

How and for whom abusive supervision influences organizational citizenship behavior: the roles of burnout and workplace friendship

Burnout and
workplace
friendship

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Abstract

Purpose – Although many studies have investigated the link between abusive supervision and employee organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), most of them have been performed in isolation, resulting in inconsistent findings and a lack of a systematic structure for understanding how abusive supervision affects OCB. Building on the conservation of resources theory, this study aims to investigate the impact of abusive supervision on OCB through the mediating role of burnout. Additionally, the moderating influence of workplace friendship on the link between abusive supervision and burnout was examined.

Design/methodology/approach – We used data from a two-wave survey of 316 employees with a time interval of 4 weeks. We conducted a mediated moderation analysis to test our model using PROCESS (Hayes, 2013), a statistical macro for SPSS, to examine moderated mediation models' direct and indirect effects.

Findings – The findings revealed that burnout completely mediated the association between abusive supervision and OCB. Additionally, workplace friendships strengthen employees' social networks, providing them with increased resources and support when facing abusive supervision compared to those lacking such friendships. The results have both theoretical and practical implications, which are discussed.

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Originality/value – First, this study examined the moderating role of workplace friendship and the mediating role of burnout in the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. This is a novel contribution to the literature, as previous research has not examined these factors. Previous research has shown that abusive supervision can lead to decreased effort, but the mechanisms that affect job performance have attracted relatively little attention.

Keywords Abusive supervision, Burnout, Organizational citizenship behavior, Workplace friendship

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Abusive supervision is defined as “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178). Abusive supervision has drawn significant attention from scholars, and various studies have examined the harmful influence of abusive supervision on employees and organizations (for a review, see Tepper *et al.*, 2017).

Distinguishing itself from other mistreatment concepts, abusive supervision centers on a singular perpetrator, namely the supervisor, different than bullying or workplace incivility, which any organizational member can do (Hershcovis, 2011). Implicit in the choice to investigate mistreatment by supervisors is the notion that it differs, either in its content or its consequences, from mistreatment originating from other sources, such as coworkers, customers, or subordinates. Moreover, it is different from social undermining due to its sustained nature and different from workplace aggression due to its lack of physical abuse (Hershcovis, 2011). Among other deviant workplace behaviors, abusive supervision is associated with most workplace mistreatment cases (Arshad *et al.*, 2021). Abusive supervision includes an extensive range of examples, such as not sharing information with employees, consistently criticizing and scapegoating subordinates, taking credit for their achievements, ignoring them, mocking and humiliating subordinates, and invading their privacy (Tepper *et al.*, 2017). Compared to other deviant workplace behaviors, abusive supervision can be distinguished from deviant behaviors. First, abusive supervision is a personal concept, depending on the perceptions of the targets (Tepper *et al.*, 2017). Second, instead of an occasional mistreatment incident, abusive supervision is based on employees’ opinion that their manager’s intimidating behavior is intentional and persistent (Tepper *et al.*, 2017).

It is argued that abusive supervision impacts almost 14% of employees and costs US firms billions of dollars annually Tepper *et al.* (2017). In addition to its financial costs, abusive supervision leads to numerous adverse consequences for organizations and employees, such as decreased job satisfaction (Tepper *et al.*, 2017), organizational commitment (Zang *et al.*, 2021), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), innovative behavior (Wang *et al.*, 2023), job performance, and increased psychological stress, turnover intention, and workplace deviance (Mitchell and Ambrose, 2007).

Drawing on existing literature, this study seeks to deepen our understanding of the causal pathways through which abusive supervision affects OCB. We uniquely focus on OCB, an understudied outcome in abusive supervision research, and investigate the mediating and moderating mechanisms underlying this relationship, advancing our knowledge in this area. To handle the stress triggered by abusive supervision, employees are inclined to use their personal resources, such as coworker support, to attain their personal objectives (Arshad *et al.*, 2021; Whitman *et al.*, 2014). While there has been

increasing research on abusive supervision, there is still a need to understand better how employees' resources can help mitigate its adverse effects (Martinko *et al.*, 2013). To analyze these relationships, this study relies on the arguments of the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2001). Particularly, relying on the COR theory, burnout is tested as a potential mediator variable in the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. Additionally, we investigated workplace friendship as a factor that can influence the relationship between abusive supervision and burnout in order to understand better who is more affected by abusive supervision.

This study contributes to the literature in numerous ways. The first contribution investigates the fundamental mechanism through which abusive supervision may affect OCB. It is noted that the research on abusive supervision and OCB is still inconclusive (Zhang *et al.*, 2019). They argued that there is a need for more studies to investigate the mechanisms through which abusive supervision affects OCB. The authors also suggested that researchers should go beyond studying direct effects and explore mediators, moderators, and boundary conditions of the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. In terms of abusive supervision, previous studies used a tit-for-tat approach (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005) as the underlying mechanism between abusive supervision and OCB, arguing that the victims of abusive supervision may retaliate against the instigator or their organizations by decreasing their OCB efforts. However, previous studies noted that tit for tat method might not be applicable to abusive supervision, contrary to the arguments of reciprocity theory (see the review by Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005), due to the power asymmetry between supervisor and subordinate. In particular, retaliation is not an option to cease the abuse; instead, it may even generate more severe aggression on the instigator's part. Moreover, abusive supervision decreases targets' customer-oriented OCB, who are unrelated to the incident, through decreased work engagement (Li *et al.*, 2016). Hence, relying on the prior studies, it can be argued that targets of abusive supervision may decrease their OCB for several reasons. Therefore, further research is essential and required to improve our understanding of the other potential mechanisms by which abusive supervision impacts OCB. To tackle this issue, we employed the COR theory to investigate the mediating role of burnout, an enduring psychological state of resource exhaustion, in the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. A fundamental tenet of COR theory is that individuals seek to enhance and defend their own resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Furthermore, COR theory suggests that individuals experience anxiety and distress when resources are endangered or lost and when resources are not regained or recovered after significant resource investment (Hobfoll, 2001). Given this reasoning, we use the COR theory to explore how and why abusive supervision influences employees' extra-role behavior toward customers who are unrelated to the abusive incident. By examining this relationship, we anticipate improving the current knowledge of abusive supervision and the OCB relationship and offer a complementary representation of why targets of abusive supervision put less OCB.

This study also analyzes the moderating role of workplace friendship on the adverse consequences of abusive supervision. This aligns with the call for more studies on moderators of abusive supervision, as it can help us better understand who is more affected by this phenomenon (Fischer *et al.*, 2021). Workplace friendship is a form of social support that refers to voluntary, person-specific, informal, and reciprocal relationships between employees working in an organization (Berman *et al.*, 2002). Workplace friendships are essential in producing beneficial organizational results (Rai and Agarwal, 2018) and assisting people in coping with challenging work conditions by offering social and emotional support (Arshad *et al.*, 2021; Sias and Gallagher, 2009). Even if abusive supervisors withhold resources and information from their subordinates, workplace

friendships can help to compensate for these losses by providing emotional support, informal information sharing, and practical assistance when needed (Arshad *et al.*, 2021). Specifically, we hypothesize that workplace friendship can moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. In particular, drawing on COR theory, we propose that targeted abuse might strike the weakest employees with workplace friendship support and have the highest effect on those who do not have such social support. From the perspective of COR theory, individuals with low workplace friendship support should strive to retain and protect their valued resources more. Consequently, the depletion of personal resources is likely to amplify burnout responses. The presence of close workplace relationships may offer a form of psychological distancing from an abusive supervisor, which could potentially help employees manage the situation more effectively. As a result, employees with solid workplace friendships are more likely to engage in OCB, even when they are experiencing abusive supervision.

Theoretical framework and hypothesis development

Abusive supervision

Studies on deviant workplace behavior and aggression within the workplace have attracted researchers' interest since the late 1980s and gained significant popularity during the 1990s (Hershcovis, 2011). The studies have yielded numerous constructs, including bullying, mobbing, workplace incivility, social exclusion, and abusive supervision. Even though abusive supervision resembles other deviant workplace behaviors, it has substantial features that make it unique from other workplace deviant behaviors, demonstrating differences in strength, intent, and frequency (Fischer *et al.*, 2021). Abusive supervision is based on continuous or long-term demonstrations of a supervisor's hostility, distinct from other negative workplace behaviors. In particular, incidental hierarchical abuse is not considered abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000). The continuation of abusive supervision can be attributed not only to the defenseless patience of subordinates but also to the superior's strong place in a two-way relationship (Li *et al.*, 2016). Second, abusive supervision, unlike workplace aggression, constitutes hostile behavior that excludes physical contact. Rather, it is based on nonphysical aggression, such as emotional neglect or verbal assault. Third, abusive supervision is based on the personal evaluation of mistreated victims. Thus, subordinates may perceive the equivalent abusive conduct differently (Li *et al.*, 2016). Since its first introduction, abusive supervision and its negative effect on employees and organizations have been progressively examined (Tepper *et al.*, 2017). Enduring exposure to abusive supervision has a variety of undesirable consequences, including decreased employee engagement and creativity (Arshad *et al.*, 2021) and increased retaliation against offenders (Mitchell and Ambrose, 2007).

Conservation of resources theory and abusive supervision

COR theory has demonstrated its efficacy in comprehending and elucidating the responses of those subjected to abusive supervision. The inquiry revolves around the perceived or actual losses in resources linked to an abusive supervisor. When individuals undergo resource depletion in the workplace, they are predisposed to encounter strain manifested in various well-being outcomes, such as anxiety, depression, self-esteem issues, and burnout (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). COR theory proposes that stress is stimulated by damage to valued resources (Hobfoll, 2001; Whitman *et al.*, 2014), and it states that people have limited resources and they strive to obtain, maintain, and protect these resources in order to achieve their goals (Hobfoll, 2001). COR theory categorizes four types of resources: objects (shelter or clothing), conditions (status at work), personal characteristics (self-esteem or occupational

skills), and energy resources (time or knowledge). The COR theory also states that people are more likely to experience adverse mental health outcomes, such as stress, anxiety, and depression, when they lose or are threatened with losing resources (Li *et al.*, 2016). COR theory posits that social relationships act as a “double-edged sword”, potentially offering supportive and depleting resources (Hobfoll, 2001). These social connections can either enhance or deplete our energy, knowledge, skills, and emotional resources (Hobfoll, 1989). In the context of work, social stressors like abusive supervision can disrupt the positive aspects of the work environment, impacting well-being (Kern and Grandey, 2009). Therefore, understanding the complex interplay between social relationships and work is crucial, particularly for individual career development and daily job experiences (Asim *et al.*, 2023). Specifically, abusive supervision is a detrimental workplace stressor, and COR theory can be used to understand how employees react when their supervisor threatens their resources. Employees under abusive supervision may experience an actual loss of valuable resources or find that resources may be lost due to abuse or hostility from their managers. For instance, insulting behaviors of managers, such as yelling, intimidating employees with unemployment risks, and social exclusion, can make subordinates perceive a loss of control and even an actual loss of resources (Whitman *et al.*, 2014). Accordingly, abusive supervision, which is a comparatively major form of social hassle and a form of destructive leadership, can drain employees’ emotional and psychological resources and considerably affect an individual’s welfare. What is more, in the long run, the cumulative effects of abusive supervision can lead to decreased job satisfaction, increased stress, and even physical health problems (Bormann and Gellatly, 2022). For example, people who are subjected to abusive supervision may see it as a threat to their well-being or social standing in the workplace, and they are more likely to suffer from strain and anxiety as a result (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). In the case of abusive supervision, persistent hostile behavior by managers shows that valuable employee resources can be lost at any moment. To avoid further depletion of their resources, employees may disengage from their work responsibilities because abusive supervision is emotionally and mentally draining (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Prior research has offered empirical support for this argument, such that abusive supervision negatively influences personal well-being and is positively related to burnout (Li *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, abusive supervision is both mentally and emotionally taxing, so employees must invest time and energy to cope with it, which takes away from the resources they have available for work-related tasks (Arshad *et al.*, 2021).

Using the framework discussed above, in this study, we first argue that abusive supervision is positively associated with burnout. Drawing on this relationship and prior research related to abusive supervision and OCB, we propose that burnout plays a mediating role in the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. Finally, we propose that the strength of organizational identification moderates this relationship.

Abusive supervision and burnout

Conservation of resources theory provides a beneficial structure for comprehending how employees react to habitual workplace strain. One of these reactions, specifically, is burnout, which is defined as an emotional state of repetitive resource loss without offsetting resource retrieval (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Traditionally, burnout is conceptualized in terms of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Emotional exhaustion is the feeling of being drained of one’s emotional resources. It is considered the core individual stress component of burnout. Depersonalization is the development of negative, callous, or excessively detached responses to others at work. It is the interpersonal component of burnout. Reduced personal accomplishment is the feeling of

decreased competence and effectiveness in one's work. It is the self-evaluation component of burnout (Bresó *et al.*, 2007). However, prior empirical findings showed that emotional exhaustion is the core element of burnout. As a result, researchers have commonly concentrated on the emotional exhaustion facet because of the consistency in its association with organizational consequences (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Whitman *et al.*, 2014). Instead, prior research frequently showed that decreased personal accomplishment is not a central facet of burnout. It even argued that burnout is the weakest aspect compared to its association with other variables (Bresó *et al.*, 2007). In particular, reduced personal accomplishment may result from negative emotional burnout rather than being a sub-facet of burnout (Shirom, 1989). Based on these findings, reduced personal accomplishment was ruled out as a feature of burnout, and exhaustion and disengagement were integrated as two new dimensions of burnout (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). In this study, we used this conceptualization and measurement of burnout. In particular, exhaustion refers to "intensive physical, cognitive, and affective strain", while disengagement refers to "distancing oneself from work in general, work object, and work content" (Demerouti *et al.*, 2010, p. 210).

Drawing on COR theory, it is possible to argue that individuals suffering from emotional exhaustion may also experience resource loss because of prolonged anxiety and extreme workloads (Whitman *et al.*, 2014). As a result, emotionally exhausted individuals may switch to a self-protective *locus* to defend or keep enduring resources (Whitman *et al.*, 2014). Focusing on conserving resources discourages taking advantage of opportunities to acquire resources and initiates a cycle of loss (Hobfoll, 2001). Consequently, disengagement appears as a self-defending instrument, preventing employees from draining additional resources (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001).

In particular, the victims of abusive supervision are naturally discouraged, insulted, and emotionally exhausted from the abusive confronts (Li *et al.*, 2016). When people's mental resources are depleted, they can no longer maintain them at the desired level. This can lead to burnout and physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion. People who experience resource deprivation due to workplace stressors may try to conserve and replenish their resources in various ways, including withdrawing from work (Liu *et al.*, 2019). As emphasized before, abusive supervision is a social hassle that the targets of the abuse may be unable to protect themselves from forthcoming recurrence (Tepper *et al.*, 2017). According to the workplace stress literature, managers have been emphasized as a significant source of workplace support (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Whitman *et al.*, 2014). Supportive managers may deliver necessary resources and information that simplify job roles and task assignments that match employee skills with job needs (Whitman *et al.*, 2014). On the contrary, abuse by managers can threaten many of the valuable resources identified in Hobfoll's (2001) extensive list of COR resources, such as understanding from "my employer/boss" and "status/security at work" (Whitman *et al.*, 2014). To cope with such pressures, subordinates can reallocate valuable resources to cope with abusive behavior. Victims of abusive behavior may, therefore, feel that they need to step away from their jobs in order to defend and maintain their resources. Specifically, prior research has revealed that abusive supervision is related to withdrawal, absenteeism, and moral disengagement (Carlson *et al.*, 2012).

Drawing on the arguments above, it can be claimed that abusive supervision may drain the physical, affective and cognitive resources of the targets of the abusive behavior, leading subordinates to experience burnout. Similarly, prior studies demonstrated empirical evidence for the positive influence of abusive supervision on burnout (Carlson *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, in this study, it is proposed to replicate this formerly confirmed relationship and then use this relationship as the basis for our proposed mediation relationships:

H1. Abusive supervision will positively affect burnout.

Abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behavior

OCB is defined as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988, p. 4). Organizations value OCB because it helps to create a positive work environment and improve employee performance. However, employees may be less likely to engage in OCB when they experience unpleasant workplace encounters, such as abusive supervision or workplace bullying. In line with COR theory, it is proposed that participating in OCB can deplete personal resources, given its time-intensive nature (Liu *et al.*, 2024). Time, a vital resource transferred to others during OCB activities is highlighted in this context (Koopman *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, in the presence of emotional exhaustion, employees are inclined to refrain from committing to OCB to mitigate the risk of additional resource depletion. Studies have shown that employees who experience more workplace stressors are less likely to engage in OCB (e.g. Liu *et al.*, 2019). Abusive supervision, which is classified as workplace deviant behavior (Tepper *et al.*, 2017), may trigger mental anxiety and emotional pressure for employees (Priesemuth *et al.*, 2022). According to previous studies, abusive supervision adversely impacts employee attitudes and performance (Hobman *et al.*, 2009). It is found that employees with negative relationships with supervisors are less likely to go beyond their job duties (Bormann and Gellatly, 2022). Similarly, in a more recent study, it was also found that employees who experience mistreatment from their supervisors are less likely to engage in extra-role behaviors, such as volunteering for extra work or helping their colleagues (Asim *et al.*, 2023). Taken together, we developed the second hypothesis as follows:

H2. Abusive supervision negatively affects the OCB of employees.

The mediating role of burnout

While the literature on the negative consequences of abusive supervision has been increasing, theoretical matters must be tackled before thoroughly examining and understanding how abusive supervision affects employee outcomes (Mackey *et al.*, 2017).

Some scholars have argued that the current research on abusive supervision has focused too much on the direct effects of abusive supervision and not enough on the underlying mechanisms and contextual effects (Mackey *et al.*, 2017; Tepper *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, it is also noted that although some studies examined the consequences of abusive supervision as being influenced by moderators (Martinko *et al.*, 2013), more work is needed to identify boundary conditions (Zhang *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, it is also emphasized that “Do certain mechanisms have more explanatory power under specific circumstances or concerning specific outcome variables? Studies addressing such questions would help scholars and practitioners better understand the considerable body of research accumulated since 2000” (Tepper *et al.*, 2017, p. 134). This study heeds the call to focus on understanding other variables’ indirect effects and boundary conditions to better understand abusive supervision’s underlying nature.

According to previous studies, people often start new jobs feeling motivated and excited, but this feeling can fade over time if they experience stress (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Work that was once enjoyable and meaningful can become unfulfilling and unimportant if it is too stressful. Accordingly, based on the principles of COR theory, the present study takes abusive supervision as a resource-depleting event, and the targets of abusive supervision may experience increased levels of burnout due to the resource-depleting consequences of the abusive behavior. Once employees’ resources are threatened or depleted, they could seek other methods of maintaining and recurring those reserves (Hobfoll, 2001). One of the

common ways of getting even or coping with the adverse effects of mistreatment is to decrease extra-role behavior. Employees who are disengaged from their work are less likely to be committed to their jobs or to see their work as meaningful. They are also less likely to go the extra mile and engage in discretionary citizenship behavior. This is because discretionary citizenship behavior requires extra effort and resources, which disengaged employees may not have. Additionally, abusive supervision can lead to burnout, which is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion. Burnout can make it difficult for employees to focus on their work or to have the energy to go the extra mile. As a result, targets of abusive supervision may be less likely to engage in discretionary citizenship behavior, even if they want to (Bormann and Gellatly, 2022). Therefore, employees who experience abusive supervision are less likely to go the extra mile because they are not as engaged in their work because they lack such engagement and desire for the efficient implementation of responsibilities. Similarly, prior studies have supported this argument by claiming that burnout is adversely associated with OCB (Liu *et al.*, 2019).

Drawing on the COR theory and the above-mentioned studies, we argue that abusive supervision will increase the level of burnout due to resource depletion, thus yielding a decreased level of OCB because of the lack of resources:

H3. Burnout mediates the negative relationship between abusive supervision and OCB.

The moderating role of workplace friendship between abusive supervision and burnout

Focus on friendships at work dates to the Industrial Revolution. American psychologist Mayo uncovered the presence of unofficial organizations through the “Hawthorne experiment,” which examined employees’ collective and mental necessities. However, it was not until the 1980s that it emerged as another topic for consideration (Wang *et al.*, 2022). Workplace friendship is “a nonromantic, voluntary, and informal relationship between coworkers characterized by communal norms and socioemotional goals” (Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018, p. 637). This includes voluntary interactions between employees and their colleagues that are not enforced by the organization and differ from official and prescribed working interactions (Wang *et al.*, 2022). Notably, in workplace friendship relationships, participants see each other as whole people rather than as simple role-holders within an organization (Berman *et al.*, 2002). Friends assist each other when needed and demonstrate mutual understanding (Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018). Friendships at work are related to specific constructive results, such as increased employee welfare (Nielsen *et al.*, 2000), better cooperation, creativity, and workplace innovation (Lu *et al.*, 2017), increased organizational citizenship behavior (Wang *et al.*, 2022), and yield organizational effectiveness and performance through enhancing employees’ positive work behavior. Moreover, workplace friendship helps employees deal with demanding and nerve-racking work circumstances by offering collective and mental support (Sias and Gallagher, 2009). Depending on the type of relationship, workplace friendships provide employees with three different types of support (Arshad *et al.*, 2021). The first is based on emotional support, which involves understanding and caring for each other. The second type is based on information support, referring to exchanging information and introducing new views on current problems. The third type is instrumental support, involving employees providing each other with access to tangible and intangible resources to achieve duties (Arshad *et al.*, 2021; Sias and Gallagher, 2009).

As a social support resource, workplace friendship can have a significant role in coping with workplace stressors, including abusive supervision. In particular, employees who experience workplace deviance not only suffer from harmful emotions such as tension and

stress, but they also struggle to seek assistance and help from their colleagues (Nielsen *et al.*, 2000). As a result, employees begin to share work-related difficulties with colleagues and are more likely to deal with problems (Rai and Agarwal, 2018). Accordingly, it can be argued that individuals see themselves as psychologically safe when their colleagues support their work-related problems. Specifically, having a friendship network offers individuals helpful, sensitive, and collective support to deal with hostile workplace situations (Rai and Agarwal, 2018). As highlighted above, COR theory argues that social support is the main instrument through which an individual's resources are expanded beyond the limited scope of resources the individual possesses (Hobfoll, 2001). Particularly in the workplace, having friends who empathize and show consideration decreases worker anxiety (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). It lowers resource reduction, assisting in balancing emotional separation from work (Rai and Agarwal, 2018). Accordingly, having social support from friends at work helps to protect a positive perception of the self, in addition to the perception of overcoming workplace stressors, such as abusive supervision. Therefore, the capability to activate social support and perceive that there are individuals in the workplace who can be trusted and ready to provide support when needed can be valuable resources.

Workplace friendship differs from formal work relationships (i.e. work relationships), which are mandatory and regulatory because they are based on specific work functions in a working environment (Huh and Lee, 2022). Workplace friendships are different from formal relationships because they are voluntary and unrestrained. Job titles or roles do not bind people in workplace friendships, and they value each other as individuals rather than seeing each other as competitors (Zarankin and Kunkel, 2019). This can lead to deeper mutual affection and support than in formal relationships. During challenging situations like supervisory abuse, friends play a crucial role by offering each other constructive feedback on how they perceive such events (Campbell *et al.*, 2000). This support aids employees in alleviating stress and effectively coping with pressures. This suggests that employees are more likely to express a positive causal interpretation of supervisory abuse when interacting with workplace friends compared to situations where such interactions are absent (Huh and Lee, 2022). Combining a personal resource (positive causal attribution of abusive supervision) and a job resource (workplace friendship) can synergistically activate, propelling individuals toward positive work outcomes.

According to previous studies, employees who have workplace friends, who are a sort of social support resource, are less likely to experience and suffer from the adverse impact of workplace stressors (Arshad *et al.*, 2021; Hobman *et al.*, 2009; Rai and Agarwal, 2018). For instance, it is noted that the social support in one area, such as colleagues, may diminish the adverse impacts of abuse in another area, such as a supervisor (Hobman *et al.*, 2009). Similarly, it was found that workplace friendship weakens the negative effect of workplace bullying on job satisfaction and engagement (Rai and Argwal, 2018). More recently, it was found that workplace friendship plays a substantial role in deteriorating the destructive influences of abusive supervision on empowerment (Arshad *et al.*, 2021). The COR theory argues that peer assistance during abusive supervision can supplement resources. On the contrary, an employee who lacks workplace friends or has a minimum friendship network at work might be incapable of growing his/her social resources. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

- H4. Workplace friendship will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and burnout. Specifically, the negative effect of abusive supervision will be less for employees with greater workplace friendships than low levels of workplace friendships.

Figure 1 demonstrates the developed model in the study.

Methodology

Procedure and participants

To minimize common method bias, data were collected through two surveys at two different times (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). We used a cross-sectional design to test the theoretical model. We contacted potential respondents in the target organizations through our personal and professional channels, such as university-industry collaboration offices at our universities. An email invitation was sent to 1,266 employees in Turkey's hi-tech, finance, and manufacturing industries. Since abusive supervision is highly common in hi-tech, banking, and manufacturing industries (Bhattacharjee and Sarkar, 2022), we draw our sample from these sectors. In addition, since we aimed to collect data in two different times (Time 1 for abusive supervision and workplace friendship, and Time 2 for OCB and burnout) and this may decrease the response rate, we preferred to use our personal and professional channels, such as university-industry collaboration offices at our universities.

The participants were invited to participate in an online survey. The email included a cover letter and an informed consent form. The following information was also provided to the participants:

- Participation in the survey was voluntary, and participant confidentiality will be ensured.
- The information provided would be used for research purposes only and would be reported in aggregate form only.

547 possible subjects for the study completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 45.4%. In the first survey, participants were asked to provide information about demographics, social desirability, abusive supervision, and organizational identification. Furthermore, the participants were requested to provide their e-mail addresses to facilitate the T2 survey to be sent straightforwardly to them by e-mail. In the second wave survey, Time 2, four weeks later, participants were asked to evaluate OCB and burnout through an online survey, including their e-mail addresses as well, to enable matching. Both questionnaires were combined using the e-mail addresses of the participants to make sure that the responses of the same participants could match. In the T2 survey, 316 people participated, yielding a 57.7% response rate. The sample consisted of 53% female respondents (167), the average age was 38.4 years ($SD = 7.3$), and the average organizational tenure was 7.9 years ($SD = 3.7$).

Measurement

Abusive Supervision. The Turkish version (Ülbeği *et al.*, 2014) of Tepper's 15-item scale was used for abusive supervision over the past year. Sample items include "My immediate supervisor ridicules me" and "My leader puts me down in front of others." Participants are

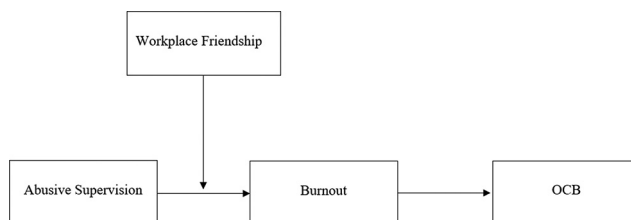


Figure 1.
Research model

Source: Authors' own work

asked to evaluate the items using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. ($\alpha = 0.90$).

Burnout. 16-item Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) developed by Demerouti *et al.* (2010) was used to measure burnout. OLBI has been one of the most widely used measurements of burnout across disciplines and has undergone extensive scrutiny and evaluation in non-Western settings, involving countries in Asia and Africa, as documented by Demerouti *et al.* in 2010.

Since the Turkish version of this scale is unavailable, we applied a translation-back translation procedure to translate the scales from English to Turkish by two Ph.D. students in the management engineering department and then back to English by an assistant professor and an associate professor. Before using the surveys, we asked two employees to review them and verify whether they were understandable and brief. Specifically, the OLBI has eight questions for exhaustion (physical, cognitive, and affective) and eight for disengagement from work, which are the two "core dimensions" of burnout (Demerouti *et al.*, 2010). Unlike the more prevalent Maslach Burnout Inventory, the OLBI employs a mixed order of question formats to mitigate response bias. (Demerouti *et al.*, 2010). The participants rated each statement on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). Sample items include "It happens more and more often that I talk about my work negatively." ($\alpha = 0.91$).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior. We used the Turkish version of the 10-item scale developed by Spector *et al.* (2010), translated by (Göncü Köse and Öztaylan, 2018) to measure OCB. Participants rated the items using a 5-point frequency scale (1 = never; 5 = every day). Sample item includes "Gave up meal and other breaks to complete work." ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Workplace Friendship. We used the Turkish version of the 12-item scale developed by Nielsen *et al.* (2000), translated by (Kural, 2016), to measure workplace friendship. The scale consists of two sections. The first part assesses the opportunities for friendship at work, and the second section measures the occurrence of workplace friendship. Sample items include "I socialize with coworkers outside of the workplace" and "I have the opportunity to get to know my coworkers." ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Control variables. The tenure of the participants was controlled because of its possible link with task OCB and deviant workplace behavior (Ng and Feldman, 2010). Moreover, employees with longer tenure are more acquainted with their organization and can obtain supplementary help from numerous sources, including workplace friendships (Zhang and Liao, 2015). Therefore, abusive supervision may be less detrimental to them. We also measured gender as a control variable because previous studies have demonstrated that the gender of the targets of abusive supervision may impact their vulnerability to abusive confrontations (Wang *et al.*, 2022). In addition, age was also controlled because having a longer age may yield more opportunities or occurrence of experiencing abusive supervision at the workplace. In addition, according to previous studies, elder older employees have greater self-control and self-regulation capacity and are more likely to adjust themselves to social and situational pressures (Zhang and Liao, 2015). Hence, abusive supervision has less deleterious effects on older subordinates (Zhang and Liao, 2015).

Even though Chen and Lin (2014) advise that the investigation of interaction effects (moderating role of workplace friendship in this study) may weaken the common method bias (CMB) threat, we still included social desirability as a control variable to evade any potential CMB threat. During the data collection, the participants' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured because some of the constructs included in this study were measured with sensitive questions, such as abusive supervision. It is emphasized both in the e-mail and on the survey cover page. We used a 4-item scale developed by Fisher (1993) to measure social desirability. Since the Turkish version of this scale is not available, we also applied the same translation-back translation methodology for this scale.

The participants rated each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “strongly disagree” and 5 meaning “strongly agree.” One of the sample items was, “I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.” The scale had a high internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.77$). The mean score for this item was 2.39, and the standard deviation was 0.70. Following Grappi *et al.* (2013), we conducted a one-sample *t*-test to compare the sample mean to the scale’s midpoint of 3. We found that the respondents had low levels of social desirability ($-2.17, p < 0.01$).

The means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables are shown in Table 1.

Finally, we also checked the possibility of non-response bias by comparing early and late respondents (Armstrong and Overton, 1977). According to the *t*-tests, there is no significant difference between early and late respondents regarding the variable used in our research model. (for abusive supervision mean difference = 0.00263, $p = 0.946$; for OCB mean difference = 0.00041, $p = 0.977$; for workplace friendship mean difference = 0.00513, $p = 0.861$ and for burnout mean difference = 0.00393, $p = 0.89$).

Analytical approach

Before performing the primary analyses, to evaluate the factor structure of the study’s variables (abusive supervision, burnout, organizational citizenship behavior, and workplace friendship), we first performed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) by using AMOS version 24. Since the sample size ratio is a concern in this study, which was suggested to be 1:20 (Kline, 2011), we performed the item parceling method to build the model. Item parceling, also called partial decomposition modeling, is useful since it reduces the optimum sample size to variable ratio and indicates computational benefits such as higher commonality of parameter estimates, fewer errors, and improved fitting results (Williams and O’Boyle, 2008). In the analysis process, we randomly generated three parcels for each latent construct to verify that each single variable was independently confirmed. The four-factor model revealed a well fit with CMIN/DF = 2.0970; $\chi^2 = 92.259, df = 44; p < 0.01$; IFI = 0.987; TLI = 0.981; GFI = 0.970; CFI = 0.987; AGFI = 0.946; SRMR = 0.038 RMSEA = 0.048.

Hypothesized structural model

In order to examine our comprehensive theoretical framework, we adhered to the guidelines proposed by Preacher *et al.* (2007) and Hayes (2013). We analyzed our primary hypotheses ($H1-H3$) using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Model 4) developed by Hayes (2013).

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	38.4	7.33	1							
2. Gender	0.53	0.50	0.17*	1						
3. Tenure	7.9	3.7	0.67**	0.07	1					
4. Social desirability	2.39	0.70	0.04	0.07	0.03	1				
5. Abusive supervision	2.85	1.09	-0.11*	0.42**	0.07	-0.06	1			
6. Burnout	2.77	1.17	0.04	0.11	0.09	0.09	0.24**	1		
7. OCB	3.55	1.09	0.06	0.8	0.04	0.04	-0.44**	-0.48**	1	
8. Workplace friendship	3.49	1.14	0.05	0.10	0.03	0.08	-0.25**	-0.48	0.60**	1

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations among variables

Notes: $n = 316$. Gender was coded 1 = female, 0 = male. Tenure and age were measured in years. OCB refers to organizational citizenship behavior
Source: Authors’ own work

Subsequently, we integrated our moderator into the model, following the suggestions in the literature (Edwards and Lambert, 2007; Preacher *et al.*, 2007), to explore the fully specified moderated-mediation model. In particular, we used PROCESS (Hayes, 2013), a statistical macro for SPSS, to examine the direct and indirect effects of mediation and moderated mediation models. We used Model 4 and Model 7 of the macro, which performs a bootstrapping procedure to obtain 95% bias-adjusted confidence intervals for the indirect effects. We also controlled for several variables in the analysis, and all continuous variables were standardized.

Results

Direct and mediated effects

The PROCESS Macro Model 4 (Hayes, 2013) was used to analyze mediation paths, as indicated by the unstandardized regression coefficients in Table 2. According to the results, abusive supervision was found to be positively associated with burnout ($b = 0.562$ $p < 0.001$), supporting *H1*. Abusive supervision was also negatively related to organizational citizenship behavior ($b = -0.187$ $p < 0.001$), supporting *H2*. *H3* anticipated that burnout would mediate the adverse impact of abusive supervision on OCB. The bootstrapped indirect influence of abusive supervision on OCB through burnout in the mediation model (Model 1) was -0.31 with a 95% confidence interval of $[-0.380, -0.251]$. Since the confidence intervals do not contain zero, the indirect effect is statistically significant. These results suggest a partial mediating effect of burnout on OCB, supporting our *H3*. The results are shown in Table 2.

Moderated mediation analysis. Moderated mediation is a statistical phenomenon in which the strength of the indirect effect of one variable on another is dependent on a third variable. *H4* in this study states that the impact of abusive supervision on OCB through burnout depends on the employees' level of workplace friendship. To understand how the intervening effect of burnout is moderated, we examined whether the strength of the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB, mediated through burnout, is significantly different when employees have different levels of workplace friendship.

PROCESS macro Model 7 was used to test mediated moderation. This model uses 5,000 bootstrap samples to adjust for bias and obtain 95% confidence intervals. Bootstrapping is a statistical procedure that can obtain confidence intervals for indirect effects. It works by repeatedly sampling from the data and calculating the indirect effect each time. This allows us to get an idea of how much variation there is in the indirect effect and to calculate confidence intervals that consider this variation. In particular, it is claimed that bootstrapping is advantageous because it does not make assumptions about the shape of the sample distribution (Hayes, 2013). This is important because the sample distribution may not be

Variables	b	SE	t	R-sq	Bootstrap 95% CI	
					LL (95% CI)	UL (95% CI)
Abusive supervision → burnout	0.562***	0.052	10.823	0.27		
Abusive supervision → OCB	-0.187***	0.046	-4.057	0.25		
Abusive supervision → burnout → OCB	-0.31***	0.033			-0.380	-0.251

Notes: $n = 316$; Model 4 (mediators) in the PROCESS macro. Bootstrap resample = 5,000, b is a nonstandard regression coefficient and SE is Standard Error, t is t statistics; R-sq is R square explained, and CI is a confidence interval. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Authors' own work

Table 2.
Direct and mediation
analysis

normally distributed, which is the assumption made by other methods of obtaining confidence intervals. Before the analysis, as [Aiken et al. \(1991\)](#) suggest, the predictor and moderating variables are grand mean-centered. Taking the recommendations of [Preacher et al. \(2007\)](#) into account, the bootstrapped conditional indirect effects of workplace friendship were operationalized at three levels: one standard deviation below the mean, the mean, and one standard deviation above the mean. [Table 3](#) demonstrates how workplace friendship moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB, where the relationship is mediated by burnout, including bootstrap effects and confidence intervals. As given in [Table 3](#), abusive supervision has a statistically significant negative impact on organizational citizenship behavior at 1 SD below the mean (indirect effect = -0.2566 , 95% CI [-0.3449 , -0.1730]), at the mean level (indirect effect = -0.1462 , 95% CI [-0.1983 , -0.0950]), and at 1 SD above level (indirect effect = -0.0658 , 95% CI [-0.0989 , -0.0272]). As depicted in [Figure 2](#), the negative effect of abusive supervision on burnout is reduced for employees with higher workplace friendships. Taking all these results into account, *H4* is supported.

Discussion

This study examined the mediating and moderating mechanisms of the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB, drawing on the COR theory. This study unveils a

Table 3. Moderated mediation for workplace friendship

Dependent variable: OCB; mediator: burnout				
Moderator	Effect	SE	Bootstrap LLCI	Bootstrap ULCI
-1 SD	-0.2566	0.0440	-0.3449	-0.1730
Mean	-0.1462	0.0261	-0.1983	-0.0950
+1 SD	-0.0658	0.0321	-0.0989	-0.0272

Notes: Number of bootstrap samples = 5,000; level of confidence = 95%; SE = standard error; LLCI = lower level of confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of confidence interval
Source: Authors' own work

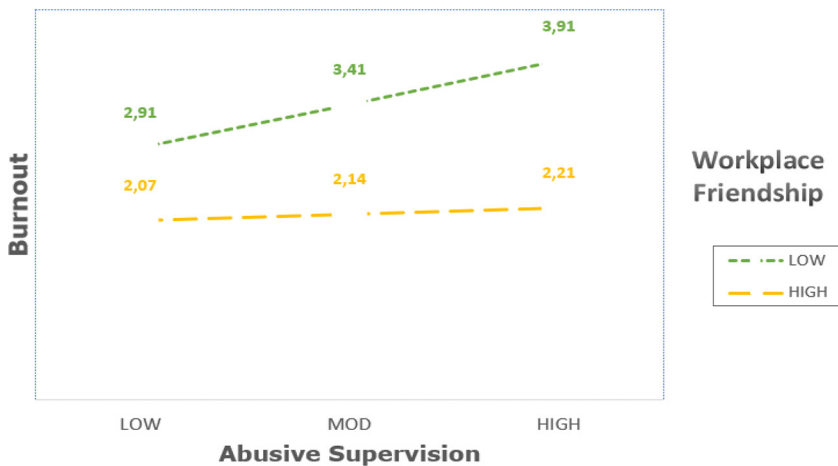


Figure 2. Moderating role of workplace friendship on the relationship between abusive supervision and burnout

Source: Authors' own work

novel mechanism explaining how abusive supervision negatively impacts OCB. We found that targets of abusive supervision experience burnout, depleting their emotional and cognitive resources, leading them to engage less in OCB. This finding of burnout as a mediator contributes significantly to the literature by suggesting that exhaustion caused by abusive supervision hinders employees' capacity for extra-role behaviors like OCB. This mechanism was more substantial for employees with lower levels of workplace friendship. These findings contribute to the literature in several ways.

First, this study fills a research gap by examining these potential relationships together. First, this study examined the moderating role of workplace friendship and the mediating role of burnout together in the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. This is a novel contribution to the literature, as previous research has not examined these factors together. By doing so, we contribute to this research gap by concurrently examining the potential relationships based on COR theory. In particular, according to COR theory, people who don't feel they have the emotional resources to handle interpersonal stressors healthily are more likely to become emotionally exhausted (Whitman *et al.*, 2014; Wright and Cropanzano, 1998). Abuse creates a harmful and toxic work environment, making victims feel helpless and out of control. Exhausted people naturally try to cope or adapt to protect their limited resources. Previous research suggests that people use coping or adaptation strategies to deal with or avoid stressful situations (Whitman *et al.*, 2014). Indeed, our findings provide additional support for COR theory indicate that under stressful situations, burned-out employees will withdraw from engaging in voluntary behavior (OCB) in order to cope with or adapt to the situation. According to the loss cycle principle of COR theory, subordinates who experience burnout and lack social support will experience even greater exhaustion. This is because social support, such as workplace friends, is valuable for abused subordinates, and its absence represents a loss. Because the victims of abusive supervision have limited resources, they are less likely to engage in voluntary behavior, possibly costing them even more resources. On the other hand, receiving social support from a work friend may prevent further losses.

The study also fills a gap in the literature by revealing the relationship that underlies the association between abusive supervision and OCB. Previous research has shown that abusive supervision can lead to decreased effort (Gümüştaş and Karataş Gümüştaş, 2023; Liu *et al.*, 2024), but the mechanisms through which abusive supervision affects job performance have attracted relatively less attention from organizational behavior scholars (Mackey *et al.*, 2017; Zhang and Liao, 2015). Drawing on the arguments of COR theory, this study suggests a new mechanism to understand the influence of abusive supervision on OCB; that is, the negative impact of abusive supervision on OCB is mediated by burnout, which is consistent with the arguments of COR (Hobfoll, 2001).

Mackey *et al.* (2017) conducted a meta-analysis of the consequences of abusive supervision, and they called for more research on the mechanisms that explain these consequences. In response to this call, we investigated the mediating role of burnout in the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. Our findings showed that burnout significantly mediated this relationship, meaning that burnout was a key factor that explained how and why abusive supervision was related to lower levels of OCB. In particular, abusive supervision causes employees to experience burnout, thus decreasing their extra-role behaviors to protect their resources. In line with Arshad *et al.* (2021), we found that employees feel increased levels of burnout to engage in work.

Similar to previous research (Liu *et al.*, 2024; Zhang and Liao, 2015), this study found that employees who experience abusive supervision are more likely to exhibit lower levels of OCB. Burnout was found to mediate this relationship, meaning that abusive supervision leads to

burnout, which in turn leads to lower levels of OCB. This finding suggests a new mechanism for understanding how abusive supervision can lead to decreased OCB. When employees experience abusive supervision, they may withdraw from work and have fewer resources to engage in OCB. This is because abusive supervision can be a very stressful and demoralizing experience. This result contributes to the literature by arguing that instead of regulating their behaviors or even increasing their engagement in OCB to get appreciation from their supervisors and avoid being excluded by the organization (Liu *et al.*, 2024), employees lessen their input to balance abusive supervision's adverse effects (Zhang *et al.*, 2019).

Third, in this study, we performed a theoretical review, investigated the moderating role of workplace friendship, and then proposed a comprehensive model that offers a more complete and systematic interpretation of abusive supervision and OCB literature. As Liu *et al.* (2024) emphasized, earlier studies were missing incorporated examination (Li *et al.*, 2016), and without a comprehensive theoretic structure, making it complicated to comprehensively recognize how abusive supervision is associated with OCB and when and to whom these impacts are much greater. To address this significant issue, this study involved different theories and variables to examine a comprehensive model and tested the influence of workplace friendship on it. We found that employees with friends at work were less likely to be harmed by abusive supervision than those without peer support.

Having workplace friendships can help employees cope with the negative consequences of abusive supervision. This is because friends can provide emotional support, practical help, and a sense of belonging. Emotional support can help employees feel less stressed and anxious, while practical help can help them deal with the challenges of their work. A sense of belonging can help employees feel connected to their colleagues and the organization, which can buffer the negative effects of abusive supervision. In contrast, employees with no workplace friendships are more susceptible to the harmful effects of abusive supervision. They may feel isolated and alone, which can make it difficult to cope with the stress and anxiety caused by abusive supervision. They may also be less likely to get the support they need to deal with their challenges. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Arshad *et al.*, 2021), which found that workplace friendship substantially reduces abusive supervision's detrimental influences on structural empowerment. Therefore, this study has made an essential contribution to the COR theory by showing that workplace friendship can alleviate the adverse impacts of abusive supervision on work outcomes. COR theory states that individuals strive to maintain and accumulate resources and that the loss of resources can lead to adverse outcomes (Hobfoll, 2001). Our study found that workplace friendship can provide employees with social support, which can help them cope with the negative effects of abusive supervision. This finding has important implications for organizations, as it suggests that they can help protect their employees from the negative effects of abusive supervision by creating a workplace culture that fosters friendships. These results show how different factors, such as having a friendship network, can affect employees' reactions to abusive supervision. This could help explain why previous studies on abusive supervision and OCB have produced different results.

Practical implications

This study found that abusive supervision can lead to burnout, which in turn can lead to decreased OCB. To prevent these negative consequences, organizations should implement proactive policies to address abusive supervision before it occurs. For instance, organizations can screen out candidates with deviant behavior tendencies during the selection process. This can be done by conducting background checks and reference checks. For instance, they can do this by talking to people at all levels of the candidate's previous company. This takes time, but it's worth it. Companies that are good at keeping their

workplaces civil find this strategy to be effective in avoiding habitual incivility instigators. Moreover, since trait anger (Mawritz *et al.*, 2014), and psychopathy (Wisse and Sleebos, 2016) are positively associated with abusive supervision, selection, and recruitment processes can be tailored to screen out candidates who are high on these dimensions. Despite the challenges organizations face in screening out psychopathic individuals due to the coexistence of dark-triad traits and strong social abilities, it remains exceptionally challenging to identify these dark tendencies during interviews. In fact, the attributes associated with psychopathy often appear as favorable qualities in the short run (Cohen, 2016). However, a limited number of studies have produced scales designed to assess the extent of psychopathic tendencies in supervisors, as reported by their subordinates (Mathieu *et al.*, 2014), thereby enabling the potential use of these scales in the selection process.

Moreover, organizations should promote supervisors based on their performance and interpersonal skills, rather than seniority or other factors (Liu *et al.*, 2024). This can help ensure supervisors have the skills and abilities necessary to manage their employees effectively. In addition, organizations can train supervisors on how to prevent and address abusive behavior. This training should cover topics such as communication, conflict resolution, and stress management. Even though these policies may seem time-consuming and costly in the short term, they are likely to save organizations money and improve productivity in the long term.

Second, once organizations have selected supervisors, they should establish rules and regulations to reduce abusive supervision and create safe channels for employees to report workplace abuse, such as anonymous hotlines and formal non-retaliation mechanisms (Liu *et al.*, 2024). At this point, organizations can help to create an abuse-free workplace by implementing a zero-tolerance policy for abusive supervision. This policy should be communicated to employees both orally and in writing. Additionally, abusive supervision should be considered in performance appraisals. This will help break the abusive supervision cycle and improve employee morale and productivity. Abusive supervision is a complex problem that cannot be solved overnight. However, by taking a systematic and continuous approach, organizations can create a workplace where employees feel safe and respected. Our research has shown that workplace friendships can help individuals cope with the negative effects of abusive supervision. This suggests that organizations should foster a collective spirit among employees, which can help create a more supportive work environment. As suggested (Arshad *et al.*, 2021), one way to do this is to implement peer mentoring programs. In these programs, employees are divided into small groups and encouraged to come together as part of their work. This can help to strengthen social networks and friendships at work. Additionally, new hires can be paired with existing employees to help them build social networks and get engaged in the company.

Finally, this study suggests that solid workplace friendships among employees act as a buffer against abusive supervision. The support and camaraderie they receive from colleagues empower them to confront and resist abuse attempts. Conversely, employees who lack such support are more vulnerable to the negative effects of abusive supervision and may resort to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as burnout. This emphasizes the importance of fostering a positive and supportive work environment, which is characterized by strong friendships.

Limitation and further research

This study has some limitations that need to be taken into consideration. First, data are collected by self-report, which means there is a risk of bias from one source. This can lead to inflated correlations between variables, as the same person may be more likely to rate themselves and

others similarly. However, single-source bias is less likely to be problematic for interaction effects. The interaction effect occurs when the relationship between two variables differs depending on the degree of the third variable. This study's interaction effect between abusive supervision and work friendships was significant, suggesting that bias from one source may not affect the results. Although collecting organizational citizenship (OCB) data from other sources is generally advisable, it is found that self-reported and self-reported OCB data exhibited similar correlation patterns with several common variables (Carpenter *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, while we recognize the limitations of using self-reported data, we believe our conclusions remain true. However, future studies may want to collect data from multiple sources (such as customers, colleagues, or subordinates) or use logs or critical incident data to back-test our model. Moreover, according to our results, age, gender, and tenure have a significant relationship with abusive supervision. Future studies might benefit from retesting the model to explore the differential effects of other groups based on gender, tenure, and age. For instance, future studies may focus on the effect of the supervisor-subordinate relational context, such as gender or age (dis)similarity. Similarly, future studies may focus on the influence of tenure as well. In particular, it is observed that younger employees exhibit more aggressive behavior compared to their older counterparts, making them more susceptible to both perpetrating and being targets of aggression (Zhang and Bednall, 2016). Typically, older workers receive greater levels of esteem and consideration than their younger counterparts. Similarly, employees with a shorter tenure are more prone to experiencing mistreatment than those with a longer history at the organization. Over time, subordinates become accustomed to their supervisors' conduct, reducing the likelihood of interpreting ambiguous behaviors as abusive.

Second, because the definition of abuse supervision is based on persistent and repetitive behavior, future studies may be conducted using longitudinal data collected from multiple sources to examine abuse supervision cases over time. Furthermore, as participants engaged in the survey voluntarily and at their preferred timing, we have considered the potential for a self-selection bias. Nevertheless, given the notably high response rate observed across three waves of data collection, we maintain that the influence of a self-selection bias on the ensuing findings is improbable. In addition, we measured overall OCB instead of measuring it at OCB toward coworkers. Since our moderator is workplace friendship, future studies may fine-tune the measurement of OCB at the coworker level to see the specific effects of abusive supervision.

Third, this study responds to the call of *Tepper et al.* (2017) to examine how employees simultaneously deal with the negative consequences of abusive supervision to gauge their relative effectiveness. In this study, we examined only one social resource: workplace friendship. Future studies may consider other coping mechanisms, such as psychological withdrawal, seeking retaliation, ignoring deviant behaviors, or even behavioral modification and increased investment to gain supervisors' appreciation and check their relative effectiveness.

Moreover, Turkey exhibits a high-power distance culture (with a power distance index of 66), characterized by significant power differentials between supervisors and their subordinates (Basabe and Ros, 2005). Power distance refers to "the degree to which a society accepts unequal distribution of power in institutions and organizations" (Hofstede, 1980: 45). In cultures with high power distance, individuals tend to be more accepting of abusive supervision due to their deference to authority (Lian *et al.*, 2012; Martinko *et al.*, 2013; Xu *et al.*, 2015). Nevertheless, despite these cultural tendencies, our findings suggest that abusive supervision still has adverse effects on employees in Turkey.

Another limitation in this is that our data only involves a Turkish sample, representing high power distance (with a power distance index of 66), and a collectivistic nature (with an individualism index of 37), characterized by significant power differentials between supervisors and their subordinates (Dirican and Erdil, 2022). According to *Vogel et al.* (2015),

cultural instructions about proper managerial relations with subordinates vary across cultures. In particular, subordinates across different cultures judge abusive supervision differently regarding interpersonal fairness. For instance, in cultures high on power distance, which refers to recognition and acceptance of the legitimacy of unequal power distribution in social relationships (House *et al.*, 2004), abusive supervision might be perceived as less detrimental (Vogel *et al.*, 2015), because of the respect for authority, and thereby lessening its destructive effects, such as burnout. For instance, Lian *et al.* (2012) have observed that individuals with high power distance are more attentive to the power difference between themselves and their supervisors and are more accepting of abusive supervisors. Furthermore, Lin *et al.* (2013) indicated that the connections between abusive supervision and employee mental well-being, as well as job satisfaction, are less pronounced for employees who possess a stronger inclination toward power distance orientation. Nonetheless, despite this fact, our findings show that abusive supervision still causes adverse outcomes for employees in Turkey. On the other hand, in cultures high on collectivism, where people expect to form strong bonds with their social in-groups, employees are more willing to make friends with colleagues (Rhee *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, the moderating effect of workplace friendship may also show variation across cultures. Hence, it would be advantageous for future research endeavors to consider the possible impact of cross-cultural variations when examining the concept of abusive supervision. This study examined the association between abusive supervision and OCB at the individual level. Nevertheless, we lack a comprehensive understanding of its implications at the team or organizational levels. For instance, Priesemuth *et al.* (2014) introduced the concept of an “abusive supervision climate” within work teams, suggesting that it detrimentally affects team OCB. However, the mediating factors connecting this climate to team OCB and the contextual factors involved still require further investigation. Therefore, future researchers must extend their inquiries to encompass the team and organizational levels.

Finally, the data collected is not fully representative of the Turkish workforce (in this study, cross-sectional data has been gathered from a few organizations operating in hi-tech, finance, and manufacturing); in further studies, scholars may consider using data from different sectors across Turkey to reach a more representative and generalizable conclusion. Thus, the generalizability of our findings to different cultural environments must be examined in future research.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of abusive supervision on OCB through the indirect effect of burnout. Specifically, we wanted to know who is more likely to be influenced by abusive supervision: employees with or without workplace friends. When individuals' resources are depleted, people are more likely to suffer from adverse results, such as burnout and reduced extra-role behavior. According to our results, abusive supervision can cause burnout, which in turn can lead to diminished OCB. However, the influence of abusive supervision on OCB was weaker for employees with workplace friends. This suggests that workplace friends can provide social support and resources that help employees deal with the adverse consequences of abusive supervision. Overall, our findings highlight the negative impact of abusive supervision on OCB and the significance of workplace friendship in buffering the harmful impacts of workplace stressors.

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