervisors are generally responsible for ensuring that subordinates perform well and refrain from counterproductive work behaviours. Subordinates who are poor performers either because they have poor task performance (e.g., making mistakes,

working slowly), fail to engage in citizenship behaviours (e.g., offering help to a coworker, taking on extra responsibilities), or because they engage in counterproductive behaviours (e.g., coming in late, taking long breaks, withholding effort, Spector & Fox, 2002) can threaten supervisor success. According to Hobfoll's (1998; 2001) comprehensive list of resources, work-related resources such as feelings of success and maintaining a leadership role can lead to psychological stress when threatened with loss, actual lost, or when invested without sufficient gain.

### **2.2.1 Task performance**

Task performance as defined by Borman and Motowidlo (1993; 1997) is a reflection of how well an individual executes duties and carries out responsibilities that contribute to the technical core of the organization and are formally considered the responsibility of the jobholder. Following Rotundo and Sackett (2002), task performance refers to duties that are generally considered to be part of the job and contribute to organizational goals and may include duties beyond those formally outlined in job descriptions. Poor subordinate task performance can threaten supervisor resources, such that when duties are left incomplete or improperly completed by the subordinate, ultimate responsibility for ensuring duties are adequately performed can fall to the supervisor. Therefore, supervisors may experience greater stress due to the need to expend further resources training or punishing poorly performing subordinates, reallocating the work to other subordinates, or completing the work themselves. As such, consistent with COR theory, when subordinates perform poorly, it is likely to lead to heightened levels of supervisor stress and abusive reactions toward the subordinate.

*H1: Lower subordinate task performance will relate to (a) higher supervisor stress and (b) higher subordinate-targeted abusive supervision.*

### **2.2.2 Counterproductive work behaviours**

In addition to poor task performance, counterproductive work behaviours can threaten supervisor resources leading to supervisor stress. Counterproductive work behaviours are intentional negative work behaviours that harm the organization or its members (Spector & Fox, 2005), and include acts like mistreating coworkers, stealing from the organization, work withdrawal, and sabotage. As supervisors are responsible for the work behaviours of their subordinates, counterproductive work behaviours negatively affect the organization by deterring from productive work of the instigator and potentially disrupting the work of colleagues. This can adversely affect the performance goals of the unit, which reflects negatively on the supervisor. This may lead to higher psychological stress for supervisors, who attend to these behaviours rather than focusing on productive and goal-enhancing tasks.

In addition to the resource threat associated with subordinate counterproductive behaviours, research suggests that one counterproductive subordinate may encourage similarly negative behaviours from others. For example, Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly (1998) found that counterproductive behaviours of coworkers could influence individual counterproductive behaviours of group members, which affects the workgroup as a whole. Extending their research, Glomb and Liao (2003) found that both being targeted with counterproductive behaviour and general level of workgroup interpersonally-directed counterproductive behaviour is associated with enacted counterproductive behaviours. This research, along with that of Andersson and Pearson (1999), suggests that negative interpersonal behaviours tend to spiral through organizations. Therefore, counterproductive behaviours by subordinates may be particularly stressful for supervisors and elicit abusive reactions from the supervisor.

*H2: Higher subordinate counterproductive work behaviours will relate to (a) higher supervisor stress and (b) higher subordinate-targeted abusive supervision.*

### **2.2.3 Organizational citizenship behaviours**

The third aspect of performance according to Rotundo and Sackett (2002) is organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs). Organ (1988) defined OCBs as discretionary behaviour “that supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place” (Organ, 1997, p. 95). He suggested that OCBs stem from either positive job attitudes (grounded in social exchange theory as employees may choose to return positive treatment by their organizations) or an individual’s disposition (some individuals are more prone to be helpful and conscientious than others; Bolino, 1999; Organ, 1990). Subordinates that engage in OCBs increase supervisor resources by enhancing their ability to achieve organizational objectives and be successful in their roles. Due to the positive outcomes of OCB that results in employee completing work on time and dealing with complaints and problems, they are also helping to create a more positive work environment. These combined outcomes are likely to decrease supervisor psychological stress and abusive subordinate-targeted behaviours.

*H3: Higher subordinate OCBs will negatively relate to (a) lower supervisor stress and (b) lower subordinate-targeted abusive supervision.*

## **2.3 Subordinate Performance Related Characteristics**

In addition to performance-related work determinants, certain subordinate characteristics can threaten supervisor resources leading to a stress reaction, such as abusive supervision. Three such characteristics are self-efficacy, conscientiousness, and general mental ability (intelligence). These variables were chosen because they share a

strong relationship with performance. That is, individuals high in self-efficacy (e.g., Barling & Beattie, 1983; Gist, Schwoerer, & Rosen, 1989), conscientiousness (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991), and general mental ability (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Mount & Barrick, 1995) generally outperform their inefficacious, low conscientious, and low mental ability counterparts. When supervisors perceive that subordinates are low in one of these characteristics, the supervisor may experience resource threat, expecting poorer performance and more demands on time from these subordinates resulting in abusive supervision.

### **2.3.1 Subordinate self-efficacy**

Wood and Bandura (1989) define self-efficacy as “beliefs in one's capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands” (p. 408). More simply put, self-efficacy is an individual's belief about his or her ability to successfully complete a task (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Self-efficacy influences how individuals select goals, apply effort, react emotionally, cope, and persevere (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Supervisors are likely to perceive subordinates low in self-efficacy as a threat to resources because they are more likely to set lower goals, apply less effort, and require more time and guidance from their supervisors. Individuals high in self-efficacy tend to perform better than those low in self-efficacy (e.g., Barling & Beattie, 1983; Baum & Locke, 2004; Gist et al., 1989; Poon, Ainuddin, & Junit, 2006). As lower performers are likely to require more time, energy, and assistance from their supervisors, supervisors may identify those low in self-efficacy as resource threats. Those low in self-efficacy are also less likely to set challenging goals for themselves (Locke & Latham, 2006), and are more likely to give up on difficult tasks (Bandura, 1986), which can result in supervisors expending resources to find someone

else to complete challenging task or to complete them him or herself. Subordinates with low self-efficacy can threaten supervisor resources by taking up excessive work time, and being too dependent on the supervisor, which is likely to increase a supervisor's psychological stress and result in more abusive subordinate-directed behaviours.

*H4: Lower subordinate self-efficacy is related to (a) higher supervisor stress and (b) higher subordinate-targeted abusive supervision.*

### **2.3.2 Subordinate conscientiousness**

In addition to self-efficacy, subordinate conscientiousness is likely related to supervisor resource threat and psychological stress. Individuals high in conscientiousness are more reliable, trustworthy, achievement-focused (Mount, Barrick, & Strauss, 1999), cooperative with others, and display more self-discipline than those low in conscientiousness (Peeters, van Tuijl, Rutte, & Reymen, 2006). By extension, those low in conscientiousness are less likely than their counterparts to complete work on time and may be less detail-oriented and therefore more likely to make mistakes. Using a US army sample, Mount et al. found conscientiousness was strongly correlated with supervisor performance ratings while others found conscientiousness to be the personality factor most related to performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Meta-analytic research suggests that conscientiousness is strongly related to performance motivation (Judge & Ilies, 2002), and is a good predictor of academic performance (Poropat, 2009). Taken together, this research suggests that subordinates low in conscientiousness threaten supervisor resources because they may be less dependable, may not attend to details and may not strive for a high level of achievement, causing supervisors higher psychological stress and resulting in higher levels of abusive supervision.



*H5: Higher subordinate conscientiousness is related to (a) lower supervisor stress and (b) lower subordinate-targeted abusive supervision.*

### **2.3.3 Subordinate general mental ability**

General mental ability (Spearman, 1904) is a strong predictor of job performance (e.g., Hunter, 1986; Ree & Earles, 1992). Schmidt and Hunter (2004) found that general mental ability not only predicted job performance, but it also predicted the level individuals reach in their occupations and was a better predictor of performance and level attained than any other ability, disposition, or trait. Subordinates who are low in general mental ability can take longer to learn new tasks and require more training time than their higher general mental ability counterparts (Schmidt & Hunter, 2004). They are also more likely to lose hierarchical ground (e.g., demotion, taking a job with lower pay or responsibility) while those with high general mental ability gain hierarchical ground over time (Wilk, Desmarais, & Sackett, 1995). Following this research, it is likely that supervisors perceive subordinates with low general mental ability as threats to their success as they may be less able to perform well at work, leading to higher supervisor stress and abusive reactions toward the subordinate.

*H6: Lower subordinate general mental ability is related to (a) higher supervisor stress and (b) higher subordinate-targeted abusive supervision.*

## **2.4 The Moderating Role of Supervisor Resources**

In the previous sections, I reviewed research on victim precipitation, and then explored how subordinate behaviours and characteristics threaten supervisor resources leading to increased psychological stress and abuse toward the subordinate. In this section, I consider how supervisor resources moderate the relationship among

subordinate performance-related behaviours and characteristics and supervisor stress. Specifically, drawing on COR theory, I argue that supervisors with many resources are less likely to perceive the same degree of resource threat from subordinates as supervisors with fewer resources.

According to Hobfoll (2001), in addition to COR theory's two principles (primacy of resource loss and resource investment; outlined at the onset of this chapter), there are four corollaries that stem from the second principle. Hobfoll's resource investment principle holds that resources must be invested to increase net resources and guard against future resource losses. The first corollary of this principle states that individuals with many resources are more likely to increase their resources and less likely to suffer resource losses, whereas those with few resources are more likely to suffer resource loss and less likely to gain resources. Those with vast resources are able to invest some of their resources resulting in resource gain while those with few resources must use up their limited supply, leaving little or no resources for re-investment (Brouer, Wallace, & Harvey, 2011; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993). Hobfoll's second corollary furthers that individuals with fewer resources are not only more susceptible to resource loss; once they suffer a loss, they are more likely to continue to suffer subsequent losses. Third, individuals with greater resources are not only more susceptible to resource gain; once they begin to gain resources, they are more likely to continue to amass resources. Hobfoll (2001) suggests that because losses are more salient than gains, spirals of resource losses are faster and more damaging than gains are rewarding. Last, the fourth corollary states that those lacking resources are more likely to act defensively to guard the resources they do have against losses.

According to Hobfoll (1998), those with few resources are more susceptible to resource loss while those with many resources are more predisposed to resource gain. Hobfoll identifies several resources that are pertinent to supervisors such as success perceptions, leadership role, optimism, time for work, coworker support, and adequate work tools (Hobfoll, 1998, p. 71). COR theory suggests that supervisors rich in these resources (and others) are less vulnerable to resource threat and therefore stress than those with fewer resources. Supervisors who have resources such as perceptions that they have enough time to accomplish their work and a sense of accomplishment should be less vulnerable to resource threat and stress than supervisors who perceive that they are lacking the time and tools to succeed. Therefore:

*H7: Supervisor resources will moderate the relationship between subordinate performance behaviours and supervisor stress such that the negative relationship between subordinate (a) task performance and (b) organizational citizenship behaviours and the positive relationship between (c) counterproductive work behaviours and supervisor stress will be stronger for supervisors with few resources.*

*H8: Supervisor resources will moderate the relationship between subordinate characteristics and supervisor stress such that the negative relationship between subordinate (a) self-efficacy, (b) conscientiousness, and (c) general mental ability and supervisor stress will be stronger for supervisors with few resources.*

## **2.5 Stress, Resource Threat, and Abusive Supervision**

In the previous sections, I identified supervisor resources as a moderator of the relationship between subordinate behaviours and characteristics and supervisor stress. In this section, I consider abusive supervision as a stress reaction to resource threat.

According to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), when individuals experience stress from resource threats or losses, they take action to protect and conserve resources.

There is evidence that when individuals experience stress they act aggressively. Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (1939) suggested that when someone's goals are thwarted, they feel the urge to strike out against the individual who is thwarting the goal. Thwarting goals (e.g., through poor performance) interferes with supervisors' opportunities to increase resources. For instance, when subordinates engage in behaviours and or possess characteristics that result in poor performance, supervisors are likely to perceive this as interference with their supervisory objective to achieve organizational goals. Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) posited and found that role stress was related to perpetrating aggression. As supervisors are ultimately responsible for the work behaviours of their subordinates, performance-related behaviours and characteristics are particularly relevant to role-related stress. When supervisors experience stress as a result of negative subordinate performance-related behaviours and characteristics, these stress-inducing role interferences may lead to supervisor aggression.

COR theory suggests that when resources are threatened individuals take measures to protect their resources. Supervisors may abuse subordinates to protect their resources or to promote behavioural change, both of which may alleviate their stress. Supervisors may perceive mistreating subordinates whose attitudes and behaviours threaten their resources as a way to guard against future resource loss and therefore increased stress. For example, ignoring or withholding help or training from the subordinate can leave the supervisor with more resources to invest with stronger performing subordinates to maximize resource gain and minimize resource loss. An alternative to protecting resources, supervisors may see abuse as a way to gain resources

thereby alleviating their stress. That is, supervisors may perceive abusive behaviours such as yelling at, ridiculing, or reminding subordinates of their mistakes as a way to get subordinates to improve their performance.

Based on the above arguments, I posit that supervisor stress will mediate the relationship between subordinate attitudes and behaviours and abusive supervision.

*H9: Supervisor stress will mediate the relationship between subordinate performance and abusive supervision such that higher stress will be related to more abuse against subordinates who exhibit (a) poorer task performance, (b) higher counterproductive behaviours, and (c) lower citizenship behaviours.*

*H10: Supervisor stress will mediate the relationship between subordinates' individual characteristics and abusive supervision such that higher stress will be related to more abuse against subordinates who have lower (a) self-efficacy, (b) conscientiousness, and (c) general mental ability.*

### **Chapter 3: Under Which Conditions Do Supervisors Aggress Against Subordinates**

In the previous chapter, I asked the question “why do supervisors behave aggressively?” Drawing on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), I argued that when employees engage in threatening behaviours or possess characteristics that drain or threaten to drain supervisor resources, supervisors experience stress and therefore may engage in aggression to prevent further resource depletion. However, supervisors may not always become abusive toward subordinates who display threatening behaviours and characteristics.

Building on the previous chapter, in this chapter I ask the question “under which conditions do supervisors behave aggressively?” To answer this question, I draw on attribution theory to examine how supervisor attributions about a subordinate’s performance and dispositional characteristics factor into the likelihood that the supervisor will behave abusively. That is, how supervisors go about protecting and restoring their resources is likely to depend on the attributions they make for the stressor.

As described in the previous chapter, poor subordinate performance includes sub-par task performance, low organizational citizenship behaviours, behaving counterproductively, or a combination of these behaviours (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). I expect poor subordinate performance to threaten supervisor resources resulting in stress and abusive supervision. However, the attributions that supervisors make about subordinate performance may influence the extent to which supervisors respond aggressively. As argued in Chapter 2, COR theory stipulates that individuals are motivated to minimize resources loss and maximize resource gain (Hobfoll, 1989). Poor subordinate performance threatens supervisor resources and may cause stress and abusive reactions, as supervisors are often responsible for the performance of those they

supervise. However, causal attributions for subordinate poor performance can influence how supervisors handle the stress. Attributions about whether the subordinate could have performed better or the subordinate's degree of responsibility for the poor performance can help supervisors make decisions regarding whether additional resources should be withheld from the poorly performing subordinate. In this chapter, I will consider the role of supervisor attributions for subordinate poor performance play in the relationship between supervisor stress and abusive supervision.

According to COR theory, individuals are motivated to maximize resource gain and minimize resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989). Supervisors are in a unique position, in which not only their own efforts but also the efforts of subordinates can contribute to or drain their pool of resources. Reacting abusively toward subordinates who are not responsible for their poor performance due to factors outside of their control will not improve performance or supervisor resources. Alternatively, when responsibility attributions are made toward the subordinate for poor performance, supervisors may believe that abusive reactions will encourage better performance.

In the following sections, I will consider how supervisor attributions about locus of causality, controllability, and stability of subordinate performance help supervisors attribute responsibility for poor subordinate performance. In addition to theorizing about how supervisors make responsibility attributions for poor performance, I will propose hypotheses concerning how attributions of responsibility affect subsequent subordinate directed abusive behaviours. Specifically, I will consider the extent to which supervisor attributions lead to abusive supervision as a protective stress response.

### 3.1 Attribution Theory

Attribution theory as conceptualized by Heider (1958) suggests that individuals have an intrinsic desire to understand what causes the way they and others behave. Causal attributions are answers to questions about why something is a certain way. When individuals ask this ‘why’ question, they are searching for the cause of an unexpected event, a failure, or a negative occurrence (Wong & Weiner, 1981). When an outcome is atypical, individuals naturally attempt to attribute a reason for the unexpected or unpleasant outcome. Based on this theory, a resource loss or threat to resources should initiate a supervisor’s attribution process.

Green and Mitchell (1979) suggested that a supervisor’s attribution process occurs in two steps. First, attributions are made for subordinate performance behaviour. Second, behaviours toward the subordinate are based on attributions for subordinate behaviour. These researchers suggested and found that different causal attributions by the supervisor result in different subordinate-directed behaviours. Supervisor attributions for negative subordinate behaviours can lead to subordinate-directed behavioural reactions such as defending or withholding resources and punishing or neglecting the subordinate.

According to attribution theory, attributions about behaviour are made on the basis of three main factors: locus of causality, stability, and controllability (Weiner, 1979; 1985). Based on these factors, supervisors will either blame subordinates for their behaviour or attribute their behaviour to other factors.

**Locus of Causality.** A significant body of research suggests that internal (caused by the actor) and external (situational) attributions about behaviour yield significantly different consequences (e.g., Green & Mitchell, 1979; Mitchell & Wood, 1980; Mitchel,



Green, & Wood, 1981, Weiner, 1995). When poor performance is attributed to external factors, such as luck, lack of training, or equipment malfunctions, the individual is generally deemed not responsible for the behaviour because the behaviour is attributed to factors that originate outside the individual. As such, if the supervisor attributes poor performance to external factors, then the supervisor should also perceive that the resource threat did not originate within the subordinate. If the subordinate did not cause the resource threat, then the supervisor is less likely to react abusively because neglecting or abusing the subordinate for a behaviour he or she is not responsible for would not result in resource gain (i.e., through improved performance) and could instead result in increased resource loss. When subordinate poor performance is externally attributed, the supervisor is unlikely to blame or ascribe responsibility for the poor performance to the subordinate.

Alternatively, negative outcomes related to internal attributions (e.g., effort or ability) tend to yield stronger consequences than the same outcomes attributed to external factors (e.g., luck or task difficulty). For example, Mitchell and his colleagues (Green & Mitchell, 1979; Mitchell, et al, 1981; Mitchell & Wood, 1980) found that when supervisors make internal attributions for poor performance, they reacted more punitively than when they made external attributions. When supervisors make internal attributions for poor subordinate performance, supervisors generally hold the subordinate responsible for the behaviour because they perceive that the individual caused the negative outcome and the outcome could have been better if performed by another individual.

**Controllability.** In addition to determining whether the poor performance results from a factor internal or external to the subordinate, supervisor will make attributions over the degree of controllability the subordinate had over his or her performance when

determining responsibility for negative outcomes. When poor performance is attributed to factors that a subordinate can control, reactions from supervisors should also be harsher (Weiner, 1986; 1995) because the supervisor perceives that the subordinate has the ability yet lacks the motivation to perform his or her job.

Weiner and Kukla (1970) manipulated student exam performance levels along with the amount of effort exerted and ability level of exam takers and asked respondents to evaluate and assign reward or punishment to the hypothetical individuals. They found that high effort was the most rewarded (under success conditions) and least punished (under failure conditions) with those high in ability yet exerting little effort the most punished (under failure conditions) of all groups. Similarly, Ashkanasy (1989) found that reactions to failures attributed to effort were more negative than reactions to failure related to aptitude. Weiner (1993) suggested that causal controllability is of key importance when determining responsibility for outcomes, particularly negative outcomes. Therefore, when supervisors make attributions that poor performance is controllable, they perceive the performance to be, at least in part, the responsibility of the subordinate (Weiner, 1995; 2001).

**Stability.** In addition to locus of causality and controllability, supervisors make stability attributions about subordinate behaviour when determining responsibility for poor performance behaviours. Stability attributions are based on whether or not the behaviour is likely to change overtime, or is relatively stable and therefore not likely to change. If supervisors make stable attributions for subordinate performance, such as a general lack of effort, then the supervisor will expect the same results under the same or similar circumstances in the future (Weiner, 2000). When supervisors make stable attributions for poor subordinate performance, they are more likely to hold the

subordinates responsible for the negative outcomes. If supervisors attribute poor performance to unstable factors, then the outcome of the same task may differ over time (Weiner, 1986). In a vignette study, Drach-Zahavy and Somech (2006) manipulated stability by varying reports of job experience and tenure among nurses. These authors hypothesized and found that beginners are expected to demonstrate more unstable behaviours, start out with poorer performance, and gain experience and improve overtime. Alternatively, observers viewed more experienced poor performers as less likely to change overtime, demonstrating more stable behaviours. When supervisors perceive poor subordinate performance as stable, they are more likely to blame the subordinate and hold him or her responsible for his or her poor performance.

#### **3.1.4 Responsibility/Blame Attributions**

As outlined in the previous sections, when determining responsibility for negative outcomes, supervisors may consider locus of causality, controllability, stability, or a combination of all three. Determining responsibility for negative outcomes aids supervisors in deciding how to make decisions about resource allocation. When supervisors perceive that the subordinate is to blame for his or her poor performance, the supervisor is likely to guard defensively his or her resources from that subordinate. For example, if the supervisor perceives that the reason for the poor performance is internal to the subordinate, and that another subordinate would have performed better, then the supervisor is likely to consider the subordinate responsible or blame him or her for the negative outcome. Additionally, if the supervisor considers that the subordinate had control over the cause of the poor performance, such as exerted little effort, then the supervisor is likely to blame the subordinate for his or her poor performance. Supervisors may also consider subordinates responsible or blame them for negative behaviours that

are stable overtime. If poor performance is an ongoing concern for the supervisor, he or she is likely to attribute the negative outcomes to the poor performing subordinate. When supervisors attribute blame for poor performance to the subordinate, they are more likely to react abusively, guarding resources from the subordinate they consider responsible for the resource threat or loss. Additionally, when the subordinate is not believed to be responsible for his or her poor performance, it is less likely that the supervisor will react abusively or withhold resources from the subordinate because the subordinate is not to blame for the negative performance (see Model 3.1 on page 120). Therefore:

*H11: Blame attributions for subordinate performance will moderate the relationship between poor subordinate performance and higher abusive supervision such that when supervisors blame the subordinate for (a) poor task performance, (b) high counterproductive behaviours, and (c) low citizenship behaviours, supervisors will react more abusively toward the subordinate.*

*H12: Blame attributions for subordinate performance will moderate the relationship between higher supervisor stress and higher abusive supervision such that when supervisors blame the subordinate for (a) poor task performance, (b) high counterproductive behaviours, and (c) low citizenship behaviours, supervisors will react more abusively toward the subordinate.*

## Chapter 4: Research Methods

In the previous chapters, I asked the questions “under which condition do supervisors behave aggressively?” and “why do supervisors behave aggressively?” Drawing on victim precipitation (Sparks et al., 1977) and COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), I reasoned that when subordinates engage in behaviours or display characteristics that threaten or drain supervisor resources, supervisors react abusively to protect their resources. I further argued, based on attribution theory (Weiner, 1986), that this reaction may depend on whether or not the supervisor attributes responsibility for the negative characteristics or behaviours to the subordinate. In this chapter, I will outline how I plan to test my hypotheses.

### 4.1 Method

#### 4.1.1 Participants and Procedure

To calculate an appropriate sample size to answer my research questions, I conducted a power analysis. To conduct the power analysis, I estimated effect size by using the effect sizes from similar research (Aguinis & Harden, 2009; Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2003) using Daniel Soper’s (2006-2012) online effect size calculator that calculates Cohen’s *f*-squared from *R*-squared values. *R*-squared values for research considering the same or similar values ranged from .0961 (OCBO-abusive supervision, OCBI-abusive supervision was .1024; Aryee, Sun, Chen, & Debra, 2008) to .1521 (performance-abusive supervision; Tepper, et al., 2011; interpersonal deviance-abusive supervision = .1024, organizational deviance- abusive supervision = .1089; Tepper, Bennett, Mitchell, & Marrs, 2009). Using the most conservative *R*-squared (.0961), the calculated *f*-squared is .1063. I then estimated the sample size using

Daniel Soper's (2006-2012) a priori sample size calculator for hierarchical multiple regression. I entered the calculated f-squared value, which is the anticipated effect size (.1063) along with number of predictors (2 control variables and 8 predictors), and the statistical power (.8) and probability (.05), which are both conventional choices and system defaults chosen by Soper. The calculation suggested I needed to recruit a minimum of 151 unique supervisor-subordinate dyads to answer my research questions.

The current sample is comprised of supervisor-subordinate dyads obtained from various sources including: three organizations, 109 stores located in three malls, and a small convenience sample of individuals (see Appendix A on page 136 for a sample consent form and Appendix B on page 138 for the measures used in this study). First, I recruited three organizations: a multi-family property management company headquartered in the mid-west United States, an online bank headquartered in the northeast United States, and a real estate investment trust headquartered in the Canadian prairies. Separate surveys were given to subordinates and supervisors. Subordinate surveys asked subordinates about their self-assessed performance behaviours (task, citizenship, and counterproductive; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002), individual characteristics (conscientiousness, self-efficacy, and perceived general mental ability), and abusive treatment from their supervisors. To ensure supervisor-subordinate dyads, supervisor surveys asked supervisors to choose the employee who has worked with them for over six months and whose first name begins closest to the letter "A". The supervisor was then asked to enter the initials of the subordinate to enable matching and double-checking the correct supervisor and subordinate were paired together. Supervisors were asked about their stress, resources, perceived subordinate GMA, subordinate performance behaviours

(task, OCBs, and CWBs), and blame attributions for that subordinate's negative behaviours.

To match supervisors to subordinates, I used employee numbers for the property management organization, and email addresses for the bank and real estate investment organization. I collected a total of 186 supervisor and 516 subordinate surveys from these three organizations resulting in 102 unique (each supervisor was only matched with one subordinate) matched cases. As my power analysis indicated that I would require at least 151 matched cases for my analyses, I continued collecting data.

To collect more data, I went to three malls in the northeast United States and asked supervisors and subordinates who worked in retail stores in these malls to participate in my study. I handwrote a unique identifier on each pair of paper-and-pencil surveys before distributing them so that I would be able to match them afterward. I explained to potential respondents that I was collecting data for my dissertation and asked if "the supervisor" and a randomly-selected subordinate would be willing to take my 15-minute survey. If the individuals agreed, I left surveys with them and picked them up upon completion. Of the stores I "cold-called", approximately 50% agreed to take the survey. Of the individuals that agreed to participate in my research, approximately 60% completed the survey. As such, I collected a total of 115 supervisor and 115 subordinate surveys amounting to 109 matched dyads of varying levels of completeness. At the same time, I asked people I know to ask people they know to participate in my study and ask either their supervisor or a subordinate to participate as well. This resulted in an additional 13-matched dyads.

Before combining samples, I compared the means of the office and mall samples using independent sample t-tests (see table 4.1 on page 122). Sample means were largely

comparable. T-test results identified that mall sample subordinates reported engaging in more OCB-Is, OCB-Os, and CWB-Is, and were less conscientious than office sample subordinates. Mall sample supervisors also reported that subordinates engaged in more OCB-Os than office sample supervisors reported, and office sample supervisors attributed more blame to subordinates, experienced higher resources, and lower stress than the mall sample. Further, since t-tests assume the data are normally distributed, and many of my variables are not normal distributed, I also ran independent Mann-Whitney *U* test. The Mann-Whitney *U* test is a non-parametric test useful for comparing distributions between groups that do not have normal distributions. The Mann-Whitney *U* test suggested the mall and office samples have similar distributions on most variables with the exception of subordinate reported OCB-I and OCB-O, and supervisor reported resources, blame attributions, and stress (see Table 4.1).

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Insert Table 4.1 here

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One possible reason for these differences between the samples is the nature of the work. For example, office employees tend to have workstations and desks that their work is based around, whereas, oftentimes retail (mall) employees' job includes looking for customers to help and fixing up displays around the store. It is likely that mall employees not only have more flexibility in how their time is spent than office workers, they also have more opportunity to engage in extra-role activities toward customers, coworkers, and the organization, possibly accounting for the higher OCB reported by the mall sample.



After combining the samples and removing cases that did not provide enough dyadic information to analyze, 211 cases remained. Of the supervisors that responded to demographic questions, 34% were male, 35% were less than 30 years old, 29% were between 30 and 39 years old, 20% were between 40-49 years old, and 16% were 50 years old or older. Thirteen percent held high-school diplomas, 43% had bachelor degrees, 32% had master's degrees, and 6% held doctoral degrees. The supervisor sample was predominantly Caucasian, with 63% reporting Caucasian/white, 11% reported being African American/Black, 10% Hispanic, and 4% Asian. Supervisors reported performing their current job for approximately 3 years, working with the focal subordinate for 18 months, and working an average of about 43 hours per week.

Of the subordinates that responded to demographic questions, 33% were male and 65% were female, 50% were less than 30 years old, 27% were between 30 and 39 years old, 13% were between 40-49 years old, and 10% were 50 years old or older. Thirteen percent held high-school diplomas, 34% had bachelor degrees, 36% had master's degrees, and 3% held doctoral degrees. The subordinate sample was predominantly Caucasian, with 49% reporting Caucasian/white, 20% reported being African American/Black, 13% Hispanic, and 7% Asian. Subordinates also reported performing their current job for approximately 20 years, working with their current supervisors for approximately 18 months, and working an average of about 35 hours per week.

#### **4.1.2 Measures**

To answer my research questions, I surveyed supervisor-subordinate dyads. Due to the length of the surveys and because some supervisors completed questions on multiple subordinates, many of the scales were shortened. Each scale was shortened using a combination of quantitative and qualitative strategies. First, the measures selected were

from rigorously validated scales, when available. Second, I looked at factor loadings from each validation study focusing on the highest-loading items. Next, I considered whether the highest-loading items were also representative of the variable I was measuring, were clearly written, and could be answered with relative ease by my target respondents. In most cases, except where specified below, the highest-loading items were judged to represent the variables of interest and were retained. Using highest-loading items is fairly common in organizational research (e.g., Eisenberger, Karagonlar, Stinglhamber, Neves, Becker, Gonzalez-Morales, & Steiger-Mueller, 2010; Parker & Sprigg, 1999; Shoss, Eisenberger, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2013; Turner, Chmiel, Hershcovis, & Walls, 2010; Turner, Hershcovis, Reich, & Totterdell, 2014; Turner, Tucker, & Kelloway, 2015; Williams, Parker, & Turner, 2010), and according to Goetz, Coste, Lemetayer, Rat, Montel, Recchia, Debouverie et al. (2013), was used in over 25% of studies that shortened measurement scales from 1995 to 2009. Following a suggestion by Stanton, Sinar, Balzer, and Smith (2002), I incorporated qualitative judgements when making final decisions on which items to retain that best represented the full-versions of each measure. A detailed description of the measures follow, and a complete list of items can be found in Appendix B.

#### **4.1.2.1 Supervisor measures: Independent variables.**

4.1.2.1.1 Subordinate performance. I adapted the four highest-loading items from Williams and Anderson's (1991) six-item scale. To allow maximum variability, question anchors were changed from agree-disagree to allow supervisors to provide information beyond agreement that basic job requirements were met and was expanded from a 5- to a 7-point scale (1= *does not meet job requirements*; 4= *meets job requirements*; to 7= *routinely exceeds job requirements*; anchors taken from Morgeson, Delaney-Klinger, &

Hemingway, 2005). Supervisors were asked to think about a specific subordinate's performance over the last month when answering subsequent questions. Example items included: "completes assigned duties" and "fulfills responsibilities specified in job description". Coefficient alpha for this study's sample was .96.

**4.1.2.1.2 Subordinate OCBs.** I measured organizational citizenship behaviours using eight of 16 items from Lee and Allen's (2002) OCBI (targeted toward individuals) and OCBO (targeted toward the organization) measure to manage survey length. Respondents were asked to think about the last month and indicate their responses on a 7-point scale (1 = *never* to 7 = *always*). Examples of OCBI items included: "helped others who were absent" and "gave up time to help others who had work or non-work problems". Examples of OCBO items include: "offered ideas to improve the functioning of the organization" and "expressed loyalty toward the organization". Coefficient alpha for this study's sample were .79 for OCB-I and .76 for OCBO.

**4.1.2.1.3 Subordinate CWB.** I measured subordinate CWB using four interpersonal deviance and four organizational deviance items from Bennett and Robinson's (2000) measure. Respondents were asked to indicate how often a specific subordinate engaged in certain behaviours over the last month (1 = *never* to 5 = *daily*). To help manage survey length, I selected the four highest-loading items from each measure. Sample items for interpersonal deviance included: "made fun of someone at work" and "acted rudely toward someone at work". Sample items for organizational deviance included: "came in late to work without permission" and "put little effort into his or her work". Coefficient alpha for this study's sample were .80 for CWB-I and .77 for CWB-O.

**4.1.2.1.4 Subordinate GMA.** As I will describe in chapter 5, I created a 12-item scale to measure the supervisor's perception of his or her subordinate's intelligence based

on Gottfredson's (1977, p.13) basic general outline. Respondents were asked to indicate on a slider scale (-3 = very far below average, 0 = about average, +3 = much better than others) the degree to which they agree with the following statements, prefaced with: "Everyone has different skills and abilities. Below is a short list, when reading each item, please compare your subordinates skill level to that of the 'average adult'": Example items included "ability to objectively analyze", "ability to think strategically", and "ability to evaluate information beyond what is presented". Coefficient alpha for this study's sample was .96.

#### **4.1.2.2 Supervisor measures: Moderator variables.**

4.1.2.2.1. Supervisor Resources. An inventory measuring supervisor resources was adapted for this study. This inventory was based on Hobfoll's (1998) 74-item list of resources and Hobfoll's COR-E that asked respondents about the amount of resource loss or threat of loss and resource gain they had experienced over a period of time (e.g., 6 weeks). I made two modifications to Hobfoll's inventory and COR-E for my study. First, I shortened the length of the inventory and only included the 14-items from Hobfoll's 74-item resource inventory that related to work and the role of supervisors. Items were selected on the basis of whether or not each would generally be considered a resource related to employment or employment in a supervisory role. Items meeting these criteria were included regardless of whether or not each resource might also be considered a resource in another domain outside of work. As this measure is an inventory and not a scale, including a broader range of resources is more representative of actual resources that can be threatened or invested at work. Although the resource measure is an inventory, I ran a CFA to better understand this measure. The 14-item resource inventory had an acceptable model fit: Chi-square = 128.67, df = 64, Chi-square/df = 2.01, SRMR

= .066, GFI = .94, RMSEA = .06. Coefficient alpha for the supervisor work-related resource inventory was .86

Second, because I hypothesized that the net amount of work-related resources a supervisor had would moderate the relationships between subordinate behaviours and characteristics (IVs) and both supervisor stress (mediator) and abusive supervision (DV), I asked supervisors about their perceived levels of work-related resources by asking them the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with resource-related statements. Specifically, I asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point scale Likert scale (1= *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*), sample items included: “I feel that I am successful”, “I feel I am valuable to others”, “I feel I am accomplishing my goals”, “I have support from coworkers”, “I have opportunity for advancement in education or job training”, and “I have help with tasks at work”.

#### **4.1.2.3 Supervisor measures: Moderator variable.**

*4.1.2.3.1 Blame Attributions.* I was unable to find a suitable measure of blame attributions to test my hypotheses, so I developed my own items. I briefly describe below how I developed this measure.

First, I enlisted 10 graduate students and working individuals known to them to generate items based on the following: “People generally look for reasons for their own behaviour or the behaviour of others. This is especially true when the behaviours or actions of others lead to negative outcomes. When someone's behaviour, or lack thereof, results in an unwanted outcome, people generally make decisions about whether the individual was responsible for his or her behaviour or if the outcome was outside of his or her responsibility....Is this person responsible or to blame for the event in question? What kinds of things would you consider if you were deciding whether or not to blame

someone or hold them responsible?” These instructions were based on the definitions found in the attributions literature (e.g., Heider, 1958; Shaver, 1985; Mikula, 2003) and resulted in 25 items specific to blame attributions after removing unclear and repetitive items.

I then asked five subject matter experts to judge each attribution item based on clarity, consistency with the construct, and generalizability on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very*). Items with scores below 4.0 on clarity ( $M = 5.43$ ), consistency with the definition ( $M = 4.62$ ), and generalizability ( $M = 5.45$ ) were eliminated, resulting in 8 attribution items.

Second, 610 MTurk workers (77.3% were employed, 9% were students, 56% were male, 81% were between 21-40 years-old, and 73% held a degree) were asked to think of a time someone they worked with was not performing their best, and to indicate their agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 7 = strongly disagree). Following Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan (1999), I then randomly divided my data in half and ran an exploratory factor analysis on the first half ( $n = 262$ ) and a confirmatory factor analysis on the second half ( $n = 267$ ). For my exploratory factor analysis, I used maximum likelihood estimation and direct oblimin extraction. After removing items with communalities lower than .6 on the initial extraction (Velicer & Fava, 1998), four blame attribution items remained “this person is directly at fault”, “he or she was responsible for negative outcomes”, “he or she is responsible for his or her behaviour”, and “he or she is to blame” loadings ranged between .65 to .81. Coefficient alpha was .80 ( $n = 262$ ).

Last, to test my blame attribution measure, I ran a confirmatory factor analysis SPSS AMOS. I removed cases listwise to account for missing data, resulting in 256

cases. To test fit, I followed Hu and Bentler's (1999) guideline that recommend relying on several goodness-of-fit indices when assessing model fit. Mackenzie, Podsakoff, and Podsakoff (2011) identified the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), root-mean-square error or approximation (RMSEA), standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) in addition to chi-square as appropriate measures for overall goodness-of-fit. Although chi-square is a good inferential test of overall fit, it is influenced by non-normality, sample size, and model complexity, and should be considered along with other model fit indices.

According to Hu and Bentler, cut off values near (or above) .90 for GFI, near (or below), .08 for SRMR, near (or below) .06 for RMSEA, and equal or less than 3 for normed chi-square (NC, chi-square/df) indicate a good model fit. The model fit was acceptable on all indices: chi-square = 13.51, df = 5, NC = 2.70, GFI = .983, SRMR = .028, RMSEA = .078, indicating acceptable fit on most indices.

In the study sample, supervisors were asked to think about their focal subordinate and consider the degree to which they agree or disagree with each of the four blame attribution statements. Coefficient alpha for this study's sample was .85.

#### **4.1.2.4 Supervisor measures: Mediator variable.**

**4.1.2.4.2 Supervisor Stress.** I measured supervisor stress using Stanton, Balzer, Smith, Parra, and Ironson's (2001) eight highest-loading items from their 15-item stress in general (SIG) work stress scale comprised of two subscales: time pressure and threat. Respondents were asked "Do you find your job stressful? For each of the following words or phrases they indicated the degree to which each statement describes their job (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*, anchors were changed to 1 = *strongly disagree* to 10 = *strongly agree* to allow more variance), Sample time pressure items are "demanding" and "hectic"; sample threat items are "nerve-wracking" and "irritating".

Exploratory factor analysis using maximum likelihood estimation suggested a 1-factor solution and coefficient alpha for this study's sample was .92.

#### **4.1.2.5 Subordinate measures: Independent variables.**

4.1.2.5.1 Performance. This measure is the same as described in subsection 4.1.2.1.1, reworded to reflect a self- instead of other-rating. coefficient alpha for this study's sample was .93.

4.1.2.5.2 OCBs. These measures are the same as the OCB measures described in the subsection 4.1.2.1.2, reworded to reflect a self- instead of other-rating. Coefficient alpha for this study's sample were .73 for OCBI and .81 for OCBO.

4.1.2.5.3 CWB. These measures are the same as the CWB measures described in subsection 4.1.2.1.3, reworded to reflect a self- instead of other-rating. Coefficient alpha for this study's sample were .73 for CWB-I and .62 for CWB-O.

4.1.2.5.4 GMA. This measure is the same as the GMA measure I identify above and describe in detail in chapter 5. Coefficient alpha for this study's sample was .92.

4.1.2.5.5 Conscientiousness. I measured conscientiousness using the four conscientiousness items from HEXACO model of personality (Ashton & Lee, 2009). Individuals were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree*, to 5 = *strongly agree* their agreement with items such as "I plan ahead and organizes things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute" and "I often push myself very hard when trying to achieve a goal". Coefficient alpha for this study's sample was .79.

4.1.2.5.6 Self-efficacy. I measured self-efficacy using Chen, Gully, and Eden's (2001) general self-efficacy scale. Respondents were asked to respond to items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Sample items included: "When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them" and "In general, I



think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me”. Coefficient alpha for this study’s sample was .87.

#### **4.1.2.6 Subordinate measures: Dependent variables.**

**4.1.2.6.1 Abusive Supervision.** I measured the subordinate’s perception of abusive supervision using ten items from Tepper’s (2000) 15-item scale; five passive-aggressive and five active-aggressive as outlined by Mitchell and Ambrose (2007). Statements were prefaced with “This past month, my supervisor...” using a 5-point scale (1 = *never*, 2 = *rarely*, 3 = *sometimes*, 4 = *most of the time*, and 5 = *Always*). Sample items for passive-aggressive included: “Invades my privacy” and “Puts me down in front of others”, and active-aggressive items include: “Ridicules me” and “Puts me down in front of others”. Coefficient alpha for this study’s sample was .94.

**4.1.2.7 Control Variables.** In this study I controlled for subordinate negative affect (NA) and social desirability. First, I controlled for subordinate NA because it is the variable most related to experienced aggression at work (e.g., Bowling & Beehr, 2006). People high in NA tend to perceive ambiguous situations as threatening and tend to behave in a manner that provokes others. As subordinates are reporting abuse from supervisors, controlling for subordinate NA accounts the variance in abusive supervision related to NA. Supervisor negative affectivity is not controlled because supervisors are not asked to report on their own experienced mistreatment. Second, I controlled subordinate social desirability in this study because subordinates are asked about their own negative and positive behaviours and controlling for social desirability compensates for some individuals’ tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner. Controlling for social desirability is important because individuals high in social desirability tend to over report pro-social and underreport antisocial behaviours. Supervisor social desirability was

not controlled as supervisors only asked about subordinate behaviours and not their own, making it less likely their responses would be affected by a tendency to select socially desirable responses.

4.1.2.7.1 Negative Affect. I controlled for negative affect using Watson, Clark, and Tellegen's (1988) 10-item trait negative affectivity scale. Bowling and Beehr (2006) found meta-analytic evidence that trait negative affect significantly predicts interpersonal deviant behaviours. Respondents were asked to respond on a 5-point scale (1 = *almost never* to 5 = *almost always*) "the extent to which they feel:" Example items included "angry" and "loathing". Coefficient alpha for this study's sample was .859

4.1.2.7.2 Social Desirability. I controlled for social desirability as I am asking subordinates to report their negative organizationally- and interpersonally-directed behaviours at work. Following Herscovis et al., (2012) respondents were asked to respond, either true or false, to seven statements based on Crowne and Marlowe's (1960) social desirability scale. An example question is: "No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener." As this is a binary measure, Coefficient alpha is not appropriate.

4.1.2.7.3 Post-Hoc Control. After collecting my data, I found differences between my mall and my office samples. To control for sample differences I created a new variable and coded the office sample = 0, and mall sample = 1.

## **Chapter 5: GMA Construct Validation Study**

In the previous chapter, I described how I collected my data. In this chapter, I briefly outline why and how I developed a new measure for perceived general mental ability for this study.

For my research, I needed to assess subordinate-perceived GMA and supervisor-reported perceptions of subordinate GMA. The only GMA measures that I was able to find in my literature search were ability or aptitude tests that are lengthy (12 minutes at minimum; e.g., Wonderlic, 1973) and would not be an option for my proposed sample for several reasons. First, potential respondents are scattered across Canada and the United States, making it very challenging to instruct properly potential respondents on these tests. Second, the surveys are fairly lengthy, and I would likely lose a number of potential respondents if a long and complicated aptitude test was added to the voluntary survey. Third, existing measures of aptitude (e.g., Wonderlic, 1973) can often be easily identified as measures of aptitude, negating its use in some organizations. That is, some organizations do they want their employees to perceive that the purpose of organizationally sanctioned research is to gain information on employee intelligence.

Last, in addition to needing a “non-aptitude test” self-report measure of GMA, I required a measure for supervisor perceptions of subordinate GMA. For this reason, I considered both self- and other-perceived GMA together when developing the perceived GMA measure, as I can find no theoretical justification in the intelligence literature to create two separate measures. The items that constitute the self-perceived GMA scale should also constitute the other-perceived GMA scale as both are based on Gottfredson’s (1997) definition of GMA. To develop this measure, I followed the measurement

development sequence used by Bennett and Robinson (2000) and steps identified by DeVellis (2012).

To create a measure for self-perceived and other perceived GMA, I followed a 4-stage process. In Stage 1, I recruited individuals to generate items based on Gottfredson's (1997) definition of GMA and I refined the number of items by asking subject matter experts to rate each item. In Stage 2, I refined the number of items by evaluating item variances and item-total correlations. In Stage 3, I performed exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Last, in Stage 4, I examine convergent and discriminant validity.

### **5.1.1 Stage 1: Instrument Development**

**5.1.1.1 Step 1.** I enlisted ten graduate students to take an online survey as well as asked each graduate student to ask two or three of their working acquaintances to take the same survey. Respondents were asked to read the following definition for GMA:

"Intelligence is a very general mental capability that, among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience. It is not merely book learning, or a narrow academic skill, or test-taking smarts. Rather it reflects a broader and deeper capability for comprehending our surroundings –“catching on,” making sense” of things, or “figuring out” what to do... [Intelligence tests] do not measure creativity, character, personality, or other important differences among individuals, nor are they intended to..." (Gottfredson, 1997, p.13). After reading this definition, respondents were asked to identify words and phrases that relate to intelligence. Specifically, respondents were asked to “Think about the definition you just read, and consider your own intelligence and the intelligence of

other people that you know. If you were to assess someone's intelligence, what aspects would you consider?"

Of the 58 individuals who consented to take the survey, 46 participants generated 121 GMA items. Of those who responded, 63% were male, the average age was 33 years old, 44% were students (part- or full-time), 88% were employed, working an average of 37 hours per week in a variety of jobs including teaching assistant, clerk, consultant, technician, and professor.

**5.1.1.2 Step 2.** After the items were generated, I asked subject matter experts to judge each GMA item based on clarity, consistency with the construct, and generalizability on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very*). Six subject matter experts judged each GMA item. Items with scores below the 4.0 on clarity ( $M = 5.97$ ), consistency with the definition ( $M = 4.73$ ), and generalizability ( $M = 5.23$ ) were removed or re-written, resulting in 80 items remaining.

## **5.1.2 Stage 2: Item Refinement**

**5.1.2.1 Sample.** To refine the number of GMA items, I recruited workers from Mechanical Turk. A total of 908 individuals responded to a survey about either themselves or someone else and were compensated five cents for their time, which is consistent with MTurk payment norms (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Approximately 58% were male, 77% were employed, 73% held a degree, and 82% were between 21 and 40 years of age.

**5.1.2.2 Procedure.** To answer my research questions, I required a measure of self-perceived and other-perceived GMA. As I could find no theoretical basis to expect perceptions of GMA, and therefore GMA items to differ based on the focal person, I also decided to consider self- and other-perceived GMA simultaneously. As such, I required

items that perform acceptably under both conditions. I recruited MTurk workers to respond to one of two surveys. The first survey asked respondents to answer prospective GMA items based on themselves and the second survey asked respondents about the last person they spoke with for more than 15 minutes.

The reason that I created two surveys (self- and other-) and did not ask respondents to respond to questions about themselves and someone else is that the pool of 80 items was still very large. Asking each respondent to answer each item about themselves and another person would more likely lead to response biases (e.g., acquiescence) than if each respondent was asked to answer each item once.

To determine the best anchors, I drew on Gottfredson's (1997) definition. She stated that scores are clustered around the center point of 100 points, with only 3% of the population below 70 or above 130 points. Based on her definition, I made zero the center point of the measure and asked respondents to compare the focal individual with the "average adult person" using a slider (-3 = very far below average, 0 = about average, +3 = very far above average).

Following Bennett and Robinson (2000), items with variances below 1.5 on both surveys were eliminated ( $n = 6$ ), as items with low variance do not adequately distinguish between individuals (DeVellis, 2012). I recoded the perceived-GMA items from a 7-point scale including zero to a 7-point scale ranging from 1 to 7 before removing items with variances below 1.5. Next, as recommended by DeVellis (2012; Fabrigar et al., 1999), I eliminated items with low communalities, as low communalities indicate the item has low reliability or has little in common with the overall measure. I retained only items with moderate to high communalities, above .6 (Velicer & Fava, 1998) on both self-perceived and other-perceived GMA (common practice in the social sciences generally

ranges between 4. and .7; Costello & Osborne, 2005). As a result, I eliminated another 21 items, retaining 30 items.

### **5.1.3 Stage 3: Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

**5.1.3.1 Sample.** To further refine the number of GMA items, I conducted another MTurk study. For participating in the study, participants were given fifty cents for approximately 10-15 minutes of their time. One thousand and sixteen participants agreed to take the study with 774 completing the survey. Of the 774 respondents that completed the study, 164 were rejected because they failed to answer properly specific quality check questions as instructed, resulting in 610 responses. Of these, 77.3% were employed, 9% were students, 56% were male, 81% were between 21-40, and 73% held a degree. I then randomly split my sample and conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on the first half of the sample and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the second half of the sample (Fabrigar et al., 1999).

**5.1.3.2 Procedure.** Participants were asked to think about themselves in comparison to the “average adult person” and rate themselves on each item using a slider that ranged from *-3 far below average* to *+3 far above average*, with the center point as zero (*about average*). Next, participants were asked to think of the last person they spoke with for over 15 minutes and to compare that person to the “average adult person”, on the same scale.

**5.1.3.2.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis.** I followed the same method with this sample as with the previous sample. First, items with low communalities below .6 were eliminated, as high inter-item correlations generally suggest that items are measuring a common phenomenon (DeVellis, 2012). I used maximum likelihood estimation (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999) with oblimin rotation (Costello &

Osborne, 2005) for the EFA. The result was 14 items that had loadings all above .5 on two factors with minimal cross-loadings on each the self-perceived and other-perceived GMA items (see Table 5.1 on page 123 for factor loadings). The second factor contained only two items: “am/is creative” and “am/is imaginative.” I removed these items from further analyses as Gottfredson’s (1997) definition of intelligence states that intelligence measures do not measure creativity. Further, at least three items are generally considered the minimum for a reliable measure ( DeVellis, 2012). The remaining 12 items were retained as the self-perceived and other-perceived GMA measures were both reliable with Cronbach’s alphas of .92 ( $n = 236$ ) and .95 ( $n = 248$ ), respectively.

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Insert Table 5.1 here

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*5.1.3.2.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis.* Next, I ran a confirmatory factor analysis using SPSS AMOS on the self-report GMA and other-report GMA. Before running my CFA, I removed all missing data listwise resulting in 270 cases for self-report GMA and 280 cases for other report GMA. To test fit, I followed the guidelines identified in Chapter 4. For both self- and other-perceived GMA I ran two CFAs. The first CFA included only the 14-items on a single factor and the second CFA included only the 12-items that loaded onto the GMA factor, excluding the two-items that loaded onto a separate factor labeled creative. Results suggest that both models have acceptable fits on all indices, although the 12-item model had a better overall fit for both self- and other-perceived GMA (see Table 5.2 on page 124). Additionally, the 12-item measure has better face validity, as the definition for GMA excludes creativity by definition, further supporting validation of the 12-item measure over the 14-item measure.



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Insert Table 5.2 here

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#### 5.1.4 Stage 4: Construct Validation

**5.1.4.1 Sample and Procedure.** To show convergent and discriminant validity for the GMA constructs, I recruited 52 participants from an introductory organizational behaviour course for extra credit. I asked participants to complete the self-report perceived GMA, other-report perceived GMA about their coursework partner for the term, the Wonderlic WPT-Q (Wonderlic, 2004), and I obtained permission from participants to access their course grade for introductory organizational behaviour course.

**5.1.4.2 Results.** First, I analyzed the correlations among self-perceived GMA, the Wonderlic WPT-Q score, and course grade. I found that there was a significant correlation between self-perceived GMA scores and score on the Wonderlic WPT-Q ( $r = .30, p < .05, n = 48$ ), and between self-perceived GMA scores and course grade ( $r = .30, p < .05, n = 48$ ). To test discriminant validity, I looked at the correlations among agreeableness, self-perceived GMA, and the Wonderlic WPT-Q, as agreeableness was found to be unrelated to general intelligence by Ackerman and Heggestad (1997) in a meta-analysis. Agreeableness was measured using four items from the HEXACO model of personality (Ashton & Lee, 2009). Individuals were asked to indicate on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree*, to 7 = *strongly agree* their agreement with “People sometimes tell me I’m too stubborn (reverse scored)”, “People think of me as someone with a quick temper (reverse scored)”, “Even when people make a lot of mistakes, I rarely say anything”, and “I tend to be lenient in judging other people” (see Table 5.3 & Table 5.4 (on page 124) for self- and other-report measure correlations

respectively). As predicted, neither self-reported perceived GMA ( $r = .10, p = .48, n = 48$ ) nor the Wonderlic WPT-Q ( $r = .18, p = .22, n = 48$ ) was significantly related to agreeableness.

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 Insert Tables 5.3 & 5.4 here  
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Next, I analyzed the correlations between other-perceived GMA for the coursework partner, Wonderlic WPT-Q score of the coursework partner, and course grade for the respondent's coursework partner. I found a significant correlation between other-perceived GMA scores and the other's score on the Wonderlic WPT-Q ( $r = .41, p < .01, n = 46$ ), with the correlation between other-perceived GMA and course grade ( $r = .27, p < .07, n = 46$ ) and Wonderlic WPT-Q score course grade ( $r = .27, p < .07, n = 46$ ) marginally related. To test discriminant validity, I ran correlations among other-reported perceived GMA, Wonderlic WPT-Q score, and rater agreeableness, as there is no reason these variables should be correlated. The resulting correlations between agreeableness and other-reported perceived GMA ( $r = .17, p = .27, n = 46$ ), and agreeableness and the score on the Wonderlic WPT-Q ( $r = .10, p = .52, n = 46$ ) were both non-significant, as expected. These findings indicate that the perceived GMA measure (self- and other-), shares significant variance with actual GMA as measured by the Wonderlic WPT-Q test. As such, the created 12-item perceived-GMA measure is an appropriate tool for me to use as I was unable to use the Wonderlic WPT-Q measure (Wonderlic, 1973; due to length, cost, appearance of IQ testing), and the new measure provides an assessment of other-perceived as well as self-perceived GMA.

## Chapter 6: Results

Descriptive statistics, zero-order correlations, and reliability coefficients are presented in Table 6.1 (page 125), Table 6.2 (page 127) provides an overview of results from hypotheses 1 through 6, and Table 6.3 (page 128) provides an overview of hypotheses 7 and 8. In this study, I used a cut-off of  $p \leq .050$ . Hypotheses 1-3 predict that subordinate behaviours will correlate with (a) supervisor stress and (b) abusive supervision. More specifically, I measured subordinate-reported and supervisor-reported subordinate performance, organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), and counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs) in relation to supervisor-reported stress and abusive supervision, controlling for subordinate negative affectivity and social desirability.

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 Insert Table 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 here  
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Hypothesis 1a proposed that supervisor-reported and self-reported subordinate task performance would negatively relate to supervisor stress, and is not supported; neither subordinate-reported ( $r = -.09, p = .26, n = 197$ ) nor supervisor-reported ( $r = .01, p = .92, n = 201$ ) subordinate performance is significantly related to supervisor stress. Hypothesis 1b proposed that subordinate task performance would negatively relate to abusive supervision and was partially supported. Supervisor-reported subordinate task performance was negatively related to abusive supervision ( $r = -.21, p = .004, n = 189$ ), while subordinate-reported task performance was unrelated to abusive supervision ( $r = .08, p = .28, n = 192$ ).

Hypothesis 2a predicted that subordinate counterproductive work behaviours would positively relate to supervisor stress and was not supported. Subordinate-reported CWBs toward the organization (CWB-O,  $r = .12$ ,  $p = .11$ ,  $n = 197$ ), CWBs toward individuals (CWB-I,  $r = .06$ ,  $p = .40$ ,  $n = 196$ ), supervisor-reported subordinate CWB-O ( $r = .04$ ,  $p = .63$ ,  $n = 197$ ), and CWB-I ( $r = .04$ ,  $p = .63$ ,  $n = 195$ ) were not significantly related to stress. Hypothesis 2b was mostly supported. Subordinate-reported CWB-I ( $r = .16$ ,  $p = .027$ ,  $n = 191$ ) and CWB-O ( $r = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $n = 191$ ) and supervisor-reported CWB-O ( $r = .18$ ,  $p = .015$ ,  $n = 185$ ) were significantly, positively related to abusive supervision, while supervisor-reported CWB-I did not share a significant relationship with abusive supervision ( $r = .08$ ,  $p = .30$ ,  $n = 184$ ).

Hypothesis 3a posited that subordinate OCBs would negatively relate to supervisor stress and was not supported. Supervisor-reported subordinate OCB toward the organization (OCB-O,  $r = -.09$ ,  $p = .26$ ,  $n = 198$ ), supervisor-reported OCB toward individuals (OCB-I,  $r = .03$ ,  $p = .74$ ,  $n = 199$ ), subordinate reported OCB-O ( $r = .06$ ,  $p = .44$ ,  $n = 197$ ), and subordinate-reported OCB-I ( $r = .04$ ,  $p = .61$ ,  $n = 198$ ), were not significantly related to supervisor stress. Hypothesis 3b was partially supported. Supervisor-reported subordinate OCB-I ( $r = -.20$ ,  $p = .007$ ,  $n = 186$ ) and OCB-O ( $r = -.20$ ,  $p = .008$ ,  $n = 186$ ) were negatively related to abusive supervision, whereas subordinate-reported OCB-O ( $r = -.03$ ,  $p = .65$ ,  $n = 191$ ) was not significantly related to abusive supervision, and counter-prediction, subordinate-reported OCB-I ( $r = .15$ ,  $p = .048$ ,  $n = 192$ ) was positively related to abusive supervision.

Hypotheses 4 through 6 argued that subordinates' individual characteristics—self-efficacy, conscientiousness, and perceived GMA—are negatively related to (a) supervisor stress and (b) abusive supervision. Subordinate self-efficacy ( $r = -.03$ ,  $p = .73$ ,  $n = 188$ ),

subordinate conscientiousness ( $r = -.03, p = .66, n = 188$ ) and perceived subordinate GMA reported by the subordinate ( $r = -.09, p = .26, n = 184$ ) and supervisor- ( $r = -.01, p = .86, n = 196$ ) were not significantly related to supervisor stress, failing to support hypotheses H4a, H5a, and H6a. Hypotheses H4b, H5b, and H6b predicted that subordinate self-efficacy, conscientiousness, and perceived GMA would be negatively related to abusive supervision. Subordinate self-efficacy ( $r = .06, p = .37, n = 187$ ), and self-perception of GMA ( $r = .02, p = .77, n = 180$ ) were not related to abusive supervision, whereas subordinate conscientiousness ( $r = -.16, p = .024, n = 187$ ), and supervisor perceptions of subordinate GMA ( $r = -.27, p < .001, n = 185$ ) were negatively related to abusive supervision, failing to support H4b, while supporting H5b, and partially supporting H6b. Hypotheses 7 through 12 involve moderation and mediation and are tested using the PROCESS macro models 1 (moderation) and 4 (mediation) developed by Hayes (2013). I chose the PROCESS macro to test these hypotheses as PROCESS does not assume direct and indirect effects are normally distributed when estimating bootstrapped confidence intervals. According to Preacher and Hayes (2008), the product of two variables is generally only normally-distributed in very large samples. Bootstrapping confidence intervals is a non-parametric protocol that resamples data in the set thousands (5000 in my analyses) of times to obtain a statistical approximation of the distribution of the variables' product. Preacher and Hayes recommend "bootstrapping—whenever possible" (p. 886) as it is the best method available for calculating confidence intervals for direct and indirect effects in most instances.

Hypothesis 7a, 7b, and 7c propose that supervisor resources will moderate the relationship between self- and supervisor-reported subordinate performance, OCBs, and CWBs (respectively), such that the negative relationship between subordinate task

performance and OCBs and supervisor stress, and positive relationship between CWB and supervisor stress, would be stronger for supervisors with lower resources. Hypothesis 7a is not supported: neither of the interactions between subordinate self-reported ( $B = -.12, t(174) = -.55, p = .58, CI: -.54 .30$ ) nor supervisor-reported ( $B = -.22, t(172) = -1.14, p = .26, CI: -.59 .16$ ) subordinate performance and supervisor resources are significantly related to supervisor stress. Hypotheses 7b is not supported. None of the interactions between self-reported ( $B = .07, t(174) = .35, p = .73, CI: -.32 .45$ ) nor supervisor-reported ( $B = .03, t(171) = .17, p = .86, CI: -.30 .36$ ) subordinate OCB-I, nor between self-reported ( $B = -.02, t(173) = .16, p = .87, CI: -.31 .26$ ) nor supervisor-reported ( $B = .03, t(170) = .26, p = .79, CI: -.22 .29$ ) subordinate OCB-O and supervisor resources significantly predicted supervisor stress. Hypotheses 7c is not supported. Although supervisor resources moderate the relationship between both self-reported subordinate CWB-I ( $B = .67, t(173) = 2.84, p = .005, CI: .21 1.14$ ) and CWB-O ( $B = -.74, t(173) = 3.52, p < .001, CI: .32 1.15$ ) and supervisor stress, this relationship is in the opposite direction than predicted (see Figure 6.1 on page 130 and Figure 6.2 on page 131). The relationships between supervisor stress and subordinate self-reported CWBs were stronger when supervisors reported higher resources. Supervisors with lower resources experienced higher overall stress regardless of subordinate self-reported CWBs. The interactions between supervisor-reported subordinate CWB-I ( $B = -.22, t(167) = -1.19, p = .23, CI: -.58 .14$ ) and CWB-O ( $B = .13, t(168) = .53, p = .60, CI: -.37 .63$ ) and supervisor resources do not significantly influence supervisor stress.

Hypothesis 8a, 8b, and 8c propose that for supervisors with fewer resources, the negative relationship between subordinate self-efficacy and conscientiousness, and GMA (respectively) and supervisor stress will be stronger. Hypotheses 8a and 8c are not

supported. There was not a significant interaction between self-efficacy ( $B = -.42$ ,  $t(173) = -1.48$ ,  $p = .14$ , CI:  $-.98 .14$ ), subordinate self-perceived GMA ( $B = -.24$ ,  $t(168) = -.82$ ,  $p = .41$ , CI:  $-.80 .33$ ), or supervisor perceived subordinate GMA ( $B = .05$ ,  $t(168) = .24$ ,  $p = .81$ , CI:  $-.39 .450$ ) and supervisor stress. Counter to H8b's prediction, supervisors with few resources experienced similar levels of stress regardless of subordinate conscientiousness, whereas supervisors with many resources experienced significantly less stress when subordinate conscientiousness was high ( $B = -.94$ ,  $t(173) = -3.08$ ,  $p = .002$ , CI:  $-.8 -.33$ , see Figure 6.3 on page 132).

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 Insert Figure 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 here  
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Hypothesis 9 and 10 proposed that the relationship between subordinates' performance behaviours and characteristics and abusive supervision would be mediated by stress. Hypotheses 9a is not supported. Specifically, supervisor-reported subordinate performance was not significantly related to stress ( $a = .002$ ,  $p = .99$ ), nor was stress related to abusive supervision controlling for supervisor-reported subordinate performance ( $b = -.007$ ,  $p = .76$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero ( $-.01, .01$ ). Subordinate-reported performance was also not significantly related to stress ( $a = -.29$ ,  $p = .12$ ), nor was stress related to abusive supervision controlling for subordinate-reported performance ( $b = -.005$ ,  $p = .84$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero ( $-.01, .03$ ).

Hypothesis 9b was not supported. Specifically, supervisor-reported subordinate OCB-I was not significantly related to stress ( $a = -.01$ ,  $p = .91$ ), nor was stress related to

abusive supervision controlling for supervisor-reported subordinate OCB-I ( $b = -.01, p = .65$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero  $(-.01, .01)$ . Subordinate-reported OCB-I was also not significantly related to stress ( $a = .10, p = .50$ ), nor was stress related to abusive supervision controlling for subordinate reported OCB-I ( $b = -.01, p = .71$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero  $(-.02, .01)$ . Additionally, supervisor-reported subordinate OCB-O was not significantly related to stress ( $a = -.23, p = .055$ ), nor was stress related to abusive supervision when supervisor-reported subordinate OCB-O was controlled for ( $b = -.02, p = .42$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero  $(-.01, .04)$ . Subordinate-reported OCB-O was not significantly related to stress ( $a = -.07, p = .357$ ), nor was stress related to abusive supervision controlling for subordinate-reported OCB-O ( $b = -.01, p = .70$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero  $(-.01, .02)$ .

Hypothesis 9c was not supported. Specifically, supervisor-reported subordinate CWB-I was not significantly related to stress ( $a = .08, p = .66$ ), nor was stress related to abusive supervision controlling for supervisor-reported subordinate CWB-I ( $b = -.01, p = .74$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero  $(-.02, .01)$ . Subordinate-reported CWB-I was not significantly related to stress ( $a = .28, p = .03$ ), stress nor was stress significantly related to abusive supervision controlling for subordinate-reported CWB-I ( $b = -.01, p = .57$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero  $(-.05, .01)$ . Additionally, supervisor-reported subordinate CWB-O was not significantly related to stress ( $a = .09, p = .61$ ), nor was stress related to abusive supervision when supervisor-reported subordinate CWB-O was controlled for ( $b = -.01, p = .64$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was



detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero (-.02, .01). Subordinate-reported CWB-O was significantly related to stress ( $a = .51, p = .02$ ), yet stress was not related to abusive supervision when subordinate-reported CWB-O was controlled ( $b = -.03, p = .19$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero (-.07, .01).

Hypothesis 10 was not supported. Subordinate self-efficacy was not significantly related to stress ( $a = -.05, p = .86$ ), nor was stress related to abusive supervision controlling for subordinate self-efficacy ( $b = -.01, p = .73$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero (-.01, .02). Subordinate conscientiousness was not significantly related to stress ( $a = .27, p = .35$ ), nor was stress related to abusive supervision controlling for subordinate conscientiousness ( $b = -.01, p = .63$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero (-.01, .05). Subordinate-perceived GMA was not significantly related to stress ( $a = -.34, p = .15$ ), nor was stress related to abusive supervision controlling for subordinate self-perceived GMA ( $b = -.01, p = .73$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero (-.01, .05). Additionally, supervisor perceptions of subordinate GMA were not significantly related to supervisor stress ( $a = -.16, p = .42$ ) nor was stress related to abusive supervision when supervisor perceptions of subordinate GMA were controlled ( $b = -.02, p = .53$ ). No indirect effect ( $ab$ ) was detected as a bootstrap confidence interval included zero (-.01, .04).

Hypothesis 11 predicted that supervisor blame attributions for subordinate poor performance would moderate the relationship between supervisor stress and abusive supervision, such that when responsibility for poor task performance (H11a), low OCBs (H11b), and high CWBs (H11c) is attributed to the subordinate, supervisors would

engage in more abusive behaviours toward their subordinates. When analyzing supervisor reported subordinate behaviour, only Hypothesis 11a was supported (see Figure 6.4 on page 133). When supervisors blame subordinates for poor task performance they reacted more abusively ( $B = -.07$ ,  $t(145) = -2.47$ ,  $p = .015$ , CI:  $-.12 \text{ } -.01$ ). Hypothesis 11b and 11c were not supported for supervisor reported subordinate OCBs and CWBs. Blame attributions over low engagement in OCB-I ( $B = -.02$ ,  $t(146) = -.65$ ,  $p = .52$ , CI:  $-.06 \text{ } .03$ ) and OCB-O ( $B = -.001$ ,  $t(146) = -.05$ ,  $p = .96$ , CI:  $-.04 \text{ } .04$ ) and for high CWB-I ( $B = .07$ ,  $t(142) = 1.66$ ,  $p = .10$ , CI:  $-.01 \text{ } .15$ ) and CWB-O ( $B = .06$ ,  $t(144) = 1.44$ ,  $p = .15$ , CI:  $-.02 \text{ } .14$ ) did not significantly relate to abusive supervision.

Alternatively, when performance behaviours were reported by subordinates, blame attributions moderated the relationship between CWBs and abusive supervision such that when subordinates were blamed for engaging in high levels of CWB-I ( $B = .09$ ,  $t(145) = 2.54$ ,  $p = .012$ , CI:  $.02 \text{ } .16$ ) and CWB- O ( $B = .09$ ,  $t(145) = 2.94$ ,  $p = .004$ , CI:  $.03 \text{ } .15$ ), supervisors were significantly more abusive, supporting hypothesis 11c (see Figure 6.5 on page 134 and Figure 6.6 on page 135). Hypotheses H11a and H11b, were not supported. Blame attributions failed to moderate the relationships between subordinate-reported performance ( $B = -.001$ ,  $t(146) = -.24$ ,  $p = .81$ , CI:  $-.07 \text{ } .05$ ), OCB-I ( $B = .04$ ,  $t(146) = 1.59$ ,  $p = .11$ , CI:  $-.01 \text{ } .09$ ), and OCB-O ( $B = .03$ ,  $t(145) = 1.59$ ,  $p = .11$ , CI:  $-.01 \text{ } .07$ ) and abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 12 posited that supervisor blame attributions for poor subordinate performance would moderate the mediated relationship between supervisor stress and abusive supervision. To test my hypothesis, I used Hayes' (2013) PROCESS model 14. Hypothesis 12 was not supported, as blame attributions did not significantly moderate the relationship between stress and abusive supervision accounting for: supervisor-reported

subordinate: task performance ( $B = .01$ ,  $t(143) = .93$ ,  $p = .36$ , CI:  $-.01 .03$ ), OCB-I ( $B = .01$ ,  $t(144) = 1.13$ ,  $p = .26$ , CI:  $-.01 .04$ ), OCB-O ( $B = .02$ ,  $t(144) = 1.42$ ,  $p = .16$ , CI:  $-.01 .04$ ), CWB-I ( $B = .02$ ,  $t(140) = 1.59$ ,  $p = .11$ , CI:  $-.01 .05$ ), and CWB-O ( $B = .02$ ,  $t(142) = 1.63$ ,  $p = .11$ , CI:  $-.004 .04$ ) or subordinate self-reported task performance ( $B = .02$ ,  $t(144) = 1.38$ ,  $p = .17$ , CI:  $-.01 .04$ ), OCB-I ( $B = .02$ ,  $t(144) = 1.31$ ,  $p = .19$ , CI:  $-.01 .04$ ), OCB-O ( $B = .02$ ,  $t(143) = 1.33$ ,  $p = .18$ , CI:  $-.01 .04$ ), CWB-I ( $B = .01$ ,  $t(143) = 1.07$ ,  $p = .29$ , CI:  $-.01 .04$ ), and CWB-O ( $B = .01$ ,  $t(143) = 1.31$ ,  $p = .19$ , CI:  $-.01 .04$ ).

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## Chapter 7: Discussion

In my dissertation, I developed and tested a model based on COR theory (Hobfoll, 1998) to explain why some subordinates are abused by their supervisors and some are not. Specifically, my study considered the role supervisor stress and resources play in the relationship between subordinate performance-related behaviours, subordinate characteristics, and abusive supervision, and how these relationships are affected by supervisor attributions for subordinate performance. In this section I will discuss my results and identify implications of my research before discussing strengths, limitations, and future directions.

My first sets of hypotheses (H1-H3) predicted relationships between subordinate performance-related behaviours and characteristics and (a) supervisor stress and (b) abusive supervision. Hypotheses 1a, 2a, and 3a considered the relationships between task performance, CWBs, and OCBs (respectively) and supervisor stress. The only significant relationship between either subordinate-reported or supervisor-reported subordinate performance behaviours was a positive relationship between CWB-Is and supervisor stress, although this relationship became non-significant when control variables (subordinate negative affectivity, subordinate social desirability, and sample differences) were accounted for. One possible reason for the lack of relationship between either supervisor- or subordinate-reported performance behaviours and stress may be related to the measure of stress used in the study, which I discuss in more detail in the limitation section.

Hypotheses 1b, 2b, and 3b consider the relationship between subordinate performance behaviours and abusive supervision, and were partially supported. First I will discuss the relationships between supervisor-reported subordinate performance

behaviours and abusive supervision, followed by self-reported performance behaviours and abusive supervision.

As predicted, supporting H1a and H3a, supervisor perceptions of subordinate task performance, OCB-I, and OCB-O negatively related to abusive behaviours targeted toward subordinates. That is, when supervisors perceived high task performance or high levels of OCBs they were less likely to abuse subordinates than when they perceived subordinates task performance was low or subordinates engaged in fewer OCBs. When supervisors perceived their subordinates as high in task performance or as engaging in high levels of OCBs, they may perceive that the subordinate's goals are in line with those of the organization. When subordinate goals are in sync with organizational goals, supervisors may perceive the subordinate as a resource, decreasing the likelihood of that the supervisor will abuse his or her subordinate.

Hypothesis H2b was partially supported. When supervisors reported that subordinates engaged in high levels of CWB-O, subordinates also reported the higher levels of abuse. By harming the organization, high CWB-O subordinates can make it more difficult for supervisors to fulfill their responsibilities, which may require these supervisors to expend additional resources to meet objectives. If subordinate CWB-O cost supervisors resources or threaten future resources, supervisors may react abusively toward the subordinate either punitively in response to the resource loss or to protect further resources from the subordinate.

Hypothesis 2b was not supported for supervisor reports of subordinate CWB-I. One reason that supervisor-reported subordinate CWB-I may not have related to abusive supervision is that subordinates might hide interpersonal aggression from supervisors they believe would disapprove of such behaviours.

Hypotheses 1b, 2b, and 3b also predicted that subordinate self-reported task performance (H1b) and OCBs (H3b) would negatively relate, and self-reported CWBs (H2b) would positively relate, to supervisor stress. While these predictions were largely supported when the rater was the supervisor (with the exception of CWB-I), only subordinate self-reported CWBs were related to abusive supervision, supporting H2b. Supervisors are responsible for the work of their subordinates, it follows then, that subordinates engaging in CWB take time and effort away from productive behaviours and possibly disrupt the work of coworkers with these counterproductive behaviours. These data also suggest that the positive relationship between CWB-O and abusive supervision is stronger than the relationship between CWB-I and abusive supervision. One explanation is that because subordinate CWB-Os hinder the supervisor's ability to accomplish tasks and meet his or her work goals, these behaviours are more threatening than negative interpersonal behaviours in the workplace. Additionally, it is possible that CWB-Os are more noticeable to supervisors as they are targeted at the organization and can impede normal workflow, whereas CWB-I may be more covert in nature, have more impact on moral than workflow, and may go unnoticed by the supervisor.

Counter prediction, subordinate self-reported OCB-I was positively related to abusive supervision, failing to support Hypothesis 3b. One plausible explanation for this unexpected finding is that supervisors may perceive subordinates engaging in high levels of OCB-I as competition for resources (e.g., promotions, friendships), and perceive them as status threats. This finding is consistent with Kim and Glomb's (2010) finding that individuals high in cognitive ability were targeted more often than their lower cognitive ability counterparts because they presented themselves as competitive targets resulting in unfavourable comparisons from coworkers. Specifically, Kim and Glomb argued that

because coworkers experienced diminished self-evaluations from comparing themselves to coworkers high in cognitive ability, they reacted abusively toward these coworkers to combat negative self-directed emotions elicited by these comparisons. Similarly, supervisors may experience a resource or status threat that adversely affects their self-evaluations when making unfavourable comparisons against a subordinate who is proactively engaging in OCB-I. A second possible explanation for the positive relationship between subordinate OCB-I and abusive supervision is that subordinates high in OCB-I may inadvertently (or otherwise) threaten the supervisor's authority to assign tasks and have specific tasks carried out by specific subordinates. Helping others with assigned work tasks can make the supervisor's evaluative duties more difficult if it is unclear what each employee is doing. Additionally, subordinates reporting high levels of OCB-I may be popular in their workgroups, giving them referent power among their peers, which may threaten their supervisors' formal power, resulting in an abusive reaction. Third, supervisors may perceive high OCB-I subordinates as more interested in their coworkers than their assigned work. If subordinates are overly concerned with helping coworkers with personal and work issues and less concerned with their own responsibilities, supervisors may experience resource threat, resulting in an abusive reaction. Last, supervisors who perceive their high OCB-I subordinates as threatening to their upward mobility may feel they need to work harder or longer hours to keep up with the subordinate, which threatens their personal resources, resulting in an abusive reaction.

Hypothesis 3b yielded seemingly contradictory results. Specifically, supervisors were less abusive when they perceive subordinates engaged in citizenship behaviours toward the organization and individuals, yet were more abusive when subordinates report engaging in citizenship behaviours towards individuals. One possible explanation for

these findings supports the halo effect. That is, subordinates who are perceived as being loyal to the organization and as voluntarily making efforts toward improving organizational functioning are also perceived to fulfill their job requirements, and help coworkers in support of the organization. My data support Carpenter, Berry, and Houston's (2014) meta-analytic findings to this effect. Specifically, supervisor-rated subordinate OCB-I and OCB-O were significantly more correlated ( $r = .54, p < .001$ ) than supervisor-rated and subordinate rated OCB-I ( $r = .18, p = .01$ ) in this study. Future research needs to investigate this contradictory finding further.

Hypotheses 4 through 6 predicted that subordinate self-efficacy, conscientiousness, and perceived general mental ability (GMA) would negatively relate to (a) supervisor stress and (b) abusive supervision. Hypotheses 4a, 5a, and 6a were not supported, as there were no significant relationships between subordinate self-efficacy, conscientiousness, or GMA and supervisor stress. Hypothesis 5b was supported and H6b was partially supported. Only subordinate conscientiousness and supervisor perceptions of subordinate GMA related to abusive supervision.

I argued earlier that when supervisors managed subordinates who displayed characteristics that negatively relate to performance, supervisors would experience more stress and act more abusively toward subordinates displaying those characteristics. I further argued based on research by Barling and Beatie (1983) and Barrick and Mount (1991; Mount & Barrick, 1995) that individuals low on conscientiousness, self-efficacy, and GMA are likely to underperform their counterparts higher in these characteristics, resulting in higher supervisor stress and more abusive subordinate-directed behaviours. Specifically, I argued (H4b) that because self-efficacy is an individuals' belief in his or her motivation and ability to complete tasks (Bandura & Locke, 2003) and individuals



high in self-efficacy set higher goals and apply more effort (Gist & Mitchell, 1992), high self-efficacy subordinates would be less likely to threaten supervisor resources resulting in lower supervisor stress and less abusive behaviours towards high self-efficacy subordinates. One possible reason for the lack of relationship between self-efficacy and abusive supervision is that self-efficacy relates to an individual's belief in his or her motivation and ability, which may not always match actual ability, especially as perceived by others. Further, in this study, the lack of relationship between subordinate self-efficacy and supervisor performance ratings, suggests that perhaps belief in one's ability and motivation does not translate into supervisor perceptions of subordinate ability and motivation.

In support of H5b, subordinate-reported conscientiousness was negatively related to abusive supervision. This is consistent with prior research linking subordinate conscientiousness and supervisor performance ratings (Mount et al., 1999) and research suggesting conscientiousness is the personality factor most related to performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Subordinates high in conscientiousness tend to be reliable, trustworthy, (Mount et al., 1999), cooperative, and self-disciplined (Peeters et al., 2006), and are therefore less likely to threaten supervisor resources resulting in abusive supervision.

H6b was partially supported. Supervisor-reported subordinate GMA, yet not subordinate reported GMA was negatively related to abusive supervision. One possible reason why supervisor perceived GMA shared a significant and negative relationship with abusive supervision is that supervisors who perceive their subordinates as having low GMA may perceive them as outside of their scope of justice resulting in abusive supervision (e.g., Tepper et al., 2011). When supervisors perceive subordinates as outside

of their scope of justice, supervisors are able to exclude subordinates from moral and fair treatment increasing the likelihood of abusive subordinate-directed behaviours (Opatow, 1995).

The lack of relationships between subordinate-reported GMA and self-efficacy and either supervisor stress or abusive supervision suggests that perhaps supervisor perceptions of some subordinate characteristics may share a stronger relationship with supervisor outcomes than subordinate characteristics as reported by subordinates. In this study, I only considered supervisor perceptions of subordinate GMA; perhaps future research could explore the relationship between supervisor perceptions of other subordinate characteristics such as self-efficacy and conscientiousness and supervisor stress and abusive supervision to compare the strength of these relationships.

If supervisor perceptions of subordinate characteristics share a stronger relationship with abusive supervision than actual subordinate characteristics, then characteristic-based victim precipitation may play a lesser role in predicting abusive supervision than either perpetrator information processing or perpetrator perceptions of target characteristics. Future research should test and compare the strength of the relationships between actual target characteristics and perpetrator perceptions of target characteristics in precipitating abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 7a, 7b, and 7c consider the moderating effect that supervisor resources have on the relationship between subordinate performance behaviours and supervisor stress. Interactions between task performance and citizenship behaviours and resources on supervisor stress were not significant, whereas the relationship between counterproductive behaviours and resources on supervisor stress was significant, although not supportive of Hypothesis 7c. Whereas Hypothesis 7c predicted that

subordinate counterproductive work behaviours would relate positively to supervisor stress and that this relationship would be stronger for supervisors low in resources, I found that supervisors low in resources experienced higher stress regardless of subordinate level of subordinate CWB-O or CWB-I. Only for supervisors high in resources, did resources moderate the relationship between subordinate reported CWB-I and CWB-O and supervisor stress, such that supervisors experienced lower stress when subordinates reported low CWB-I or CWB-O and higher stress when subordinates reported high CWB-I or CWB-O. Supervisors with low resources experienced similarly high stress levels regardless of whether the subordinate reported high or low CWB-I or CWB-O, suggesting that only supervisors with high resources experience stress-related benefits supervising subordinates low in CWBs and consequences supervising subordinates high in CWBs. Higher overall stress levels for supervisors with low resources regardless of counterproductive subordinate behaviour suggests that these supervisors may lack resources to threaten, and are therefore less affected by behaviours that would otherwise threaten resources. An additional possibility is that supervisors who lack resources and are experiencing high levels of stress are oblivious to subordinate behaviours due to high demands on what little resources they do have available.

One potential reason that only CWBs and not OCBs or task performance interacted with resources on supervisor stress is that supervisors with high resources may perceive counterproductive behaviours as more threatening than poor task performance or a lack of citizenship behaviours. This is because counterproductive work behaviours are intentionally destructive behaviours towards other individuals or the organization and may be more difficult for supervisors to deal with than poor performance or an absence of citizenship behaviours. Additionally, if a subordinate is a poor performer, the

supervisor can allocate some of his or her duties to others, complete tasks him or herself, reprimand, or train the subordinate. If the subordinate is engaging in counterproductive behaviours, particularly if they are covert, it is possible the supervisor may not be able to reverse the damage caused by the counterproductive behaviours to the organization or people working for it.

Hypothesis 8 posits that supervisor resources will moderate the negative relationship between subordinate self-efficacy, conscientiousness, and GMA and supervisor stress and that this relationship will be stronger for supervisors with low resources. Only the interaction between conscientiousness and supervisor resources correlated with supervisor stress; however, this relationship was not as predicted. When supervisor resources were high, the relationship between subordinate conscientiousness and supervisor stress was the strongest, such that supervisors with high resources (one standard deviation above the mean) experienced significantly higher stress when subordinate conscientiousness was low, and lower stress when subordinate conscientiousness was high. After plotting the interaction using Jeremy Dawson's Excel spreadsheet (see Figure 6.3 on page 132), I ran a second regression using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro to further probe this relationship. Specifically, I considered how the relationship between subordinate conscientiousness and supervisor stress varied at different percentiles of supervisor resources. I found that supervisors reporting the fewest resources, those in the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, reported significantly more stress when subordinates were high in conscientiousness. This suggests that not only do supervisors not benefit from potential resources when resources are very low or nonexistent; they are actually threatened by conditions that their high-resource counterparts likely consider beneficial. That is, where high resources supervisors perceive a benefit from supervising

subordinates high in conscientiousness, their counterparts with the fewest resources experience resource threat by these same subordinates, resulting in increased stress. Perhaps supervisors with the fewest resources perceive a threat to what little resources they have because they make upward comparisons against subordinates they perceive as competition. If so, this relationship is consistent with the unexpected negative relationship identified between subordinate reported OCB-Is and abusive supervision, in that, supervisors may perceive a threat to resources when they make upward comparisons against subordinates who display characteristics and behaviours that can be perceived as threatening to status and position.

Taken together, these results suggest that supervisor resources affect the relationship between subordinate-reported CWBs and conscientiousness and supervisor stress, and that this relationship is the most robust when supervisors have high resources. My findings are partially supportive of COR theory's first corollary. Corollary 1 states that individuals with many resources are predisposed to future gains, whereas those with few resources are more likely to experience further loss. My results suggest that individuals with high resources, while experiencing overall lower stress levels than their low resources counterparts, are sensitive not only to gains, but also to threat-related losses in resources (e.g., subordinate reported CWBs). That is, in this study, high supervisor resources did not have the expected buffering effect on stress, suggested by COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and hypothesized here. Additionally, while individuals with the lowest resources tended to experience the highest stress levels, they were also less likely suffer additional stress when resources were further threatened by highly CWB subordinates. Interestingly, I also found that when presented with highly conscientious subordinates, a potential resource, supervisors with the fewest resources experienced an

increase in stress. The fact that the individuals with the very lowest resources experienced increased stress when presented with a potential resource, partially supports COR theory's first corollary, in that, those with few resources are predisposed to experience more losses. Possibly one reason that supervisors with the fewest resources experience greater threat when presented with a resource is that they are predisposed to expect losses and therefore interpreted potentially beneficial situations as threatening.

Hypotheses 9 and 10 propose stress as a mediator between subordinate behaviours and characteristics and abusive supervision and were not supported. The lack of relationship between stress and abusive supervision is surprising given that other studies have found significant relationships between supervisor stress and abusive supervision (e.g., Burton et al., 2012; Zhang & Bednall, 2015). Nonetheless, stress does not mediate the relationships between subordinate performance-related behaviours and characteristics and abusive supervision, which I discuss further in the limitations section below.

Hypothesis 11 predicted blame attributions would moderate the relationship between (a) task performance, (b) counterproductive behaviours, and (c) citizenship behaviours and abusive supervision such that when supervisors attributed blame to the subordinate for negative performance-related behaviours, supervisors will react more abusively toward the subordinate. Only Hypothesis 11a was supported when supervisors reported on subordinate behaviours. Supervisors who blamed subordinates for poor task performance were significantly more abusive toward them. Hypotheses 11b and 11c were not supported as the interactions between OCBs and blame attributions and CWBs and blame attributions failed to explain variance in abusive supervision. One reason that blame attributions failed to moderate the relationship between OCBs and abusive supervision is that OCBs are positive and voluntary and it may not be appropriate to

“blame” someone for abstaining from such behaviours. Further, to measure blame attributions, I asked supervisors to think of a negative work experience involving the focal subordinate, which in most instances would negate the consideration of OCBs. As for CWBs, it is also plausible that supervisors are less aware of CWBs carried out by subordinates than subordinates’ task performance, which explains the non-significant moderating relationship of blame attributions between CWB-I/ CWB-O and abusive supervision.

Interestingly, when subordinates self-reported their own performance behaviours, only Hypothesis 11c was supported. Blame attributions moderated the relationship between both CWB-I and CWB-O and abusive supervision, yet not between OCBs or task performance and abusive supervision. The reason that blame attributions did not moderate the relationship between self-reported OCBs and abusive supervision is possibly because it may not be appropriate to blame someone for abstaining from voluntary behaviours, as argued in the previous paragraph. One possible reason that blame attributions moderated the relationship between subordinate-reported CWBs and abusive supervision, but not supervisor-reported subordinate CWBs and abusive supervision is that many CWBs are covertly enacted, and supervisors may expect subordinates who engage in overt CWBs also engage in similar acts covertly. In such instances, when supervisors perceive that their subordinates are engaging in more CWBs than they can identify and report, it is possible that supervisor perceptions of subordinate task performance are negatively influenced by both witnessed and anticipated CWBs. This explanation is congruent with my finding that blame attributions moderated the relationship between supervisor-reported subordinate task performance and abusive supervision, yet not supervisor-reported subordinate CWBs.

Last, Hypothesis 12 predicts blame attributions will moderate the relationship between supervisor stress and abusive supervision such that when supervisors attribute blame to the subordinate for negative performance-related behaviours, supervisors will react more abusively toward the subordinate. Hypothesis 12 was not supported. One potential reason that blame attributions failed to moderate the relationship between stress and abusive supervision is that supervisors are likely to make attributions about negative subordinate performance behaviours before they experience stress. Another possible reason blame attributions failed to moderate the relationship between supervisor stress and abusive supervision is the measurement I used for stress, which I will discuss below in my limitations section.

### **7.1 Implications**

My dissertation research has five main implications. The first implication is that supervisor resources can be threatened by positive subordinate behaviours as well as negative subordinate behaviours. My research suggests that supervisors abuse subordinates who report engaging in high OCB-I behaviours. One explanation for this result is that supervisor resources are threatened by subordinates who are helpful toward others at work, possibly perceiving high OCB-I subordinates as competition for scarce resources such as promotions, friendships, and authority—resulting in an abusive reaction.

Second, my results suggest that individuals with many resources are more susceptible to both resource gain and loss compared to those with few resources, counter to corollary 1 of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Corollary 1 suggests that individuals with more resources are predisposed to gain resources while those with few resources are predisposed to lose resources. My results suggest that individuals with greater resources



are predisposed to both gain and lose resources, those with fewer resources are predisposed to neither gain nor lose resources, while those with the fewest resources are predisposed to lose resources when presented with an opportunity for resource gain. I found that individuals with many resources were more susceptible to changes in stress as a result of threatening behaviours and characteristics of others, likely because they have available resources to lose or invest to acquire additional resources. Supervisors with few resources were unaffected by resource-threatening subordinate CWBs, and supervisors with the fewest resources were not only unable to benefit from having highly conscientious subordinates, they experienced higher stress than when subordinates were low in conscientiousness.

Third, my results suggest that stress, at least as I have measured it, is not the mechanism through which subordinate behaviours and characteristics relate to abusive supervision. The lack of relationship between stress and abusive supervision suggests another mechanism or other mechanisms are responsible for the relationship between subordinate performance-related behaviours and characteristics and supervisor stress. Possibly subordinate negative performance behaviours and characteristics result in abusive supervision because they interfere or thwart the supervisor's ability to achieve goals, as the frustration-aggression hypothesis (Dollard et al., 1939) would suggest. It is also possible that supervisors act abusively in reaction to a loss of control stemming from negative interactions with subordinates. Consistent with COR theory, it is possible that subordinates displaying poor performance behaviours and characteristics threaten the supervisors' resources, specifically their ability to achieve goals and accomplish necessary tasks, resulting in aggressive attempts to regain control.

Fourth, I developed and validated self- and other-perceived GMA, and blame attributions measures. Each of these measures represents longstanding theoretical constructs that can now be empirically tested in an easy fashion. First, the self- and other-perceived GMA measure allows researchers to gauge perceptions of GMA without the cost or time it takes to measure actual aptitude. Additionally, both self- and other-perceived GMA shared significance variance with intelligence as measured by the Wonderlic QPT aptitude test, suggesting there is a relationship between GMA and perceived GMA. The perceived GMA measure is also a useful measure when aptitude tests would not be possible or appropriate, particularly if assessing the displayed cognitive ability of others is of interest. Second, the blame attribution measure I developed enables researchers to measure blame attributed to others for negative behaviours at work. Previously, only self-reported measures of blame attributions were used in research on workplace mistreatment (e.g., Aquino et al, 2001; Bradfield & Aquino, 1999), for example, Wade's (1989) blame attribution measure included items such as "I blamed them" and "I was victimized".

Fifth, my results further suggest that supervisor perceptions of subordinate performance-related behaviours and characteristics shared more variance with subordinate-reports of abusive supervision than subordinate behaviours reported by the subordinate. This finding indicates the importance of considering the relationship between varying perceptions of work behaviours in the context of the relationship in which they occur. If perpetrator perceptions of target behaviours and characteristics are more predictive of abuse in the workplace than actual target behaviours, then this is an important measurement consideration for future research.

In two recent studies, Berry and his colleagues meta-analytically tested differences in self- and other-report CWBs (Berry, et al., 2012) and OCBs (Carpenter et al., 2014). Berry et al. found that self- and other-reports of CWBs correlated moderately (.38), and while each accounted for unique variance, other-ratings of CWB added little value above self-reported CWBs. These researchers noted that of the 18 relationships they examined with self- and other-reported CWB, only for three relationships (conflict, OCB-I, and interactional justice) did other-rater CWB account for more than .02 of the variance in R-squared. Similarly, when comparing self- and other-reported OCBs, Carpenter et al. concluded that the difference between the two raters was rather small, particularly if positively worded and agreement scales were used. The finding that self- and supervisor rating were similar for OCB-O and self- and coworker-ratings were similar for OCB-I led to the interpretation that self-ratings are perhaps not inflated, but better informed. Additionally, Carpenter et al. found stronger relationships between other-rated OCBs, CWBs, and task performance than self-rated OCBs, CWBs, and task performance and suggested that other-ratings of these performance behaviours might be particularly sensitive to halo effect. These authors concluded that with the exception of other-rater CWB and performance, other-rater OCB does not predict variance in other common correlates, and encouraged research to identify factors that may affect self- and other-rated performance variables uniquely.

Based on my findings, abusive supervision appears more related to supervisor-rated subordinate performance behaviours than to self-rated subordinate performance behaviours. Additionally, since abusive supervision is related to supervisor-rated OCB, CWB, task performance, and GMA, it seems reasonable to infer some of the variability in other-rating of behaviour is due to the halo effect as identified by Carpenter et al., (2014).

These findings also suggest that more research is needed on the nature and strength of the relationship between supervisor perceptions and perceptual biases and abusive supervision.

I would also like to note that the sample is largely comprised of females who are under 30 years old. In fact, over 65% of both supervisors and subordinates are female and over 50% of subordinates are under 30, which might affect the generalizability of my results and implications. Research considering age and sex differences for enacted (e.g., CWBs) and experienced aggression (e.g., abusive supervision) is mixed. Some research suggests that males are mildly more aggressive than females (e.g., Hershcovis et al., 2007) and engage in more CWB-O (e.g., Thau & Mitchell, 2010); however, there is considerable evidence in both workplace aggression and abusive supervision literatures that suggests that age and gender are not strongly (e.g., Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007), or even significant predictors of abusive supervision (e.g., Liu, Kwong Kwan, Wu, & Wu, 2010; Liu, Liao, & Loi, 2012; Shoss, Eisenberger, Restubog, Zagenzynk, & 2013; Thau & Mitchell, 2010) or counterproductive work behaviours (e.g., Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Douglas & Martinko, 2001).

## **7.2 Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions**

My dissertation research has several strengths and limitations, which I will discuss before turning to future directions. First, to answer my research questions, I collected both self- and other-report data. Supervisors were asked about an independent, mediator variable, and moderator variables while subordinates were asked about independent variables and the dependent variable. This helps overcome concerns with common method variance (Chan, 2009). Second, I collected data from real organizations and supervisors and subordinates who work together on a regular basis, enhancing the

generalizability of my model. Third, I collected my data in multiple industries, and across several provinces and states, which also increases the generalizability of my model.

My research also has several limitations. First, the most significant weakness with my proposed model is the lack of variance shared by stress and abusive supervision. As this relationship was central to my thesis, the lack of relationship between supervisor stress and abusive supervision severely affected the predictive capability of my model. Additionally, supervisor stress failed to correlate with any of my predictors, further limiting the analytical value of my model. There are several reasons why stress, as measured, may not have correlated with any other focal study variables. First, the stress items asked supervisors about their general feeling of stress, whereas subordinate performance-related items asks specific subordinates about their performance and asks supervisors about specific subordinates. As supervisors were asked to choose a random subordinate, there is a good chance that they did not choose the subordinate whose behaviours have the strongest relationship (positive or negative) with general stress levels. Second, most of the supervisors manage multiple subordinates, which I personally observed through matching subordinates to supervisors on organizational charts and speaking with supervisors and subordinates. A supervisor's general stress level is likely a function of the performance-related behaviours and characteristics of all subordinates. Additionally, I did not ask supervisors about the number of subordinates they supervised and was therefore unable to consider number of subordinates as a possible control. It is possible that overall stress levels for supervisors who supervise relatively few subordinates are more affected by individual performance behaviours and characteristics than overall stress levels for supervisors who supervise many. Third, it is not uncommon for work stress to result from any combination of workplace factors including the job

itself and work environment in addition to coworkers, supervisors, and subordinates (Burton et al. 2012; Yoo, Eisenmann, & Franke, 2009), which also may have affected the supervisor stress beyond the behaviours and characteristics of the focal subordinate. In retrospect, I should have referred to the referent subordinate in the measurement of supervisor stress, as this would likely have strengthened the predictive power of my model. Last, I used an 8-item subset of Stanton et al., (2001) 15-item stress in general measure for this study. Although the reliability coefficient was high and the 8-item stress measure shared a highly significant negative correlation with supervisor resources, as predicted by COR theory (e.g., Hobfoll, 1998), it is possible that the abbreviated stress measure was not representative of Stanton et al.'s full measure.

A second limitation relates to additional measurement concerns with this study. Although I considered both quantitative and qualitative information when shortening each measure, I did not test the shortened measures before using them in my study. Ideally, I would have run an additional study to test the quality of the reduced scales before using them in my main study. Unfortunately, due to constraints on time and resources, this was not a possibility. Shortening measures based on highest –loading factors has important drawbacks that I will briefly discuss. First, using methods that increase internal reliability, such as inter-item correlations, or factor loadings (used in this study) can result in overly redundant items, lowering the scope of the variable set (Boyle, 1991). To combat this potential liability, I considered whether the items that had the highest loadings also represented the variable I was measuring and were appropriate for my target population. Second, because of differences in sample characteristics, basing item selection on factor loadings from one sample may not result in appropriate items for another sample. For example, the original stress in general measure (Stanton, 1991) was

comprised of mainly males (73%) working for an aerospace company in the mid-west, which differs considerably from my mostly female (67%) sample from various industries and regions across North America. These sample differences could potentially have negatively affected the predictive ability of the stress measure in my model. Last, because I did not test the shortened measures before running my study, I was unable to consider the effects of shortening these measures on their convergent and discriminant validities prior to conducting my research. That said, with the notable exception of stress, most of the other relationships in the study shared the appropriate theoretically relevant relationship expected. For example, respective OCBs and CWBs were significantly related between raters, and OCB-I and OCB-O, and CWB-I and CWB-O were highly correlated when rated by the same individual, suggesting convergent validity of the shortened measures. Additionally, subordinate self-efficacy was correlated with subordinate self-reported performance variables; yet not with supervisor blame attributions, suggesting discriminant validity.

In addition to concerns stemming from shortening study measures, the measures created and validated for this study also have potential weaknesses. The self- and other-perceived GMA measure and the blame attribution measure will require further testing in samples with varying characteristics and against other theoretically relevant variables to demonstrate that these measures are in fact generalizable and appropriate across diverse populations.

Third, my study was cross-sectional and reverse causality is a possibility for my significant results. It is possible, for instance, that subordinate reports of CWBs followed experiences of abusive supervision or supervisor perceptions of poor subordinate performance followed subordinate perceptions of abuse from the supervisor. For

example, Schat and Frone (2011) found that workplace aggression led to negative job attitudes and target health, which lead to lower task and contextual performance. Fourth, it is possible that a time-lagged study would have yielded more significant findings as subordinate characteristics and behaviours can take time to manifest into supervisor stress. Longitudinal research is necessary to test this possibility and make a stronger argument for the predictive strength of my model. Fifth, I considered the impact of net supervisor work-related resources in my model and not losses or gains (as theorized by Hobfoll, 2001) of supervisor resources. A longitudinal research design would enable observation of how actual losses and gains of supervisor work-related resources affect the relationship between subordinate behaviours and characteristics and supervisor stress.

Sixth, the mean and variance for abusive supervision were low in my sample ( $M = 1.43$ ,  $SD = .76$ ), which likely limits the power of my model. That said, subordinate reports of abusive supervision in this study are comparable to other studies on abusive supervision (see Table 7.1 on page 129), and workplace aggression more broadly. It is worthwhile to mention that although the mean and variance for abusive supervision is low, of the 194 subordinates that responded to abusive supervision items, 114 reported some degree of abuse from their supervisors.

Seventh, since supervisors and subordinates were asked about each other's behaviours, it is possible that each perceived behaviours that were absent or misinterpreted behaviours that were present. It is also possible that deliberate behaviours were perceived as accidental and vice versa, affecting study results. For example, supervisors may have perceived CWBs as poor task performance, or subordinates may have perceived a chronically abusive supervisor as passive and lacking leadership skills. Research on human behaviour at work relies on the *perception* of the individuals



reporting the behaviour. Although perceptions are often incorrect, it is perception and not reality that drives human action; therefore, my reliance on perception was appropriate and necessary.

Last, I used a convenience sample for my data. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which subjects are chosen because they are available (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Jiao, 2007). Convenience samples are not considered generalizable to the population and result in lower external validity; however, this may be partially offset by the fact that my sample was comprised of participants from multiple organizations.

There are also several opportunities for future research related to this study. First, the proposed model could be re-tested with an alternative measure of stress. Possibly considering stress as it relates to a specific subordinate or incremental changes in stress as a result of subordinate performance-related behaviours or characteristics would yield the predicted results.

Second, future research should consider other mechanisms that help to explain why certain subordinate behaviours and characteristics result in abusive supervisor reactions using COR theory and potential competing theories (e.g., the frustration-aggression hypothesis, Dollard et al., 1939). As argued previously, it is possible that other mechanisms may explain the relationship between subordinate characteristics and behaviours and abusive supervision. With respect to COR theory, resource depletion (e.g., ego depletion, self-regulation) and control appraisals may negatively affect supervisor resources resulting less available resources to control aggressive impulses toward provocative targets. Moreover, it is possible that the frustration-aggression hypothesis may be a competing theory that may explain the relationship between victim

characteristics and behaviours, and abusive supervision. Dollard et al.'s frustration-aggression hypothesis suggests that when desired goals are interfered with or thwarted, individuals react with hostile or emotional aggression. Subordinates displaying poor performance-related behaviours can be interpreted as goal thwarting to supervisors resulting in emotionally aggressive reactions to the source of the goal interference. Future research should consider the frustration-aggression hypothesis as a competing theory to COR theory in predicting abusive supervision from subordinate characteristics and behaviours.

Third, future research should compare the strength of the respective relationships between subordinate-reported behaviours and characteristics and supervisor-reported characteristics in predicting abusive supervision. From the presented data, it appears that supervisor-reported subordinate behaviours and supervisor-reported subordinate GMA are stronger predictors of abusive supervision than subordinate-reported behaviours and characteristics (with the exception of CWBs and conscientiousness). This finding is somewhat inconsistent with recent research that meta-analytically shows other-report OCBs seldom explain variance beyond that explained by self-reported OCBs (Carpenter et al., 2014). If abusive supervision shares a stronger relationship with supervisor perceptions of subordinate behaviour than subordinate self-reported behaviours, perhaps other supervisor behaviours, such as helping subordinates will also share stronger relationships with supervisor perceptions of subordinate-reported behaviours. Future research should investigate how supervisor ratings of subordinate behaviours affect both abusive and helping behaviours toward the subordinate.

Additionally, if supervisor perceptions of subordinate behaviours are stronger predictors of abusive supervision than subordinate-reported behaviours, then perhaps

victim precipitation theory is not as robust a predictor of abusive supervision as hypothesized here and generally held. Future research should consider supervisor characteristics that inform perceptions of others along with target characteristics when investigating predictors of abusive supervision.

Last, in my dissertation I considered the impact of task performance, OCBs and CWBs on supervisor stress and abusive supervision individually. Future research should consider the relative strengths of each in predicting supervisor stress and abusive supervision, and how combinations between subordinate performance variables affect supervisor stress and abuse toward subordinates. Further, researchers should also consider other variables that may impact the strength of these relationships, such as whether or not the supervisor and subordinate have a friendship or other non-work relationship that may alter how performance related behaviours and characteristics are perceived.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

In summary, my dissertation finds partial support for COR and victim precipitation theories. Specifically COR theory stipulates that those with many resources are predisposed to gain, while those with few are predisposed to lose, resources resulting in lower and higher stress respectively. My results suggest that supervisors with low resources experience high stress and are less affected by potential resources gains or losses, while those with high resources are susceptible to both potential gains and losses and related changes in stress. My findings suggest that supervisor perceptions of subordinate work-related behaviours and characteristics share more overall variance with abusive supervision than subordinate reported behaviours and characteristics, suggesting

supervisor perceptions (and perceptual biases) may play a more predictive role in abusive supervision than target characteristics. Further research is needed to determine the robustness of these findings.

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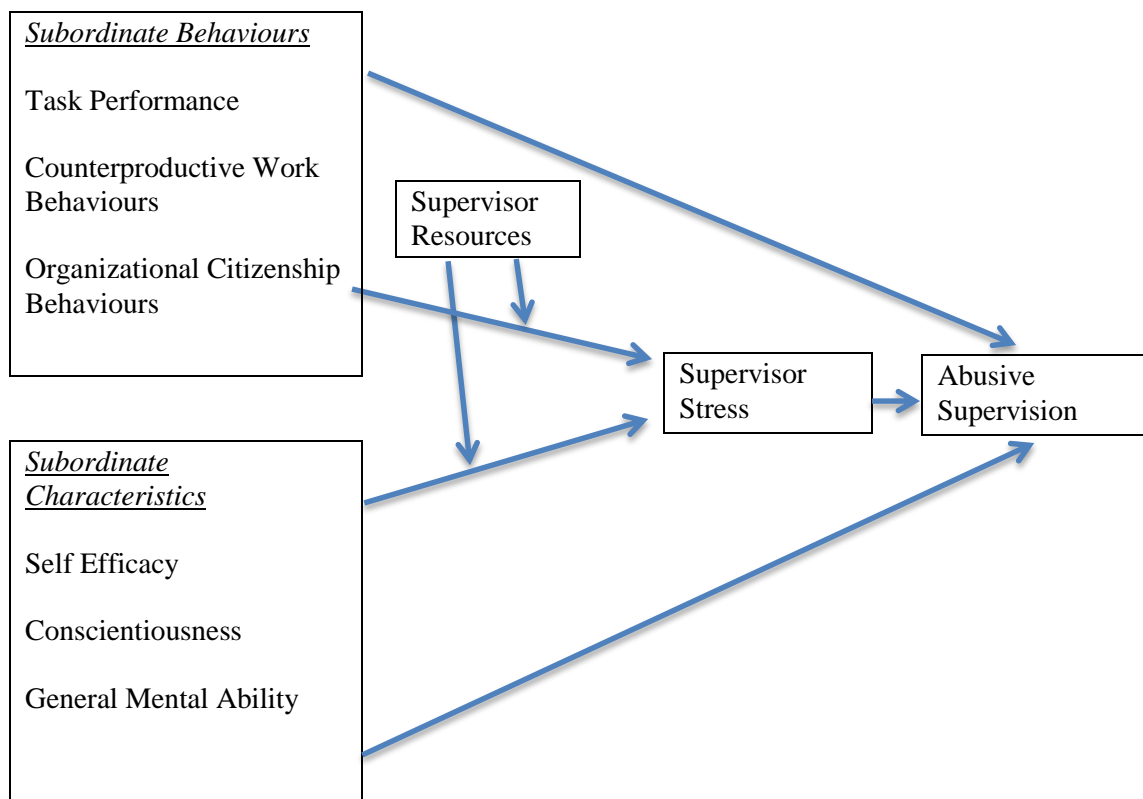
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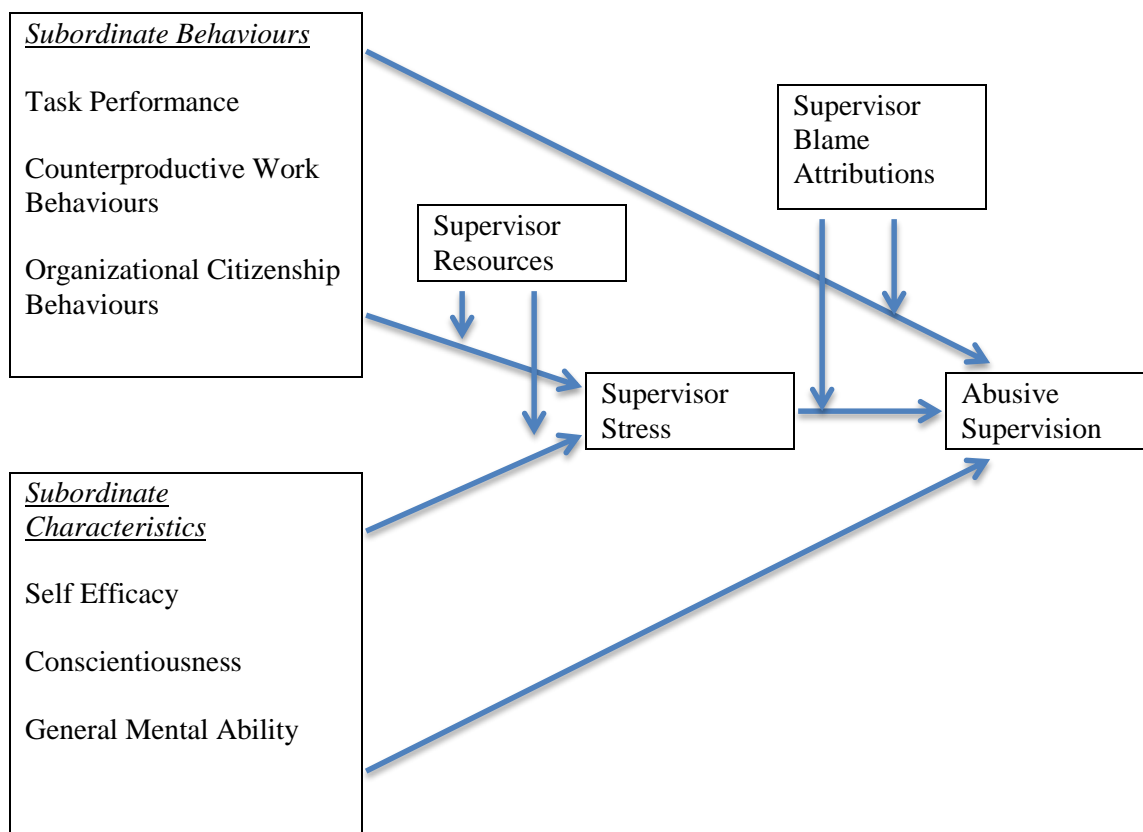
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## Models

### Model 2.1



**Model 3.1**

## Tables

**Table 2.1: Key Study Variables**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Description</b>
Workplace Aggression (Neuman & Baron, 2005)	Purposeful non-physical, non-sexual acts to harm the organization or one of its members by organization member
Abusive Supervision (Tepper, 2000)	Subordinate perception that his or her supervisor is mistreating him or her (non-sexual, non-physical) on an ongoing basis
Victim/Victimology (Aquino et al. 1999)	A victim is someone who believes he or she has, or actually has been mistreated by someone at work
Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989)	Stipulates that people are motivated to acquire and conserve resources and when resources are threatened or lost, individuals experience stress
Resources (Hobfoll, 1989; 1998)	Any object (e.g., home, food), characteristic (e.g., self-esteem, optimism), condition (e.g., employment), or energy (e.g., time, wealth), that are valued because they have actual value or they can assist in gaining and maintaining other valued resources
Task Performance (Borman & Motowildo, 1993; 1997)	Reflects how well an individual completes the duties outlined in his or her job description that are central to his or her role within the organization
Counterproductive Work Behaviours (Fox & Spector, 2005)	Antisocial behaviours directed toward the organization or any of its employees and are intentionally carried out by an insider
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (Organ, 1997)	Prosocial behaviours directed toward the organization or coworkers that are voluntary and not part of the incumbent's job requirements
Self-Efficacy (Bandura & Locke, 2003)	An individual's belief in his or her motivation and ability to complete tasks
Conscientiousness (Mount et al. 1999)	A Big-5 personality trait. People high in conscientiousness tend to be reliable, hardworking, organized, and trustworthy
General Mental Ability (Gottfredson, 1997)	Cognitive capabilities including ability to reason, learn from experience, problem solve, and make sense of things and situations
Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958)	People are driven to make casual explanations for their own behaviour and the behaviour of others
Blame Attributions (Wong & Wiener, 1981)	The drive to make causal inferences for behaviour is even stronger when the occurrence is negative or unexpected. When outcomes are negative individuals make blame attributions

**Table 4.1: Independent t-Tests and Mann-Whitney U tests**

	Office sample			Mall Sample					
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t test</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>M-W U</i>
<b>SocDes s</b>	85	0.70	0.19	105	0.71	0.24	-0.23	0.817	0.429
<b>NA s</b>	85	1.94	0.55	105	1.90	0.69	0.52	0.607	0.238
<b>Task s</b>	98	4.68	0.79	108	4.81	0.93	-1.10	0.271	0.309
<b>OCB-I s</b>	99	4.19	1.09	108	4.63	1.02	-2.96	0.003	0.003
<b>OCB-O s</b>	98	3.70	1.29	108	4.38	1.41	-3.60	<.001	0.000
<b>CWB-I s</b>	98	1.29	0.47	107	1.54	0.87	-2.61	0.010	0.113
<b>CWB-O s</b>	99	1.48	0.73	107	1.49	0.82	-0.54	0.957	0.394
<b>Self-Eff s</b>	92	6.03	0.57	105	6.04	0.70	-0.19	0.849	0.600
<b>Consc s</b>	92	4.03	0.51	105	3.87	0.63	2.00	0.046	0.124
<b>GMA s</b>	85	0.08	0.68	106	-0.02	0.73	1.03	0.304	0.212
<b>Task m</b>	101	4.38	1.04	108	4.61	1.03	-1.61	0.108	0.142
<b>OCB-I m</b>	97	4.19	1.28	109	4.42	1.28	-1.30	0.194	0.174
<b>OCB-O m</b>	97	3.80	1.25	109	4.25	1.41	-2.42	0.016	0.006
<b>CWB-I m</b>	94	1.46	0.80	109	1.54	0.92	-0.69	0.493	0.888
<b>CWB-O m</b>	98	1.54	0.83	107	1.51	0.85	0.30	0.765	0.541
<b>GMA m</b>	95	0.10	0.86	109	-0.01	0.78	0.90	0.368	0.125
<b>Resource m</b>	102	5.70	0.70	105	5.46	0.82	2.28	0.024	0.046
<b>Stress m</b>	100	4.45	2.14	106	6.24	2.12	-6.04	<.001	0.000
<b>Blame m</b>	85	5.72	2.01	89	4.13	1.83	5.47	<.001	0.000
<b>AbuSup s</b>	88	1.40	0.58	106	1.45	0.89	-0.47	0.639	0.158

Note: Subordinate responses are denoted by an “s” after each item name, supervisor responses are identified by an “m”. NA = negative affectivity, SocD = social desirability, Task = subordinate task performance, OCB = subordinate organizational citizenship behaviour, CWB= subordinate counterproductive work behaviour (I = individual-, O = organizational targeted), Self-Eff = subordinate self efficacy, GMA = subordinate general mental ability, Consc = subordinate conscientiousness, Blame = supervisor blame attributions toward subordinate, Res = supervisor resources, Stress, supervisor stress, Abuse = Abusive supervision, p = p-value for independent t-test for equality of means (<.05 indicates a significant difference between the office and mall groups), M-W U = Mann-Whitney U test for differences in distribution between the office and mall samples (<.05 indicates a significant different between sample distributions).

**Table 5.1: GMA Factor Loadings**

<b>Self- and Other-report GMA Factor Loadings</b>				
<i>Item</i>	<i>Self-GMA</i>	Self-Creative	<i>Other-GMA</i>	Other-Creative
can objectively analyze	<b>0.77</b>	-0.02	<b>0.86</b>	0.02
am/is able to think analytically	<b>0.77</b>	0.06	<b>0.87</b>	0.11
am/is a critical thinker	<b>0.71</b>	0.07	<b>0.80</b>	0.10
am/is able to think strategically	<b>0.84</b>	0.06	<b>0.87</b>	0.07
make sense of things	<b>0.75</b>	0.01	<b>0.73</b>	-0.07
am/is able to integrate knowledge	<b>0.69</b>	-0.03	<b>0.71</b>	-0.09
am/is able to generalize knowledge	<b>0.69</b>	0.00	<b>0.75</b>	-0.05
am/is able to evaluate information beyond what is presented	<b>0.79</b>	-0.03	<b>0.75</b>	-0.05
am/is able to interpret contradictory information	<b>0.67</b>	0.02	<b>0.79</b>	0.00
am/is able to turn the general into the specific and vice-verse	<b>0.60</b>	-0.18	<b>0.71</b>	-0.13
can identify similarities between things	<b>0.50</b>	-0.19	<b>0.62</b>	-0.19
can recognize patterns	<b>0.68</b>	-0.02	<b>0.81</b>	-0.01
am/is creative	0.21	<b>-0.67</b>	-0.04	<b>-1.00</b>
am/is imaginative	-0.07	<b>-0.94</b>	0.24	<b>-0.59</b>
Eigenvalues	7.28	1.16	8.51	1.05
% of variance	50.02	8.28	60.79	7.49
Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha	0.92		0.95	
N	236		248	

Note: Self- and Other-GMA identifies items that loaded highly on both the self- and other-reported perceived general mental ability scale. Self- and Other-Creative identifies the two items that loaded onto a second factor.



**Table 5.2: CFA results for self- and other-perceived GMA**

<i>Test</i>	<b>14-item Self-GMA</b>	<b>12-item Self-GMA</b>	<b>14-item Other-GMA</b>	<b>12-item Other-GMA</b>
<i>Chi-square</i>	125.11	84.09	143.62	136.63
<i>df</i>	74	50	74	52
<i>NC</i>	1.691	1.682	1.91	2.627
<i>GFI</i>	0.938	0.952	0.928	0.958
<i>SRMR</i>	0.041	0.033	0.048	0.036
<i>RMSEA</i>	0.051	0.05	0.058	0.056

**Table 5.3: Self-Perceived GMA Correlations**

Self-perceived GMA Correlations, N = 48						
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Self-perceived GMA (focal rater)	5.24	0.70	1			
2. Wonderlic score WPT- Q (focal rater)	20.83	4.35	.30*	1		
3. Course Grade (course instructor)	74.94	9.35	.30*	0.26	1	
4. Agreeableness (focal rater)	4.41	0.94	0.11	0.18	0.08	1
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

**Table 5.4: Other-Perceived GMA Correlations**

Other-perceived GMA correlations, N = 46				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2
1. Other-perceived GMA (focal rater)	5.11	0.94	1	
2. Other's Wonderlic WPT-Q Score (other)	20.91	4.43	.41**	1
3. Other's Grade (course instructor)	74.77	9.44	0.27	0.27
4. Agreeableness (focal rater)	4.34	1.05	0.17	0.10
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

**Table 6.1: Zero-order correlations and measure descriptives**

		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>NA s</b>	<b>1</b>									
<b>2</b>	<b>Soc D s</b>	-.371**	<b>2</b>								
<b>3</b>	<b>O.M Diff</b>	-0.04	-0.02	<b>3</b>							
<b>4</b>	<b>Task s</b>	-.249**	.261**	0.08	<b>4</b>						
<b>5</b>	<b>OCB-I s</b>	0.00	0.08	.203**	.245**	<b>5</b>					
<b>6</b>	<b>OCB-O s</b>	-0.08	0.06	.244**	.260**	.473**	<b>6</b>				
<b>7</b>	<b>CWB-I s</b>	.203**	-.298**	.176*	-.191**	0.03	0.03	<b>7</b>			
<b>8</b>	<b>CWB-O s</b>	.232**	-.238**	0.00	-.230**	0.00	-0.08	.566**	<b>8</b>		
<b>9</b>	<b>Self-Eff s</b>	-.309**	.305**	0.01	.346**	.147*	.226**	-.164*	-.177*	<b>9</b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>GMA s</b>	-0.13	.324**	-0.08	.338**	0.10	0.11	-.157*	-.145*	.431**	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Consc s</b>	-.184*	.345**	-.140*	.283**	0.03	.207**	-.293**	-.247**	.375**	.445**
<b>12</b>	<b>Task m</b>	-0.05	-0.03	0.11	0.07	0.11	0.07	0.03	-0.04	-0.03	0.07
<b>13</b>	<b>OCB-I m</b>	0.02	0.02	0.09	0.03	.183**	0.10	0.00	-0.05	-0.02	0.05
<b>14</b>	<b>OCB-O m</b>	0.07	-0.04	.167*	-0.02	0.14	.258**	0.00	-0.03	0.03	0.14
<b>15</b>	<b>CWB-I m</b>	0.08	-0.11	0.05	0.00	0.01	0.05	.188**	0.00	0.05	0.03
<b>16</b>	<b>CWB-O m</b>	-0.05	-0.05	-0.02	0.08	-0.11	-0.01	0.04	.142*	0.01	-0.04
<b>17</b>	<b>GMA m</b>	-0.05	0.10	-0.06	0.02	0.04	0.00	-0.05	-.161*	0.13	.258**
<b>18</b>	<b>Blame m</b>	-0.03	0.03	-.385**	0.12	-0.09	-0.08	-0.08	-0.05	0.07	0.07
<b>19</b>	<b>Res m</b>	-0.10	0.06	-.157*	0.04	0.02	0.11	-0.11	-0.06	.206**	.285**
<b>20</b>	<b>Stress m</b>	0.11	-0.06	.389**	-0.08	0.11	0.04	.151*	0.14	-0.06	-0.12
<b>21</b>	<b>Abuse s</b>	.319**	-.203**	0.03	-0.02	0.14	-0.05	.237**	.405**	-0.06	-0.05
	<b>M</b>	1.92	0.7	0.51	4.75	4.42	4.06	1.41	1.49	6.04	0.02
	<b>SD</b>	0.63	0.22	0.5	0.86	1.07	1.39	0.72	0.78	0.64	0.7

Note: Subordinate responses have “s”, and supervisor responses have “m” after name. NA = negative affectivity, SocD = social desirability, O.M Diff = controls for sample differences, Task = sub(ordinate) task performance, OCB = sub organizational citizenship behaviour, CWB= sub counterproductive work behaviour (I = individual-, O = organizational targeted), Self-Eff = sub self efficacy, GMA = sub general mental ability, Consc = sub conscientiousness, Blame = sup(ervisor) blame attributions toward sub, Res = sup resources, Stress = sup stress, Abuse = Abusive supervision. \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 6.1: Zero-order correlations and measure descriptives***Continued*

		<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Consc s</b>	<b>11</b>										
<b>12</b>	<b>Task m</b>	0.13	<b>12</b>									
<b>13</b>	<b>OCB-I m</b>	0.11	.452**	<b>13</b>								
<b>14</b>	<b>OCB-O m</b>	.177*	.402**	.543**	<b>14</b>							
<b>15</b>	<b>CWB-I m</b>	-0.10	-.210**	-.227**	-.155*	<b>15</b>						
<b>16</b>	<b>CWB-O m</b>	-0.10	-.333**	-.320**	-.267**	.445**	<b>16</b>					
<b>17</b>	<b>GMA m</b>	.202**	.501**	.300**	.409**	-.285**	-.360**	<b>17</b>				
<b>18</b>	<b>Blame m</b>	-0.06	-.170*	-.223**	-.179*	0.02	0.05	0.00	<b>18</b>			
<b>19</b>	<b>Res m</b>	.156*	.151*	0.12	.291**	-.145*	-.142*	.303**	0.08	<b>19</b>		
<b>20</b>	<b>Stress m</b>	-0.11	0.05	0.06	0.00	0.06	0.02	-0.04	-.177*	-.378**	<b>20</b>	
<b>21</b>	<b>Abuse s</b>	-.237**	-.203**	-.182*	-.150*	0.11	.158*	-.275**	0.03	-0.06	-0.01	<b>21</b>
	<i>M</i>	3.95	4.5	4.31	4.04	1.5	1.52	0.04	4.91	5.58	5.37	1.43
	<i>SD</i>	0.58	1.04	1.28	1.35	0.86	0.84	0.82	2.07	0.77	2.3	0.76

Note: Subordinate responses are denoted by an “s” after each item name, supervisor responses are identified by an “m”. NA = negative affectivity, SocD = social desirability, O.M Diff = controls for sample differences, Task = subordinate task performance, OCB = subordinate organizational citizenship behaviour, CWB= subordinate counterproductive work behaviour (I = individual-, O = organizational targeted), Self-Eff = subordinate self efficacy, GMA = subordinate general mental ability, Consc = subordinate conscientiousness, Blame = supervisor blame attributions toward subordinate, Res = supervisor resources, Stress, supervisor stress, Abuse = Abusive supervision

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 6.2: Results Overview for H1-H6**

H1a-H6a are correlations between subordinate/ supervisor reported IVs & supervisor stress

H1b-H6b are correlations between subordinate/ supervisor reported IVs & abusive supervision

	<b>Correlations with Supervisor Stress</b>	<i>Prediction</i>	<b>Subordinate Reported</b>			<b>Supervisor Reported</b>		
			<i>Result</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
H1a	Task Performance	Negative	NS	-.09	.26	NS	.01	.92
H2a	CWB-I	Positive	NS	.06	.40	NS	.04	.63
H2a	CWB-O	Positive	NS	.12	.11	NS	.04	.63
H3a	OCB-I	Negative	NS	.04	.61	NS	.03	.74
H3a	OCB-O	Negative	NS	.06	.44	NS	-.09	.26
H4a	Self-Efficacy	Negative	NS	-.03	.73			
H5a	Conscientiousness	Negative	NS	-.03	.66			
H6a	GMA	Negative	NS	-.09	.26	NS	-.01	.86
	<b>Correlations with Abusive Supervision</b>	<i>Prediction</i>	<b>Subordinate Reported</b>			<b>Supervisor Reported</b>		
			<i>Result</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
H1b	Task Performance	Negative	NS	.08	.28	S	-.21	.004
H2b	CWB-I	Positive	S	.16	.027	NS	.08	.30
H2b	CWB-O	Positive	S	.35	<.001	S	.18	.015
H3b	OCB-I	Negative	OD	.15	.048	S	-.20	.007
H3b	OCB-O	Negative	NS	-.03	.65	S	-.20	.008
H4b	Self-Efficacy	Negative	NS	.06	.37			
H5b	Conscientiousness	Negative	S	-.16	.024			
H6b	GMA	Negative	NS	.02	.77	S	-.27	<.001

S = supported, NS = not supported, OD= significant in opposite direction

Subordinate negative affectivity, social desirability, and sample differences are controlled

Note: CWB = counterproductive work behaviour, OCB = organizational citizenship behaviour (I= individually-directed, O= organizationally-directed), GMA = general mental ability

**Table 6.3: Results Overview for H7 and H8**

H7: subordinate behaviours x supervisor resources on supervisor stress

H8: subordinate characteristics x supervisor resources on supervisor stress

<b><u>Subordinate Reported</u></b>						
IV	<i>Result</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LCL, UCL	<i>df</i>
H7a: Task Performance	NS	-.12	-.55	.58	-.54, .30	174
H7b: OCB-I	NS	.07	.35	.73	-.32, .45	174
H7b: OCB-O	NS	-.02	-.16	.87	-.31, .26	173
H7c: CWB-I	OD	.67	2.84	.005	.21, 1.14	173
H7c: CWB-O	OD	.74	3.52	< .001	.32, 1.15	173
H8a: Self-Efficacy	NS	-.42	-1.48	.14	-.98, .14	173
H8b: Conscientiousness	OD	-.94	-3.08	.002	-1.54, -.34	173
H8c: GMA	NS	-.24	-.82	.41	-.80, .33	168
<b><u>Supervisor Reported</u></b>						
IV	<i>Result</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	UCL, LCL	<i>df</i>
H7a: Task Performance	NS	-.22	1.14	.66	-.59, .16	172
H7b: OCB-I	NS	.03	.17	.99	-.30, .36	171
H7b: OCB-O	NS	.03	.26	.41	-.22, .29	170
H7c: CWB-I	NS	-.22	-1.19	.14	-.58, .14	167
H7c: CWB-O	NS	.13	.53	.83	-.37, .63	168
H8a: Self-Efficacy						
H8b: Conscientiousness						
H8c: GMA	NS	.05	.24	.81	-.39, .50	168

S = supported, NS = not supported, OD= significant in opposite direction

Subordinate negative affectivity and social desirability are controlled

CWB= counterproductive work behaviour, OCB= organizational citizenship behaviour

(I= individually-directed, O= organizationally-directed), GMA = general mental ability

**Table 7.1: Means and Standard Deviations in Abusive Supervision Research**

<b>Abusive Supervision</b>		
<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>	<b>Study</b>
1.48	0.66	Brees, Mackey, Martinko ,& Harvey, 2014
1.30	0.67	Eschleman, Bowling, Michel, & Burns, 2014
1.39	0.58	Harris, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2007
1.50	0.62	Hoobler & Brass, 2006
1.66	0.86	Lian, Brown, Ferris, Liang, Keeping, & Morrison, 2014
1.60	0.79	Mawritz, Folger, & Latham, 2013
1.38	1.53	Tepper, 2000
1.65	0.67	Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006
1.42	0.57	Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, & Carr, 2007
1.39	0.60	Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008
1.36	0.70	Tepper, Carr, Breaux, Geider, Hu, & Hua, 2009
1.27	0.47	Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011
1.39	0.62	Wang, Harms, & Mackey, 2015
1.70	0.73	Zellers, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002
<b>1.46</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>Averages across listed studies</b>

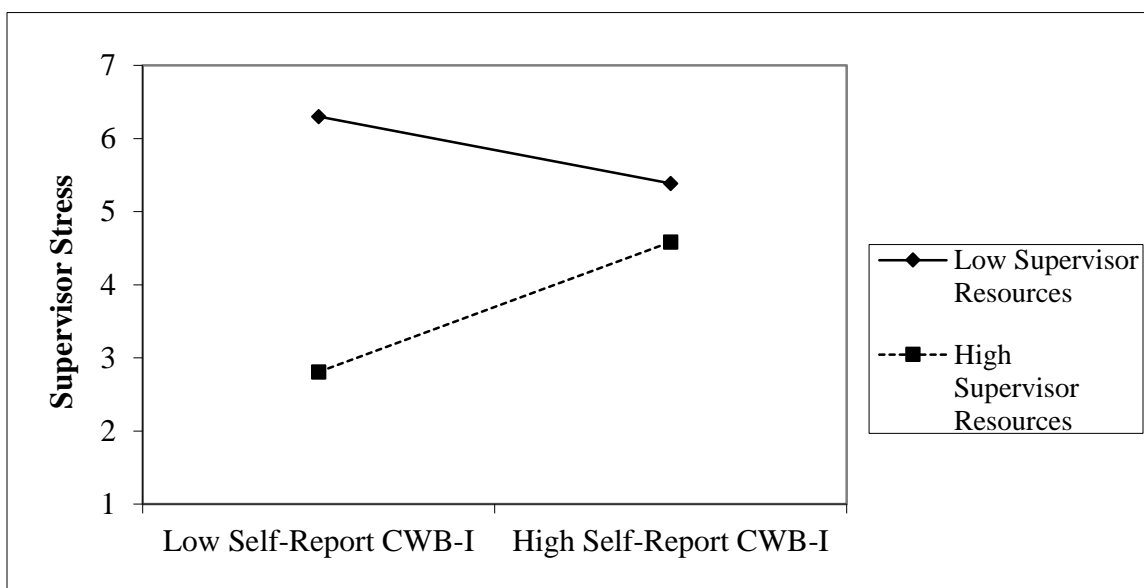
  

<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	
<b>1.43</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>This study: office and mall samples</b>
1.40	0.58	This study: office sample
1.45	0.89	This study: mall sample

## Figures

**Figure 6.1: Hypothesis 7c**

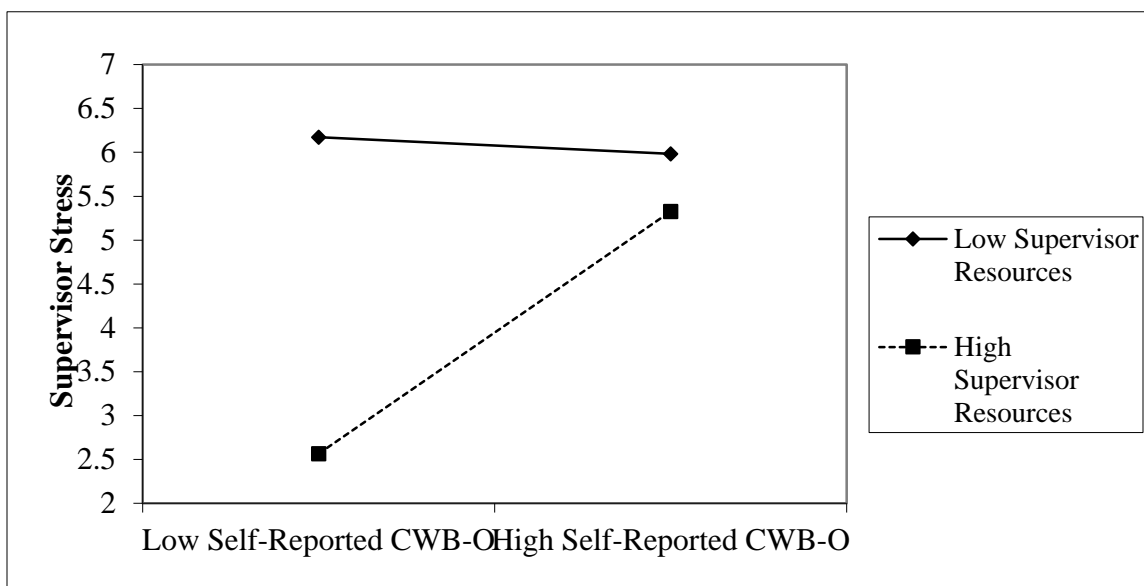
**Interactive effects between subordinate self-reported CWB-I and supervisor resources on supervisor stress (controlling for subordinate NA, social desirability, and sample differences).**



Note: CWB-I = subordinate self-reported counterproductive behaviour toward individuals

**Figure 6.2: Hypothesis 7c**

**Interactive effects between subordinate-reported CWB-O and supervisor resources on supervisor stress (controlling for subordinate NA, social desirability, and sample differences).**

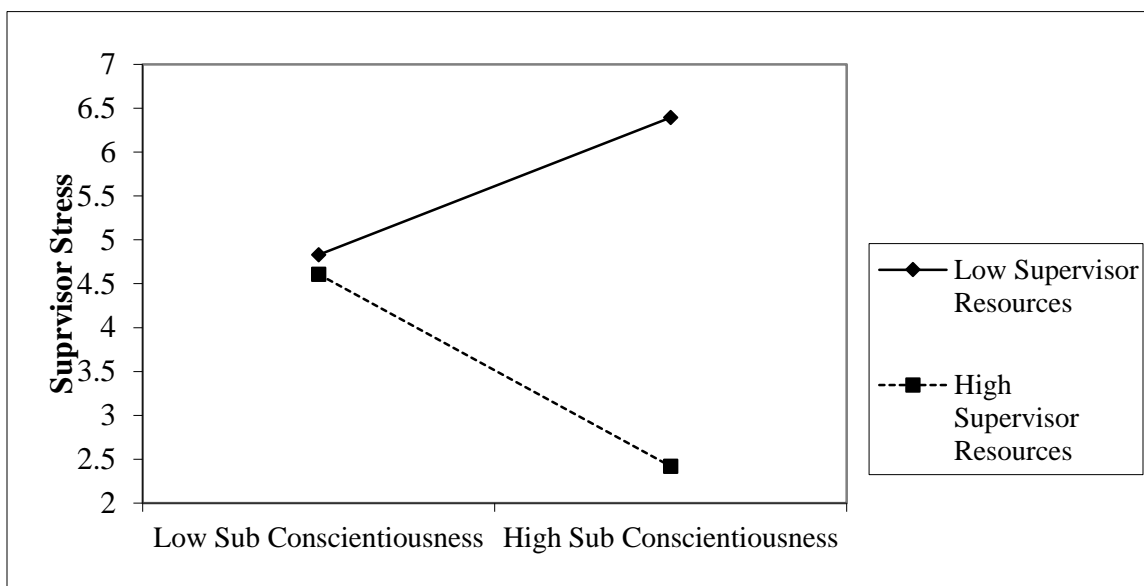


Note: CWB-O = subordinate self-reported counterproductive behaviour toward the organization



**Figure 6.3: Hypothesis 8b**

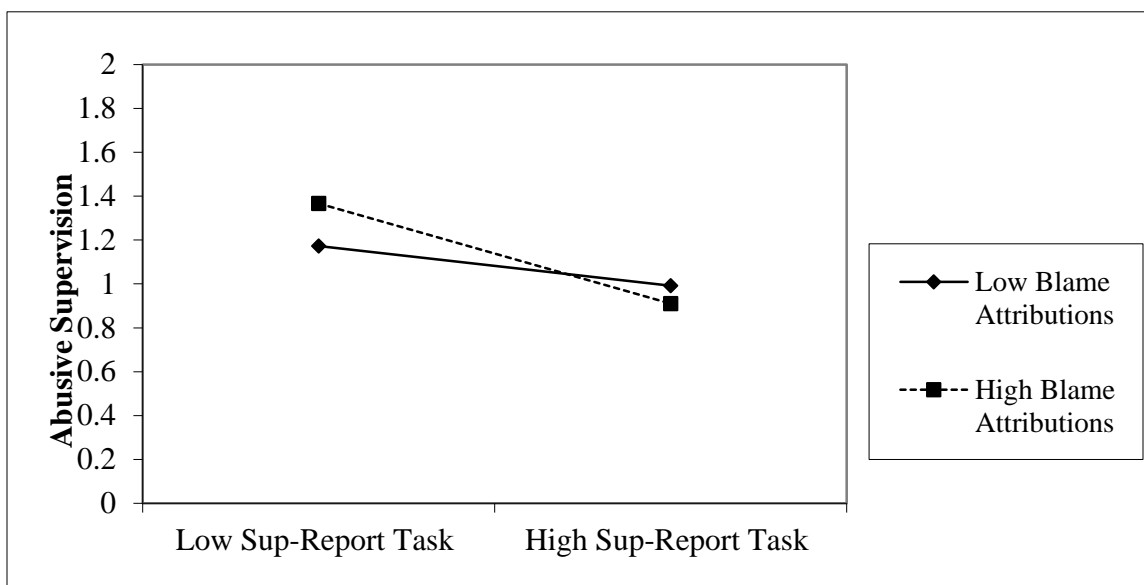
**Interactive effects between subordinate conscientiousness and supervisor resources on supervisor stress (controlling for subordinate NA, social desirability, and sample differences).**



Note: Conscientiousness = subordinate reported conscientiousness

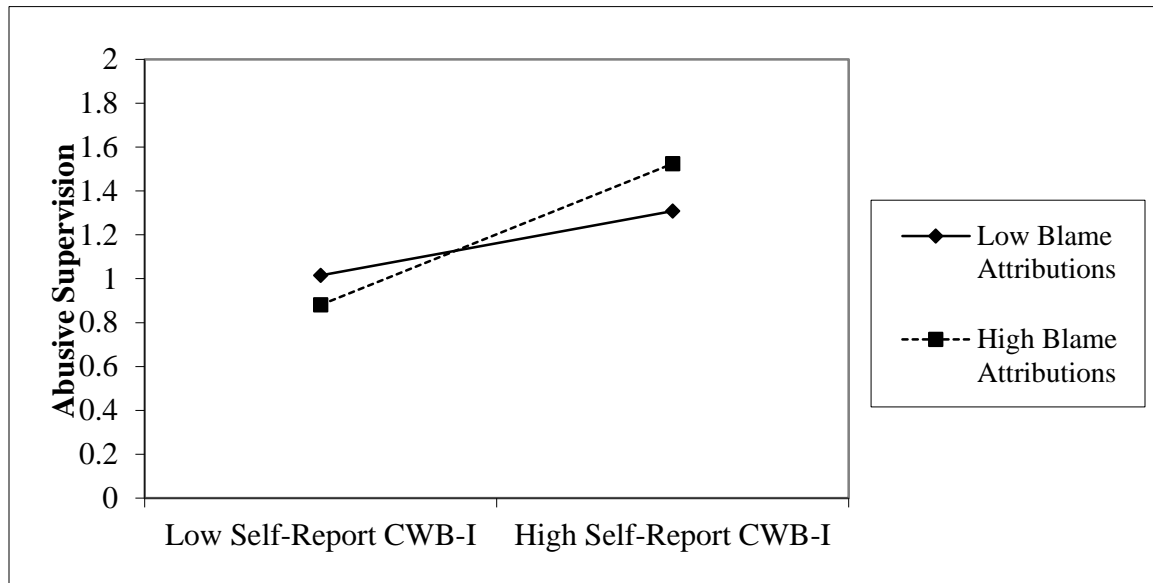
**Figure 6.4: Hypothesis 11a**

**Interactive effects between supervisor-reported subordinate task performance and blame attributions on abusive supervision (controlling for subordinate NA, social desirability and sample differences).**



Note: Sup-Reported Task = supervisor-reported subordinate task performance

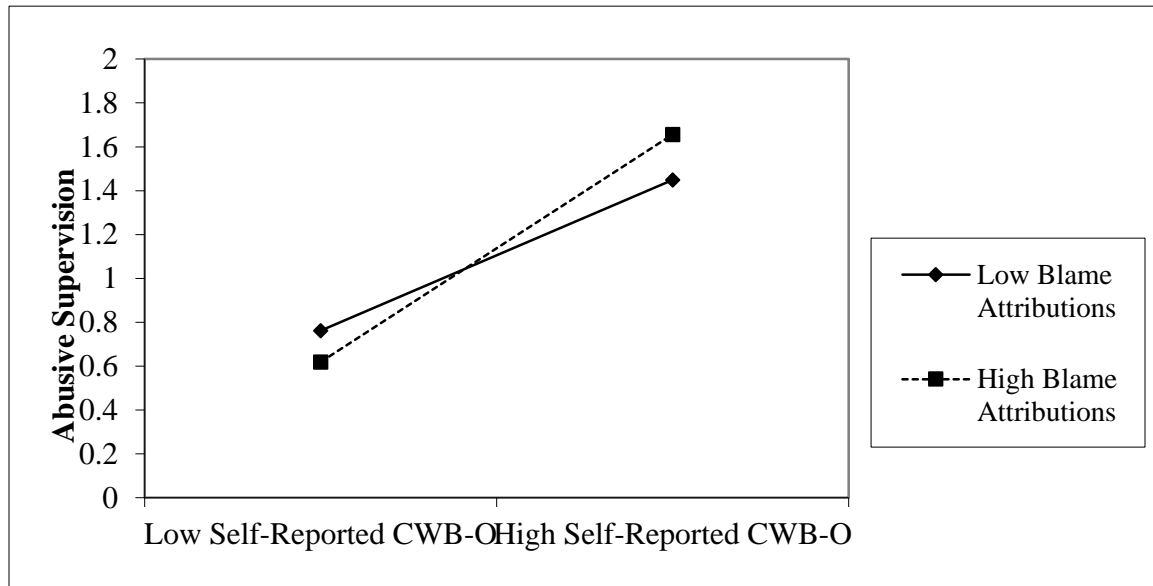
**Figure 6.5: Hypothesis 11c**  
**Interactive effects between subordinate-reported CWB-I and blame attributions on abusive supervision (controlling for subordinate NA, social desirability, and sample differences).**



Note: CWB-I = subordinate self-reported counterproductive behaviour toward individuals

**Figure 6.6: Hypothesis 11c**

**Interactive effects between subordinate-reported CWB-O and blame attributions on abusive supervision (controlling for subordinate NA and social desirability).**



Note: CWB-O = subordinate self-reported counterproductive behaviour toward the organization

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Sample Consent Form

Please read the following consent form and indicate whether you are willing to participate in this survey. This consent form, a copy of which you may print out for your, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more information, you should feel free to contact the researchers at the email address or phone number below. Please take the time to read this carefully.

By selecting "I agree" below, you are consenting to participate in the study "Workplace attitudes, relationships, and behaviours" which is being conducted by Jennifer Bozeman, a PhD Candidate at the University of Manitoba. This study has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board and the University of Manitoba may choose to look at the research records to ensure it has been carried out in a safe and proper way. Please be aware that the goal of this study is to collect information about work experiences and behaviours, some of which may be negative. If answering questions about your work experiences causes you discomfort you may decide to complete the survey at a later time, skip the question(s), or speak to someone about your experiences (e.g., University of Manitoba counseling services at 204-474-8592). Your participation will involve responding to a survey with questions about you and your work experiences and should take between 10 and 20 minutes to complete. Participation in this study and the follow up study is completely optional and you may choose to withdrawal at any time.

There are no known risks associated with this research except that some questions may remind you of a negative experience at work. Please understand that you don't have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you just don't want to answer. Also understand that any information you chose to provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will not be matched to your name, and only the researchers involved in this study will have access to responses. Finally, all personal information will be kept in the strictest of confidence, and all data will be kept under lock and key. Please be aware that you can obtain the results of this study in August, 2016 by requesting a report from the researchers. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Jennifer Bozeman at [umbozema@cc.umanitoba.ca](mailto:umbozema@cc.umanitoba.ca) or by phone at (204) 474-8793, or her advisor Dr. Sandy Hershcovis at [sandy\\_hershcovis@umanitoba.ca](mailto:sandy_hershcovis@umanitoba.ca) or by phone at (204) 474-9951. If you have any complaints about this study, please contact Margaret Bowman at the Human Ethics Secretariat at the University of Manitoba at [Margaret\\_Bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Margaret_Bowman@umanitoba.ca) or at (204) 474-7122.

Finally, please understand that your answers will be kept by the researchers for 5 years after they have been published, and then they will be destroyed. By clicking "I agree" on this form, you are indicating that you understand to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You

are free to withdraw from this study at any time and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

I AGREE

I DISAGREE

## Appendix B: Measures

### Supervisor Measures

**Section 1 Instruction:** Please think of your subordinate whose name begins with the letter \_\_\_\_ (randomly chosen letter) or whose name begins closest to that letter. Please think about this subordinate when answering all questions in this section of the survey.

### Subordinate Performance Scale (Williams & Anderson, 1991)

Thinking about the last month, please answer the following questions about this specific subordinate:

Completes assigned duties

1 (*rarely meets job requirements*) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (*often exceeds job requirements*)

Fulfills responsibilities specified in job description

1 (*rarely meets job requirements*) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (*often exceeds job requirements*)

Performs tasks that are expected of him or her

1 (*rarely meets job requirements*) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (*often exceeds job requirements*)

Meets formal performance requirements of the job

1 (*rarely meets job requirements*) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (*often exceeds job requirements*)

### Organizational Citizenship (Lee & Allen, 2002)

How often did this subordinate display the following behaviours over the last month?

Helped others who were absent.

1 (*never*) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (*always*)

Showed genuine concern and courtesy toward coworkers, even under the most trying business or personal situations.

1 (*never*) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (*always*)

Gave up time to help others who had work or non-work problems.

1 (*never*) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (*always*)

Assisted others with their duties.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Defended the organization when other employees criticize it.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Showed pride when representing the organization in public.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Offered ideas to improve the functioning of the organization.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Expressed loyalty toward the organization.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

### **Counterproductive work behaviour** (Bennett and Robinson, 2000)

How often has this same subordinate engaged in the following behaviours in the last month?

Made fun of someone at work

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5 (*daily*)

Said something hurtful to someone at work

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5 (*daily*)

Cursed at someone at work

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5 (*daily*)

Acted rudely toward someone at work

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5 (*daily*)

Taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at your workplace

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5 (*daily*)

Came in late to work without permission

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5 (*daily*)

Left work early without permission

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5 (*daily*)



Put little effort into his or her work

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*daily*)

**General Mental Ability** (Created based on Gottfredson)

Please think of your subordinate's abilities when reading the items below. Please compare this subordinate to the average adult person on each of the following items:

Ability to objectively analyze

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to think analytically

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to think critically

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to think strategically

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to make sense of things

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to integrate knowledge

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to generalize knowledge

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to evaluate information beyond what is presented

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to interpret contradictory information

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to turn the general into the specific and vice-versa

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to identify similarities between things

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to recognize patterns

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

### Conscientiousness

Thinking about this same subordinate please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

He or she plans ahead and organizes things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

He or she often pushes him or herself very hard when trying to achieve a goal

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

When working on something, he or she doesn't pay much attention to small details

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

He or she makes decisions based on the feeling of the moment rather than on careful thought

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

When working, he or she sometimes has difficulties due to being disorganized

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

He or she only does the minimum amount of work needed to get by

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

He or she always tries to be accurate in his or her work, even at the expense of time

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

He or she makes a lot of mistakes because he or she doesn't think before acting

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

People often call him or her a perfectionist

(*Strongly Agree*) 1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

Her or she prefers to do whatever comes to mind, rather than sticking to a plan

(*Strongly Agree*) 1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

### **Subordinate Self-efficacy** (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001)

My subordinate:

Is able to achieve most of the goals that he or she sets

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

Will accomplish difficult tasks when he or she is faced with them

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

Can generally obtain outcomes that are important to him or her

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

Can succeed at most any endeavor to which he or she set his or her mind

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

Will be able to successfully overcome many challenges

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

Is confident that he or she can perform effectively on many different tasks

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

Can do most tasks well compared to other people

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

Can perform quite well, even under difficult circumstances

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

### **Supervisor Resources** (adapted from Hobfoll, 1988; 1998)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements:

I feel that I am successful





Thinking about this same subordinate, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

This person was directly at fault

1 (*Strongly disagree*)    2            3            4            5            6            7(*Strongly agree*)

This person is to blame

1 (*Strongly disagree*)    2            3            4            5            6            7(*Strongly agree*)

This person was responsible for negative outcomes

1 (*Strongly disagree*)    2            3            4            5            6            7(*Strongly agree*)

This person was responsible for his or her own behaviour

1 (*Strongly disagree*)    2            3            4            5            6            7(*Strongly agree*)

This person caused the situation by his or her actions or inactions

1 (*Strongly disagree*)    2            3            4            5            6            7(*Strongly agree*)

### **Subordinate Measures**

#### **Subordinate Performance Scale** (Williams & Anderson, 1991)

Thinking about the last month, please answer the following questions about your work:

Completed assigned duties

1 (*rarely meets job requirements*)    2            3            4            5            6            7 (*often exceeds job requirements*)

Fulfilled responsibilities specified in job description

1 (*rarely meets job requirements*)    2            3            4            5            6            7 (*often exceeds job requirements*)

Performed tasks that are expected of me

1 (*rarely meets job requirements*)    2            3            4            5            6            7 (*often exceeds job requirements*)

Met formal performance requirements of the job

1 (*rarely meets job requirements*)    2            3            4            5            6            7 (*often exceeds job requirements*)

#### **Organizational Citizenship** (Lee & Allen, 2002)

How often did you display the following behaviours over the last month?

Helped others who were absent.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Showed genuine concern and courtesy toward coworkers, even under the most trying business or personal situations.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Gave up time to help others who had work or non-work problems.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Assisted others with their duties.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Defended the organization when other employees criticize it.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Showed pride when representing the organization in public.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Offered ideas to improve the functioning of the organization.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

Expressed loyalty toward the organization.

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5      6      7 (*always*)

### **Counterproductive work behaviour** (Bennett and Robinson, 2000)

Thinking about the last month, how often have you:

Made fun of someone at work

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5 (*daily*)

Said something hurtful to someone at work

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5 (*daily*)

Cursed at someone at work

1 (*never*)      2      3      4      5 (*daily*)

Acted rudely toward someone at work

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*daily*)

Taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at your workplace

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*daily*)

Came in late to work without permission

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*daily*)

Left work early without permission

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*daily*)

Put little effort into your work

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*daily*)

### **General Mental Ability** (Created based on Gottfredson)

Everyone has different skills and abilities. Below is a short list, when reading each item, please compare your skill level to that of the “average adult”.

Ability to objectively analyze

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to think analytically

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to think critically

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to think strategically

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to make sense of things

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to integrate knowledge

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to generalize knowledge



-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to evaluate information beyond what is presented

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to interpret contradictory information

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to turn the general into the specific and vice-versa

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to identify similarities between things

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

Ability to recognize patterns

-3 (very far below average)   -2   -1   0 (about average)   +1   +2   +3 (very far above average)

### **Conscientiousness**

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

I plan ahead and organizes things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

I often push myself very hard when trying to achieve a goal

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

When working on something, I don't pay much attention to small details

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

I make decisions based on the feeling of the moment rather than on careful thought

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

When working, I sometimes has difficulties due to being disorganized

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

I only do the minimum amount of work needed to get by

(*Strongly Agree*)   1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

I always try to be accurate in my work, even at the expense of time

(*Strongly Agree*) 1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

I make a lot of mistakes because I don't think before acting

(*Strongly Agree*) 1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

People often call me a perfectionist

(*Strongly Agree*) 1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

I prefer to do whatever comes to mind, rather than sticking to a plan

(*Strongly Agree*) 1                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly Disagree*)

### **Self-efficacy** (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001)

I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well

1 (*Strongly disagree*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Strongly agree*)

**Abusive Supervision** (Tepper, 2000)

This past month, my supervisor. . .

Invaded my privacy

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*always*)

Didn't give me credit for jobs requiring a lot of effort

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*always*)

Blamed me to save himself/herself embarrassment

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*always*)

Broke promises he/she made

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*always*)

Lied to me

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*always*)

Ridiculed me

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*always*)

Told me my thoughts or feelings were stupid

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*always*)

Put me down in front of others

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*always*)

Made negative comments about me to others

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*always*)

Told me I'm incompetent

1 (*never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*always*)

**Social Desirability Scale**

Please answer the following questions True or False:

I sometimes feel resentful if I don't get my way

*True*                      *False*

I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me

*True*                      *False*

I have never been annoyed when people express ideas very different from my own

*True*                      *False*

I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget

*True*                      *False*

No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener

*True*                      *False*

I'm always willing to admit when I make a mistake

*True*                      *False*

On occasion, I gossip about other people

*True*                      *False*

### **Negative Affect Scale**

When responding to the questions below, think about how you feel in general across most situations. How often do you generally feel:

Distressed

1 (*Almost never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Almost Always*)

Upset

1 (*Almost never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Almost Always*)

Guilty

1 (*Almost never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Almost Always*)

Scared

1 (*Almost never*)                      2                      3                      4                      5 (*Almost Always*)

Hostile

1 ( <i>Almost never</i> )	2	3	4	5 ( <i>Almost Always</i> )
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Irritable

1 ( <i>Almost never</i> )	2	3	4	5 ( <i>Almost Always</i> )
---------------------------	---	---	---	----------------------------

Ashamed

1 ( <i>Almost never</i> )	2	3	4	5 ( <i>Almost Always</i> )
---------------------------	---	---	---	----------------------------

Nervous

1 ( <i>Almost never</i> )	2	3	4	5 ( <i>Almost Always</i> )
---------------------------	---	---	---	----------------------------

Jittery

1 ( <i>Almost never</i> )	2	3	4	5 ( <i>Almost Always</i> )
---------------------------	---	---	---	----------------------------

Afraid

1 ( <i>Almost never</i> )	2	3	4	5 ( <i>Almost Always</i> )
---------------------------	---	---	---	----------------------------