

When Silence Speaks Whistle-Blowing Intention as a Response to Observed Abusive

Supervision

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Abstract

Abusive supervision is frequently observed at workplaces. Observers should react with empathy; it specifically investigates whether and when workers will take prosocial measures to help the victim of abuse in response to observing the supervisory abuse of a coworker. However, based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, we suggest that the internal locus of control between observers and victims determines the behavioral and emotional reactions of observers to abusive supervision. In particular, sympathetic feelings are positively correlated with whistleblowing by observers, reducing their victim-assistance behaviors, when internal locus of control is elevated or made prominent. On the other hand, observed abusive supervision is positively correlated with observers' sympathetic response when the internal locus of control is low, which in turn decreases their victim-helping activities. These theories are supported by data from South Punjab's healthcare system. We go over the findings' theoretical and practical ramifications and limitations with future directions.

Keywords: Observed abusive supervision, Empathetic emotions, whistle-blowing intention, and Internal locus of control.

Introduction

Abusive supervision is defined as the “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which their supervisor engages in hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors excluding physical contact” (Tepper et al., 2017b). Abusive supervision has grown, expanding consideration from researchers and specialists attributable to its predominance and negative impacts on the working environment (Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2007). For instance, a study shows that about 65.6 million workers in the USA have encountered abusive supervision (Li et al., 2021). The mistreated employees are primarily the subject of earlier research on abusive supervision. Subordinates can feel negative consequences from abusive supervision in many ways. However, ignoring the social connection effect in the workplace by simply looking at the effects from the

opinion of the victim of abusive supervision (Shao et al., 2018). In reality, abusive supervision involves the victim, the abusive supervisor, and the abusive supervisor's observer. As an outcome, abusive supervision might distress the third party's reaction, arrogance, and consequent behavior. According to third parties' observations, abusive peer supervision occurs when a coworker is mistreated by their supervisor. (Peng et al., 2014; Qiao et al., 2021) observers are sensitive to the abuse their peers go through; according to the literature, this sensitivity is primarily demonstrated by kindness toward the prey and aggressive conduct toward the boss (Skarlicki et al., 2015).

As a result, abusive supervision not only affects the victim and the abused supervisor but also significantly affects other parties who have not been subjected to abusive supervision directly. Instead of the abusive victims, abusive supervision can similarly hurt peers (i.e., observers) who are not victimized. When observers observe abusive supervision, they have behavior reactions they caring for victims and Aggression against abusive supervisors. All the research based on observer reactions to abusive supervision suggest that an abusive supervisor leads to colleagues in this situation, the observer practices emotions towards both abusive supervisors in the form of annoyance, feels empathic pain, unfairness, and prosocial support towards the abusive supervision victims (e.g., (Priesemuth & Schminke, 2019).

This study aims to explore and contribute to investigating observed abusive supervision and when the observer responds by studying. In undertaking so, we improve and examine a research framework that describes when and why the observer responds by conducting the supervises. We mention these activities as empathetic emotions and whistle-blowing, which comprises reactions such as standing up for the abused colleague, showing defensive behavior with the target beside the manager, or standing with the target in offensive situations.

The deontic theory of justice clarifies these responses; people must be treated according to the moral and ethical values they deserve for those values of morally appropriate behavior (Cropanzano et al., 2003). Furthermore, the deontic values classify fair treatment and righteousness as morally commanding, thus demanding followers of a social system to endorse such behavior, obsessing deviance, ethical standards, and values, such as abusive supervision, appeal to a solid passionate response inside the witness in the form of ethical violence or anger (Cropanzano et al., 2003). At the same time, handling abusive supervision as a coping strategy.

Our study setting, the Pakistani healthcare sector, is more appropriate and aimed at studying

observed abusive supervision. This study aims to find the association among observed abusive supervision, whistle-blowing, and empathetic emotions acting as a mediating component with the locus of control as a moderator. The satisfaction of subordinates and the well-being of the organization as a whole are negatively impacted by observed abusive supervision. This study will assist supervisors/HODs in public sector hospitals foster interpersonal communication and behavior so that staff members can promptly exchange critical concepts, issues, and information with their superiors.

By examining nurses' avoidance actions and their impact on patients' happiness in a variety of scenarios, this study aims to determine how witnessed abusive supervision affects healthcare results. Because the treatment that nurses provide in unique circumstances has a direct impact on patients' satisfaction, the profession is given special attention in Pakistan's healthcare system (Akhtar et al., 2022). Hospital administrators can assess the quality of healthcare given by the hospital by looking at the dyadic interaction between the nurse and the patient. According to Zeidner and Hadar (2014), maintaining a balance between nurse-patient relationships is essential to delivering high-quality healthcare facilities and serving as a means of competing in the ever-changing healthcare industry. Therefore, this study investigates patient satisfaction as a result of nurses' locus of control and assists hospital administrators in making the right choices to get a competitive edge in Pakistan's healthcare market.

Observed Abusive Supervision and Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing is well-defined by (MICELI & NEAR, 1985, p. 4), "the expose by organization members of unlawful, immoral, or illegitimate actions under the control of their employer, to persons or establishments who may be able to consequence action." It involves informing those who can take corrective and punitive action about behaviors that are regarded as immoral or illegal. Whistle-blowing is a deliberate behavior distinct from the intention to do so (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). According to planned conduct, a course of action's intention is based on a person's subjective likelihood and assessment that it will be taken (Ajzen, 2012). A person's meaning to blow the whistle is frequently an immediate precursor to doing so due to the trouble of obtaining admittance to genuine whistleblowers; academics have traditionally focused on whistle-blowing intention rather than whistle-blowing itself (Vadera et al., 2009). The likelihood that personnel within a company will report conduct regarded as unlawful, depraved, or wrong to individuals or gatherings who are both keen and talented to implement

appropriate steps is how whistle-blowing intention is described in this study. Both abusive monitoring and the goal behind a whistleblower are morally wrong. The latter seeks to expose such behaviors, whereas the former entails treating them in an unethical and immoral manner. Employees who choose to remain silent or to be silenced instead of speaking up contribute to the normalization of unethical behaviors, (Tepper et al., 2017c).

H2: Observed abusive supervision will significantly affect the subordinate's whistle-blowing intention.

Observer Reaction to Empathetic Emotions.

Observed abusive supervision may evoke sympathetic feelings among observers. According to Davis (1983) and Lazarus (1991), empathy is the emotional reaction to being moved by another person's suffering and a wish to be of assistance. When a person "understands and reacts to someone else in difficulties by desiring to alleviate the pain," they are said to be in this affective state (Lazarus, 1991, p. 821). People's sympathy, compassion, warmth, and care for the victims define it (Davis, 1983). People frequently experience empathetic feelings when they see other people suffer, according to the literature on empathic emotion (Batson, Turk, Shaw, & Klein, 1995). Because abuse has several negative repercussions on victims, most witnesses to coworkers being abused by supervisors are likely to believe that the victims are suffering and in need of assistance (Sannes et al., 2021; Tepper et al., 2007). This inspires empathy from the observers. Previous studies have shown that (Priesemuth, 2013; Priesemuth & Schminke, 2019).

H4: *peers observed that abusive supervision has a significant link with empathetic emotions.*

Empathetic Emotions and whistle-blowing.

Observers' conflicted feelings for victims, exacerbated by witnessing abusive supervision, maybe a unique cause of how they will behave toward victims in the future. That is, observers' feelings after seeing abuse can differ, which explains why they either encourage or impede victim assistance. In particular, different emotions may be triggered by variances in how observers assess abusive supervision toward coworkers as conducive to or impeditive to their goal achievement. Employees' deliberate withholding of potential Silence captures crucial ideas or worries about workplace issues. It is not a matter of poor communication (i.e., saying nothing) but rather a decision made by staff members to keep problems quiet or withhold suggestions. (Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). (MICELI & NEAR, 1985). Employees are also expected to use internal whistle-blowing first before turning to external whistle-

blowing to report malfeasance. (Colin, 2002). From the standpoint of organizational management, there is sufficient time and funding for organizations to modify the internal whistleblower channel to make it easier for whistleblowers so that the leaders can effectively handle organizational misbehavior.

H6: Empathetic emotions have a significant relationship with Whistle-blowing intentions.

Mediating Role of Empathetic Emotions Between Observed Abusive Supervision and Whistleblowing.

Furthermore, our research suggests that observers are more willing to assist victims when experiencing empathic feelings. The nature of empathetic emotion is to understand and assist in easing victims' suffering (Lazarus, 1991). Employees will be motivated to lessen the suffering of these victims they have a high level of empathic emotion toward their victimized coworkers (Batson et al., 1991). In support of this claim, earlier According to Research (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007), empathetic emotion is a significant predictor of victim-helping behaviors, Employees who choose to remain silent or to be silenced instead of speaking up contribute to normalization of unethical behaviors, the hopeless acceptance of it, and the socialization of other employees into unethical behaviors. (Tepper et al., 2017). Even though there are several reasons workers may fail to report supervisory abuse (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005), The perception of their superiors' openness to hearing their complaints about work-related matters affects employees' propensity to do so. In conclusion, we suggest the following theory by fusing these reasons with the proposed interacting impact of witnessed abusive supervision and the Silence of the supervisor between observers and victims:

H8: Empathetic emotions will mediate the relationship between observed abusive supervision and Whistle-blowing.

Moderating Effect of Locus of Control

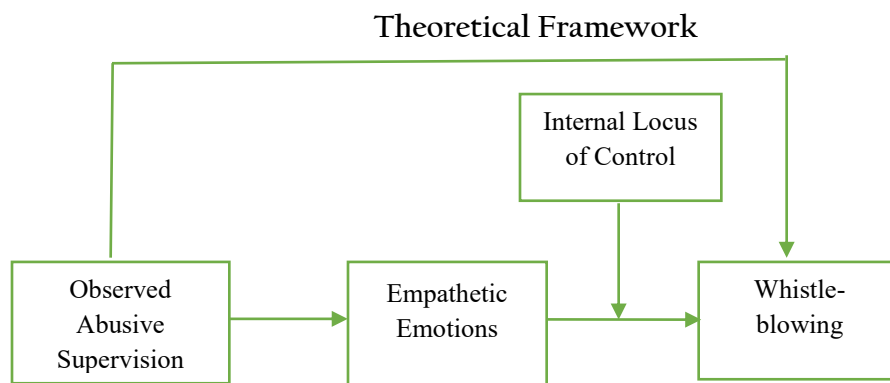
Understanding the association of whistle-blowing is aided by the personality characteristic locus of control. According to planned behaviors, a person will only act in a particular way if the resources and opportunities are present. People are more inclined to act if they believe they can control the situation and have a good chance of succeeding (Ajzen, 1991). The third element of the theory of planned behaviors is connected to the internal locus of the control variable (Chiu, 2003). As proposed by Ajzen, the locus of control is the same as the control of perceived behaviors. (Rotter, 1966). Perceptions of behavioral control, particularly those connected to

control, are called locus of control.(MICELI & NEAR, 1985) assert that the locus of control determines how whistleblower choices are made.

Whistleblowers will be highly motivated if circumstances or conditions suggest they influence the situation. An individual with an inner locus of control frequently relies on himself to determine whether something is proper or wrong and frequently accepts the results of his actions. Since whistle-blowing is regarded as an ethical action, candidates for the position should have an inner locus of control. According to the prosocial behaviors theory's antecedents' contextual model, a person's response to an issue will have an impact on how that person resolves it. Additionally, if he possesses good self-control, he may inform the authorities or the leader or publicize the scam in the media about it, A person with an internal locus of control may be a whistleblower who is accountable and works to manage his environment. In addition, he thinks that everything he has is the fruit of his labors. According to Chiu (2003), a Chinese manager frequently engaged in whistle-blowing in his office. According to other scholars, Chiu (2003) and Curtis and Taylor (2009), the locus of control was necessary for revealing the secrets of US public accountants. According to Near and Miceli (1992), one of the factors influencing whistleblower decisions is the locus of control. Due to the possibility that whistleblowers may be highly motivated by the degree to which circumstances hint that the situation could.

H10: locus of control moderates the relationship between empathetic emotion and whistle-blowing.

Exploiting the perspectives of COR (Hobfoll, 1989) and the Deontic Theory of Justice, we esteem employee silence and whistle-blowing as imminent importance of observed abusive supervision, and we inspect it as a possible mechanism connecting unjustified supervision to workers' whistle-blowing. Deontic theory of justice clarifies these responses; people must be treated according to the moral and ethical values they deserve for those values of morally appropriate behavior (Cropanzano et al., 2003). First, The idea behind abusive supervision is that it strains workers' resources, both physical and emotional (Whitman et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2015).



Research Methodology

Design of the Study

A research method is a system of procedures, guidelines, and precepts that govern a particular field of study. To control the field of social sciences According to (Schott et al., 2019) as compared to ontology and epistemology, the positivist viewpoint is upheld better through the use of quantitative research methods. The quantitative research approach deals with the expansion of knowledge through the targeted application of theories, research design, data, hypothesis testing, and measurement analysis. Because hypotheses were anticipated based on theories, gaps in the literature, problem statements, and the gathering of objective numerical evidence for analysis which ultimately yields an interpretation of the hypothesis and the veracity of the data collected this study followed the quantitative research method (Guba, 1990).

Population (Nurses)

Across all health service jobs, nurses play a more important role they dealing with hospitalized patients during severe disease treatment. World Health Organization (2015) states that Pakistan's nurse-to-patient ratio is significantly lower than necessary, and the reality diverges from all processes and expectations. the public & private sector hospital nurses were selected from south Punjab. This research also indicates that the observed abusive supervision exists in the healthcare sector. In this study on the healthcare segment and the statistics gathered from the paramedical staff of public sector hospitals of south Punjab, Pakistan, Due to unemployment and selection of good hospitals, employees have only a few options for employment. They try to retain these resources (jobs) that they bear unwanted behavior observed abusive supervision is one of them in Pakistani setup of hospitals mostly nurses and support staff join the healthcare sector as a career after completing sixteen years of education. The healthcare sector needs more

resources, and the head nurses and wards have the authority to deploy or adjust shifts of duties according to their wishes. This worse situation in the health sector leads to observed abusive supervision.

Sample and Procedure

Simple random sampling, the data is collected for this study from the healthcare sector of south Punjab, Pakistan; our sample consists of nursing staff from the public, and private hospitals of south Punjab, Pakistan. The medium questionnaire will be given in English, officially used in Pakistan. (Arain et al., 2017; Syed et al., 2015) Prevent self-reported bias and typical method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Data analysis

Researchers can focus on the research methodologies that best fit the topic at hand and set up their studies technically to achieve their research aims through research design (Mitchell & Jolley, 2012). Structural equation modeling (SEM) is widely favored by researchers in the social sciences for data analysis (Sarstedt et al., 2014) (Holmes-Smith, Coote, & Cunningham, 2006). Since this study includes independent and dependent variables, SEM is a valuable tool for examining the relationships among these variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). It enables the analysis of complex interdependencies and connections among latent, or unobserved, variables (Byrne, 2010). In addition to assessing direct links between independent and dependent variables, SEM is also advantageous for investigating indirect relationships, particularly those involving mediating and moderating variables.

Measures

Observed Abusive supervision

To evaluate observed abusive supervision, I used Tepper's (2000) 15-item abusive supervision scale, modified into a 5-item scale by Mitchell and Ambrose in 2007. Because I am more interested in gauging how an observer will react to abusive supervision than how I would react to it when given statements like "My supervisor makes fun of my coworker" and "My supervisor ridicules my coworker," employees were asked to rate how much they agreed with each one. ($\alpha=.96$).

Whistle-blowing

The creator of the six-item scale is Park & Blenkinsopp (2009). A 5-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "Never" and 5 representing "Always," was used to collect the responses. I would

whistle-blow on a lower-level employee, a middle-management employee, a senior management employee, or a person I consider a close friend. I would whistle-blow internally to management, according to the item scales.

Locus of Control

8 items from the multi-dimensional locus of control scale were used to evaluate the internal locus of control (Levenson, 1981). The internality subscale is an established measurement of an individual's confidence in his or her capacity to deal with the effects of life's events and happenings. The sample items on the scale are "My life is determined by my choices," "When I make goals, I almost always succeed in making them come true," and "When I obtain what I want, it is typically because I worked hard for it."

Empathetic Emotions

We used Davis' modified six-item scale to measure empathic emotion (1983). Participants were asked to rate the intensity of their feelings toward the abused employee (Chris) after reading how their supervisor treated Chris in the email. "Moved," "soft-hearted," "sorrowful," "touched," "concerned," and "compassionate" were among the words listed. "When viewing how Chris was treated by our boss in the email, I feel empathic" was one example item. (5 "very," 1 "very slightly/not at all," $r = .92$)

Expected Outcomes of the Research

The Expected outcomes of this study are that observed abusive supervision positively related to whistle-blowing and empathetic emotions will mediate the relationship between observed abusive supervision and whistle-blowing and locus of control will moderate the relation between observed abusive supervision and empathetic emotions and whistle-blowing intention. This research will resolve the issues related to paramedical staff, especially nurses. This study also helps in reducing abusive supervision.

Research Methodology

Design of the Study

The outer loading value describes the validity test conducted on the Smart PLS. If the outer loading value is more than 0.7, the variable is well-thought-out and genuine (Hair et al., 2014). The composite reliability value indicates reliability. If the composite reliability value is more

than 0.7, the variable is considered reliable (Hair et al., 2014). The findings of this study's validity and reliability test, which demonstrate that every construct is valid and reliable.

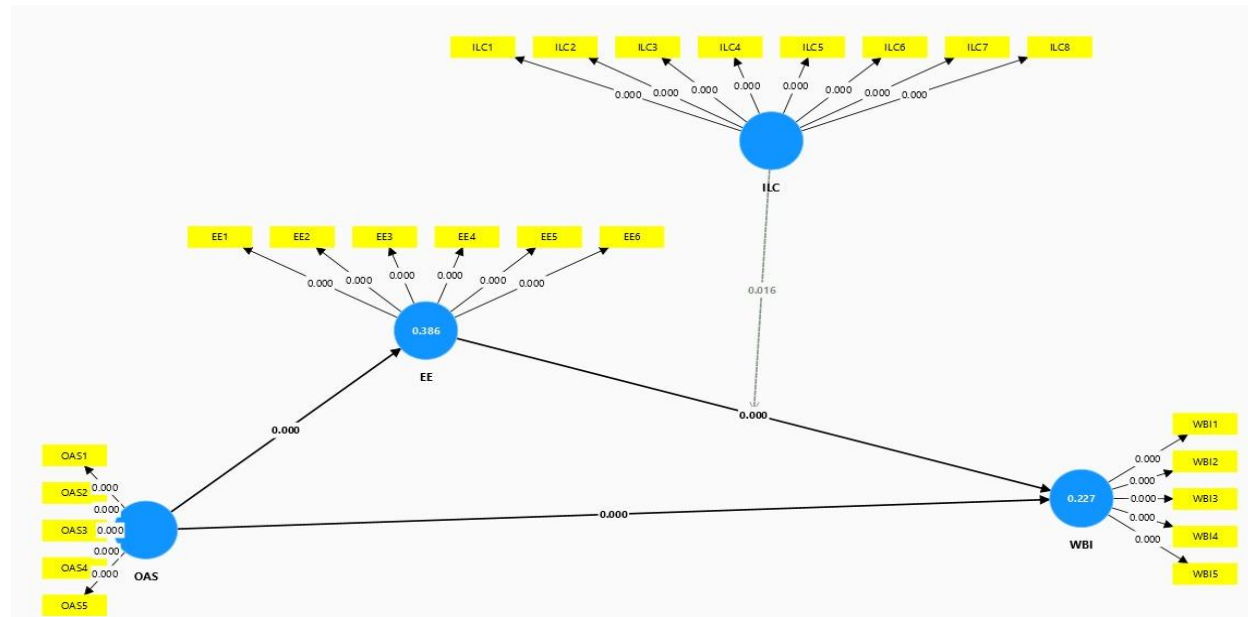


FIGURE 4.1 Structural Equation Model

Table 4.1 provides information on Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted, and the discriminant validity test are examples of outer model tests. Discriminant validity The goal of discriminant validity is to characterize an indicator that other indicators do not represent. The cross-loading value is used to measure it. If the cross-loading value is larger than 0.7 and greater than the other variables, the variable is considered legitimate (Henseler et al., 2015). The table displays the results of the discriminant validity test, which indicates that every variable is valid. Average Variance Extracted aims to determine each construct's and latent variable's discriminant validity. If the AVE value is more than 0.5, the variable satisfies the conditions (Henseler et al., 2015). The picture displays the results of the discriminant validity test, which indicates that every variable is valid.

TABLE 4.1 Measurement Model Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	(rhoA)	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted (Ave)
Observed	Abusive			
Supervision	0.743	0.751	0.833	0.509

Empathetic Emotions	0.855	0.863	0.892	0.579
Whistle-blowing Intention	0.837	0.848	0.884	0.605
Internal Locus of Control	0.765	0.921	0.823	0.503

Cronbach's Alpha The primary objective of Cronbach's Alphas is to the purpose of this test is to support the findings of a variable's composite dependability. If the Cronbach's alpha value is more than 0.7, the variable is considered eligible (Henseler et al., 2015). Figure 2 displays the results of the Cronbach's Alphas test, which demonstrates the reliability of every variable.

The Furnell-Larcker Criterion

The Fornell-Larcker criteria are frequently used to assess the discriminant validity of measurement models. This approach has been employed to evaluate discriminant validity in the current investigation. This criterion states that the AVE square root must be greater than all correlations connected to the construct. Table 4.2 presents these details.

TABLE 4.2The Furnell Larcker Criterion

FORNELL-LARCKER CRITERION				
Variables	1	2	3	4
EE	0.761			
ILC	-0.588	0.709		
OAS	0.621	-0.667	0.713	
WBI	0.363	-0.192	0.421	0.778

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ration (Htmt)

The HTMT approach was proposed by (Henseler et al., 2015) to evaluate the discriminant validity; based on this, a value of less than 0.90 has been established. Table 4.3 demonstrates that every value satisfied the required standards. (Henseler and others, 2015).

Table 4.3 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ration

HETEROTRAIT-MONOTRAIT RATION (HTMT)					
	EE	ILC	OAS	WBI	ILC x EE
EE					
ILC	0.615				
OAS	0.759	0.804			
WBI	0.421	0.189	0.525		
ILC X EE	0.127	0.292	0.144	0.075	

The similarity of latent variables is measured using the HTMT. Given that the HTMT measures inter-construct correlations, proper discrimination is hindered by these correlations

Mediation Analysis

The mediation is tested between empathetic emotions towards whistle-blowing intention, which has been observed and presented in the table. Table 4.4 is listed below.

TABLE 4.4 Mediation Analysis

Paths	β	t-value	p-value	2.5%	97.5%	Decision
OAS->EE->WBI	1.44	5.151	0.000	0.089	0.198	Supported

Table 4.5, describes the hypothesis testing which shows the Value of Beta, Standard deviation, t-value, p-value, and decision of relationship supported or unsupported.

TABLE 4.5 Hypothesis and Results

Variable	Beta β	Standard deviation	T-value	P-value	Decision
EE->WBI	0.232	0.045	5.189	0.000	Supported
ILC->WBI	0.202	0.050	4.011	0.000	Supported
OAS->EE	0.621	0.021	29.748	0.000	Supported
OAS->WBI	0.419	0.0053	7.903	0.000	Supported

ILC x EE_>WBI	0.078	0.033	2.402	0.016	Supported
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Discussion

The majority of research on abusive supervision until now centers on different types of counterproductive and deviant behavior, emphasizing the detrimental effects on the business and the impacted employees (Mackey et al., 2017). To address this knowledge gap, the current study used the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory to investigate how whistleblowing intention toward supervisors was impacted by perceived abusive supervision. Furthermore, our results showed that, with the moderating influence of internal locus of control, an observer can adopt whistleblowing as a coping mechanism after witnessing empathy for the victim and hostility toward an abusive supervisor.

Practical and theoretical contributions

Our findings suggest that supervisees can manage the recurrence of detrimental oversight episodes by developing resistance to criticism, which they can acquire from more experienced colleagues, even though they cannot directly control these occurrences. By doing this, supervisees will likely build strong relationships with collaborators and become less dependent on their administrators, resulting in a stable group environment. Therefore, having close relationships with colleagues would help supervisees reduce the likelihood of experiencing administrative abuse again and increase their productivity by learning from colleagues' experiences.

Limitations and future research

The limitations of this research, like those of some others, may be addressed by future researchers as they replicate and expand the hypothesized relationships examined in this study. For instance, Pakistan, a country occasionally examined in hazardous management writing, served as the site of the current inquiry (Khan et al., 2017). It is therefore possible that these social factors influenced the manhandled supervisees to avoid criticism and engage in help-chasing behavior as a result. For instance, Perlow and Weeks (2002) tested how social factors affected people's behavior when they were assisting others. Other personal factors, like as confidence and character traits, can also influence one's willingness to assist in searching for behavior. Therefore, it would be interesting if researchers in the future repeated this study with two examples.

Conclusion

This study investigates the relationship between witnessed abusive supervision and the intention to whistleblower. Our findings demonstrate that to assist victims who experience harsh monitoring, observers exhibit sympathetic feelings. Furthermore, when the affected supervisees made judgments to assist the victims, this sympathetic feeling pushed them to the locus of control. This situation's underlying motivational mechanism transforms witnessed harsh supervision into actions that aim to evoke sympathetic feelings. Our results further suggest that this mediation effect requires locus of control. This study contributes valuable information to the body of knowledge on abusive supervision and whistleblowing intention, and it has important implications for management practices.

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