SHAME AS AN ALTERNATE MECHANISM FOR THE ABUSIVE SUPERVISION-PERFORMANCE RELATION AND THE ROLE OF POWER DISTANCE VALUES

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ABSTRACT

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Research on workplace mistreatment indicates that abusive supervision negatively relates to employee-related criteria through perceived injustice. The consensus in the literature is that this effect is attenuated for employees who have a higher power distance orientation because they perceive abusive supervision to be more normative and legitimate. However, drawing from the group value model, the present study tests the experience of shame as an alternate mechanism that explains the effects of abusive supervision. In particular, the negative effect of abusive supervision on employee outcomes (performance and organizational citizenship behaviors) through the experience of shame is proposed to be stronger for subordinates with higher power distance values because of the relatively maladaptive way that these individuals cope with feelings of shame. Using a multi-wave survey of 211 matched supervisor-subordinate dyads, results indicate that the negative indirect effect of abusive supervision on employee performance through experienced shame is stronger for recipients with a high power distance orientation. This investigation contributes to the existing literature by testing an affective pathway by which abusive supervision relates to employee job performance and challenges the notion that high power distance followers are necessarily shielded from the negative effects of abusive leaders.
Dedicated to the many hardworking people who endure derision and abuse in the workplace.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The traditional approach to studying leadership in organizations has been to assess the ways in which leaders can be effective. However, more recently, there has been an increase in focus on the negative or darker aspects of leadership (e.g., Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009). Abusive supervision, or, the sustained display of hostile behavior directed toward one’s subordinates, is a prevalent problem that has been shown to negatively relate to a host of employee and organizational outcomes (Tepper, 2000; Tepper, 2007). However, this relatively fragmented and nascent literature has yet to answer several important questions about abusive supervision.

This study addresses two major gaps in the abusive supervision literature. First, there has been scant research looking at affective outcomes of unjust supervisory treatment like abusive supervision (Weiss, Suckow, & Cropanzano, 1999). Some studies have included general negative affect as an outcome or mediator (e.g., Hoobler & Hu, 2013), however, there is a dearth of research assessing the role of discrete emotions (See Peng & Schaubroeck, 2014 for a recent exception). This study addresses this gap in the literature by assessing the effect of abusive supervision on feelings of shame in subordinates.

Second, Tepper (2007) notes that the majority of studies assessing abusive supervision have been conducted in the United States. He further points out that the few studies conducted in other cultures have not directly modeled the effects of cultural values (two recent exceptions are Lian, Ferris, & Brown, 2012 and Wang, Mao, Wu, & Liu, 2012). To address this, the present study surveyed supervisor-subordinate dyads across two points in time to assess the moderating role of power distance orientation in the shame-job performance relation. Specifically, this study tests and supports a model whereby the indirect effect of abusive supervision on job performance
through feelings of shame is stronger at higher (versus lower) levels of subordinate power distance. See Figure 1 for the hypothesized model.

Abusive Supervision

In the past two decades, the topic of mistreatment at work has received considerable academic attention. This increased focus makes sense given that organizations, like most social systems, are characterized by power differentials, competition for scarce resources, the need for different people to work together toward common goals, and an ever-increasing environment of stress (Aquino & Thau, 2009). Depending on characteristics of the mistreatment such as intent, source, duration, and intensity, different labels have been used to describe the phenomena, each with their own separate literature. For example, one of the most commonly studied forms of mistreatment at work is workplace incivility, defined as low intensity behaviors directed toward another person at work with ambiguous intent to harm, such as acting rudely (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Similarly, bullying is the act of directing negative or harmful behaviors toward another person, however it occurs more frequently and persists over a longer period of time than incivility (Einarsen, 2000). In addition, when negative behaviors toward others are carried out with specific intent to harm one’s relationships or success at work, the label social undermining is often used (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002). Though there is a great deal of conceptual overlap between all of these constructs, this study focuses on a form of workplace mistreatment that is specifically perpetrated from supervisor to subordinate, called abusive supervision.

Tepper (2000) defines abusive supervision as the subjective assessment that one is the target of a supervisor’s willful and sustained hostile behavior. Abusive supervision can either come in the form of verbal or non-verbal behaviors, such as ridiculing, insulting, ignoring, or degrading. It can be distinguished from other supervisor-to-subordinate mistreatment constructs
such as petty tyranny (e.g., Ashforth, 1994), generalized hierarchical abuse (Rosenda, Richman, Wislar, & Flaherty, 2000), and others (see Tepper, 2007 for a review) in that it excludes physical or sexual hostility, solely encompasses behavior that is considered hostile, and is not necessarily employed to create a specific outcome. It should be noted that abusive supervision is a subjective perception, which may be colored by characteristics of the subordinate (e.g., personality) as well as the behaviors of the supervisor.

Abusive supervision is defined as willful behavior, but the motivation underlying the behavior varies (Tepper, 2007). For example, it may be enacted to cause harm to the subordinate or to motivate the subordinate when he/she is underperforming. There is also some work to show that abusive supervision can be the result of displaced aggression on the part of the supervisor. For example, Tepper, Duffy, Henle, and Lambert (2006) found that procedural injustice perceived by a supervisor indirectly affects that supervisor’s abusive behaviors toward subordinates through feelings of depression, only when the subordinate is high on negative affectivity. The rationale for this finding is that when supervisors experience something that they feel is out of their control, they are more likely to take it out on weaker targets, which helps to restore a sense of control. Subordinates who are high on negative affectivity are one potential outlet for that behavior because negative affect can be a sign that a subordinate does not have the resources to defend him/herself. Aquino, Grover, Bradfield, and Allen (1999) also argue that subordinates who are higher on negative affectivity may provoke such victimization from supervisors because their affective disposition may cause them to be less likeable.

Marcus-Newhall, Pedersen, Carlson, and Miller (2000) refer to this aggressive displacement as the “kick the dog” metaphor whereby a disgruntled worker goes home and kicks his dog because it is a weaker target and an outlet for frustration. Indeed, Hoobler and Brass
(2006) found that when supervisors perceive that a psychological contract has been breached, they are more likely to be perceived as abusive from subordinates, especially when the supervisor has a hostile attribution bias, the tendency to construe others’ behavior as hostile. In turn, the family members of subordinates are more likely to experience negative outcomes as the displacement cycle continues. Similarly, Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne, and Marinova (2012) found that abusive behavior trickled down at least three levels from manager to supervisor to employee.

Abusive supervision is also brought on by supervisory perceptions of deep-level dissimilarity (e.g., dissimilarity in values and attitudes) with the subordinate because those who are dissimilar tend to be excluded from one’s moral compass (Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011). This perceived dissimilarity relates to abusive supervision both directly and indirectly through lower performance evaluations of the subordinate. In addition, these researchers found that perceived relationship conflict mediated the dissimilarity-abusive supervision relationship only when performance evaluations were low. The reason for this is that when there is perceived deep dissimilarity between supervisor and subordinate but the subordinate is performing well, the supervisor is more likely to believe that fair treatment is deserved. However, when the subordinate is not performing well, the perceived diversity leads the supervisor to feel that moral considerations do not apply to that particular target.

Employee Ill-being and Deviance. Regardless of the impetus for abusive supervisory treatment, the literature is clear that it leads to a wide array of deleterious consequences for subordinates. Research indicates that abusive supervision negatively relates to job satisfaction and organizational commitment through feelings of injustice (e.g., Tepper, 2000) and negatively relates to intentions to quit through irritation and fear of future aggression (Schat, Desmarais, &
Kelloway, 2006; see Tepper, 2007 for a review). In general, the effects of abusive supervision on employee outcomes are exacerbated when employees hold lower power positions. For example, Tepper (2000) found that the effects of abuse on job attitudes are stronger when job mobility is low because subordinates feel that they have no option to escape the source of the abuse. In addition, there is evidence to support the notion that mixed supervisory styles, whereby the supervisor is abusive at times and supportive at times is associated with even worse job attitudes because it leads to insecurity and a feeling of lack of control (Duffy et al., 2002).

Beyond job attitudes, abusive supervision has been shown to relate to psychological strain outcomes like burnout (e.g., Yagil, 2006), psychological distress (Restubog, Scott, & Zagenczyk, 2011), job tension and emotional exhaustion (Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007), and anxiety (Harris, Kacmar, & Boonthanom, 2005). It also relates to somatic health complaints (Duffy et al., 2002) and it has even been linked to employee problem drinking behaviors (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006).

Not only do employees experience negative well-being outcomes when abused, they react behaviorally to restore equity. This is especially so when they hold more powerful positions. For example, Tepper and colleagues (2009) found that abusive supervision relates to supervisor-directed deviance, especially when subordinates have high intent to quit. This is because in this scenario, subordinates plan to leave the organization anyway and are less dependent on their supervisors, thus feeling more empowered to take revenge. Deviance is also exacerbated when abuse occurs in the context of high LMX, a high quality relationship characterized by reciprocal exchange (Lian, Ferris, & Brown, 2012). This is because when the relationship quality is generally high, abusive behaviors are unexpected and thus carry more weight. Finally, research shows that the abusive supervision-deviance relation is stronger when coworkers are more
accepting of organizational deviance and more likely to engage in it themselves (Tepper, Henle, Lamerbert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008).

**Job Performance.** This study aims to explore the effect of abusive supervision on job performance more deeply. Previous research has found that abusive leadership affects self and leader-rated in-role performance (Harris, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2007). The authors used conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) to predict this effect. The idea is that when supervisors are abusive, subordinates expend more energy and effort (i.e., resources) to manage the stressful threat posed. In addition, social exchange theory predicts that the treatment one receives is likely to be reciprocated in some form. As such, subordinates may “repay” the supervisor’s poor treatment by reducing work performance. This theoretical framework is also used to explain the negative relation between abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs; Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007; Zellers, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002), which are behaviors that benefit the organization but are external to one’s normal and expected job duties (Organ, 1988). Similar to Tepper’s (2000) original conceptualization of abusive supervision, these two studies used organizational justice to predict the mechanisms by which abusive supervision affects OCBs. Aryee and colleagues (2007) supported interactional justice as a mediator and Zellers, Tepper, and Duffy (2002) found evidence that procedural justice mediated the relation. These authors posit that employees reduce performance in an effort to restore equity to the exchange relationship. Xu, Huang, Lam, and Miao (2011) add additional support to the social exchange perspective by demonstrating that LMX mediates the relations between abusive supervision and employee in-role and extra-role performance. Given these previous findings, I hypothesize the following:
**H1: Abusive supervision negatively relates to employee’s a) in-role performance and b) OCBs.**

**The Group Value Model.** Though most research on abusive supervision to date uses a social exchange or organizational justice perspective to predict how employees will respond to such treatment, there are likely additional reasons for lowered performance that are less instrumental in nature. Drawing from the group value model (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1989), it is possible to predict a separate mechanism by which abusive supervision reduces performance. According to this framework, unjust behavior also conveys important identity-related information. Drawing from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), proponents of the group value model argue that group leaders represent the collective opinion of the broader group (i.e., the organization) and that negative behavior directed at a subordinate may be construed as an indication that the he/she is not worthy of high social standing within the group. From a social identity perspective, this can be very damaging because group standing is a source of self-validation (Festinger, 1954). Thus, not only are employees likely to reciprocate negative behavior from supervisors in the form of lower performance, but, such performance might be affected due to damage to the self-concept.

The group value model suggests that abusive supervision should lead to decreased employee performance, in part, through feelings of shame. Although both the abusive supervision and workplace emotion literatures have received increased attention as of late, very little work has examined the effects of abusive supervision on affective constructs, other than strain-related outcomes like emotional exhaustion. In one recent exception, Hoobler and Hu (2013) supported the idea that abusive treatment engenders a negative affective state, which negatively affects job performance. Though this study assessed overall negative affectivity as a
mechanism, more research is needed on the role of discrete emotions. This is important because different discrete emotions that have the same valence can affect response tendencies in vastly different ways. For example, the structural model of appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991) states that there are two categories of emotional appraisal. In the primary appraisal, the actor determines whether a given situation is important and also whether it is consistent with his/her goals. If the situation is important but incongruent with one’s goals, the experience of a negative emotion is a likely result. However, it is during the secondary appraisal where discrete emotions are differentiated. In the secondary appraisal, the person determines who is responsible for the situation and how to cope with it. For example, losing a basketball game could cause the captain of the team to feel negative emotions. However, if the captain believes it is the fault of an unprepared teammate, she may experience anger, and may cope with that emotion by lashing out. If she believes it is her own fault, she may experience sadness that she let her team down, and cope with it by offering an apology. Given that discrete emotions each have a unique motivational and behavioral profile that goes beyond simple positive and negative valence (Lazarus & Cohen-Charash, 2001), this is an important gap in the abusive supervision literature.

**Workplace Shame**

Shame is an emotional response to a sense of personal incompetence or inferiority that is highly tied to the self-concept (e.g., Lewis, 1992). It typically arises as a result of a personally meaningful failure or moral transgression and can be characterized by intense rumination, feelings of exposure, and degradation (Orth, Berking, & Burkhardt, 2006). Therefore, shame is considered a self-referent emotion. Shame is often intense and highly motivating as it undermines the basic human desire to have positive views of the self (e.g., Taylor & Brown, 1988). Lewis (1992) ascribes three basic elements to shame: a violation of some role or standard,
a failure to meet expectations, and a defect that cannot be easily repaired.

Though commonly thought of as part of the same emotion family, it bears drawing the distinctions between shame, guilt, and embarrassment. The primary characteristic that differentiates shame from guilt is whether the negative evaluation is related to a global sense of self or to a specific action (Lewis, 1992; Tangney, 1992). That is, guilt arises over a feeling of regret regarding a specific action that violates internal standards. Because guilt is an emotion in reference to a specific action, it is less closely linked to the self-concept, and thus the experience is not as intense as shame (Lewis, 1992).

Like shame and guilt, embarrassment is also a self-conscious emotion (Fischer & Tangney, 1995). Some scholars have suggested that shame and embarrassment are two names for the same construct, perhaps only differing in intensity (e.g., Kaufman, 1989). Indeed, Miller and Tangney (1994) reported that shame is a more intense emotion and tends to arise when a more moral- rather than trivial- transgression has occurred. However, recent work has differentiated these two further. Robbins and Parlavecchio (2006) found evidence for the unwanted exposure model as an explanation for embarrassment. The idea is that embarrassment is the result of revealing something that one wants to remain concealed. However, this does not always relate to shame, especially if the embarrassing act is out of the control of the person or is not damaging to the self-concept. For example, unwanted public praise can be embarrassing for some, but unlikely to be shameful. Thus, there does seem to be a quantitative and qualitative distinction between these two emotions.

**Abusive Supervision and Shame.** Shame is a viable mechanism by which abusive supervision negatively affects job performance. Given that abusive supervision is often focused on the inadequacies of the recipient, which is damaging to the self-concept, it should relate to
feelings of shame. Indeed, there has been some qualitative work that shows that bullying at work may lead to self-blame which results in feelings of shame (Hallberg & Strandmark, 2006). In addition, the shame associated with workplace bullying often lasts long after the bullying has ended (Brousse et al., 2008; Hallberg & Strandmark, 2006; Lewis, 2004).

Though shame is self-focused, it also has a strong social element in that it is related to a need for approval or acceptance (Fischer & Tangney, 1995). Thus, feelings of shame cause one to focus on the self and are also related to the belief that one cannot meet the expectations of salient others (Brown & Weiner, 1984; Fischer & Tangney, 1995). The group value model discussed above would suggest that mistreatment from the supervisor, as a prototypical representative of the organization, would lead to even greater feelings of shame because one’s status in the group is questioned, further harming the self-concept.

*H2: Abusive supervision positively relates to feelings of shame at work.*

**Shame and Job Performance.** Shame has typically been associated with a behavioral tendency to withdraw from the situation to protect the self (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989; Scherer & Wallbott, 1994). When experiencing shame, people often report that they want to remove themselves from public view and even “sink into the floor and disappear” (Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996, p. 1257). In fact, Frijda and colleagues (1989) found that only shame was consistently associated with a feeling of “wanting to disappear from view” in a study of over 30 discrete emotions. Based on this evidence, shame induced by abusive supervision, for example, would make an employee want to withdrawal from the supervisor and reduce interaction as much as possible. If the abuse is related to the subordinate’s work (e.g., the supervisor tells the subordinate that he/she is lazy or belittles his/her efforts), the subordinate might withdraw from the work itself in an attempt to preserve the self-concept. In support of this
idea, Thompson, Altmann, and Davidson (2004) found that shame-prone students who experienced failure were less likely to spend time practicing on a task than low shame-prone students. Additionally, even when a face-saving element was associated with the failure (i.e., it was not entirely the students’ fault), the shame-prone students performed worse than the low shame-prone students. This is likely because those who experience chronic shame are unable to take into consideration environmental cues that might make low shame-prone people feel less responsible for the failure, allowing them to preserve the self-concept.

There is some evidence, however, that shame is associated with approach tendencies as well. For example, although Tangney et al. (1996) reported that shame was related to a behavioral tendency to hide, it was related to the desire to make amends (an approach behavior) to an even greater degree. Additionally, De Hooge, Breugelmans, and Zeelenberg (2008) found that shame led to more prosocial behavior as long as the shame was endogenous (still relevant to the current situation) rather than exogenous (spilled over into an unrelated situation). Thus, it is apparent that shame has inconsistent behavioral effects by sometimes causing one to withdraw from the situation to prevent further damage to the self-concept but other times causing one to approach the source of the shame to regain positive feelings about the self. A recent study by these same researchers (Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2010) sheds light on this dilemma. In a series of five experimental studies, they found that the primary response to shame is to activate approach behaviors to remedy or undo the source of the shame and thus restore the self-concept. However, when it is not possible or too risky to approach the source of the shame, participants activate withdrawal behaviors to protect the self from further damage.

These approach and avoidance behaviors in the workplace are important because they have relatively clear effects on job performance. Avoidance behaviors are likely to have
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detrimental effects. This is especially so when the avoidance behavior is the result of shame, which already could be an indication that the person has not lived up to performance standards. Avoidance behaviors cause people to focus inward and results in fewer resources available to focus on work tasks (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Additionally, avoidance behaviors make people less assertive at work and take less initiative (e.g., Keltner & Harker, 1998), which is likely to decrease these ratings. Indeed, Bagozzi, Verbeke, and Gavino Jr. (2003) found that the inwardly-focused self-protective actions that individuals use as a response to workplace shame are negatively related to in-role performance and OCBs.

On the other hand, approach behaviors should have less negative effects on performance. This is because approach tendencies are associated with effort and persistence (Elliot et al., 2005), which are likely to increase supervisory ratings of performance. Indeed, Greguras and Diefendorff (2010) found that proactive personality, an approach-oriented trait that causes one to initiate change in the environment, was positively related to OCBs. The end result of such approach-oriented behavior would likely be to restore the damage to the self that was done by the supervisor’s negative appraisal and comments. Thus, while shame indicates that one has performed poorly, approach oriented behaviors as a result, are likely to help restore the ego by increasing effort, persistence, and initiative-taking.

Taken, together, research shows that shame could have either beneficial or detrimental effects on performance, depending on whether approach or avoidance behaviors are activated. De Hooge and colleagues (2010) helped to resolve these contradictory findings by showing that shame initially motivates people to approach the shame-inducing situation to remove the source of shame. However, when this is too difficult or risky, people are more motivated to retreat from the situation and protect the self from further damage. Given the social distance inherent in all
unequal power-relationships (i.e., supervisor and subordinate), more withdrawal behaviors will be activated than approach behaviors as a result of experienced shame at work. As such, I propose the following two hypotheses:

\[
H3: \text{Experienced shame at work negatively relates to a) in-role performance and b) OCBs.}
\]

\[
H4: \text{Abusive supervision indirectly relates to a) in-role performance and b) OCBs through feelings of shame.}
\]

Given that De Hooge et al. (2010) find that shame can activate approach behaviors to repair the source of shame in some circumstances, it is likely that in the context of supervisor-subordinate relationships, action tendencies and thus performance may depend on cultural values of the employee.

**The Moderating Effect of Power Distance**

Power Distance (PD) refers to the degree to which individuals or societies accept inequality as unavoidable, legitimate, or functional (Hofstede, 1980). In high PD cultures, those without power show deference to those with power (Yang, Mossholder, & Peng, 2007) and there is increased social distance between those at different levels of the hierarchy (e.g., Javidan, Dorfman, de Luque, & House, 2006). This means that leaders in high PD cultures are more autocratic and formal. Carl, Gupta, and Javidan (2002) characterize leadership in high PD cultures as having, “virtually no rapport between the leader and subordinate. Leaders will rely almost exclusively on the formal contract with subordinates to achieve organizational goals, with the organization compensating the employee through financial remuneration” (p. 535). This formalized and distant style of interaction relates to less subordinate feedback seeking (de Luque & Sommer, 2000) and high power differentials have been shown to relate to less cooperation
Given these findings, it is likely that PD acts as a type of social barrier between the supervisor and subordinate, which influences how subordinates will respond to abusive supervision and shame.

As mentioned in the previous section, de Hooge and colleagues (2010) developed an explanation for often-contradictory findings regarding shame. In a series of five experiments, they show that when experiencing shame, both restore motives (to fix or repair the self-concept) and protect motives (to hide and preserve the self-concept) are activated. However, they found that the restore motive was activated to a greater degree, leading to increased behavioral intentions like willingness to perform again and intentions to repair the situation. For example, after inducing shame in a group of participants, protect, and to a greater extent, restore motives were activated. They were also more likely than controls to indicate that they would like to engage in a task that tests their abilities (approach behavior) versus a different non-ability task. Though these motives to restore and protect the self-concept led to more approach behaviors in the shame condition, this was moderated by feelings of competency. When competency was low, participants were more likely to withdraw from the situation after experiencing shame than approach. The authors posit that low competence makes approach behaviors more risky and perceived to have potential to further damage the self-concept. For example, a basketball player who misses a shot in the last second to lose the game would be less likely to want to take the last shot in future games if she feels that she is not very capable. However, if she feels highly capable, she may want to take the last shot because it offers a way to restore the damage to the self-concept rather than just protect it from further harm.

These findings challenge previous work that assumes that shame always leads to avoidance or withdrawal behaviors. de Hooge and colleagues (2010) point out that most of the
research that reports strong positive relations between shame and withdrawal behaviors measured chronic shame or shame-proneness (Tangney, 1990; Thompson, et al., 2004). In these cases, it becomes quite difficult to approach the source of the shame because that shame is at least partially dispositional. These results are similar to those found in research on core self-evaluations, or, dispositional feelings of positive self-regard. Judge and Bono (2001) found in a meta-analysis that the relation between core self-evaluations and job performance ranges from .24 (emotional stability) to .45 (generalized self-efficacy). These strong correlations between positive views of the self and performance seem to indicate that shame would relate quite strongly and negatively to performance. In the case of these chronic or dispositional perceptions, it may be difficult for someone to approach the source of the negative feelings and affect them in a meaningful way because the source of the shame is partly genetic.

Given the findings by de Hooge and colleagues (2010), abusive supervision likely relates to feelings of shame at work and the effect of workplace shame on performance likely depends on PD. That is, in high PD cultures, where employees have greater social distance between themselves and the source of shame (the supervisor) it is more difficult and risky to repair the self-concept by engaging the supervisor more closely. Instead, the motive to protect the self-concept from further harm would likely prevail and lead the person to withdraw from the supervisor. This likely leads to even worse performance because withdrawal would mean spending less time interacting with the supervisor and perhaps less time engaged at work, especially if the supervisor is often present. Additionally, research supports the notion that leader-follower relations in high PD cultures are less malleable than in low PD cultures. For example, the relation between trust and LMX is stronger when PD is low compared to high (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012). Thus, given the more formalized
relationship between supervisor and subordinate in high PD cultures, subordinates have less ability to influence the nature of the relationship. High PD employees would also be less likely to take initiative, approach the supervisor with ideas, volunteer to work late, or engage in other approach-oriented behaviors that could help to curry favor with the supervisor. This likely translates to poorer performance ratings for these employees. For those with low PD values, there is less social distance between them and the supervisor. Thus, their ego-restore motive would be activated and this would lead them to approach the supervisor more in an effort to stymie future abuse and feelings of shame. The employee would likely do this by working harder and attempting to impress the supervisor with better performance. This would result in either better performance ratings from the supervisor or at least no significant decrease in performance.

It should be noted here that there is one study that has assessed the effect of PD on the shame-performance relation. Bagozzi and colleagues (2003) found that Dutch customer service agents responded to feelings of shame in customer interactions by engaging in protective actions, or, self-regulatory behavior that cause them to back down from the situation and become more passive (e.g., Keltner & Harker, 1998). Additionally, Dutch people engaged in less adaptive resource allocation, which is a self-regulatory behavior characterized by flexibility and adaptation in interpersonal relations. Thus, for the Dutch sample, shame lead to decreased self-reported performance. The authors theorize that the relatively individualistic Dutch are more interested in preserving the self, so they engage in more self-protective actions. However, this finding is in contrast to the relatively collectivistic Filipinos who are more interested in maintaining social harmony. They were more likely to regulate their behavior to directly mend the customer-employee relationship. Given the high correlation between collectivism and PD (Hofstede, 1980), these findings may initially seem to contradict the present study’s hypotheses.
However, the key difference between these studies is the source of the shame.

As indicated above, shame is the result of feelings of inadequacy or poor performance. When this shame is a result of customer interaction, it is likely that those high on PD (like Filipinos) will have little problem restoring interpersonal harmony with those of relatively equal status (e.g., customers) thus improving customer or self-ratings of performance. However, shame that is experienced as a result of supervisor interactions (i.e., abusive supervision) is more difficult to restore in high PD cultures and may thus result in weaker performance ratings from supervisors. In fact, these results imply that those with a high PD orientation who are also likely to be more collectivistic should experience added tension. This is because collectivism motivates people to restore harmony in their social relationships with abusive supervisors. However, PD values make that behavior quite difficult. This added internal conflict likely affects performance to an even greater degree. Finally, it should be noted that this paper only compared relations with two different countries and used cross-cultural theory to make their predictions. However, researchers argue that to be confident that the right cultural values (or values at all for that matter) are being isolated, at least 10 countries should be included in the sample, or, individual-level cultural values should be assessed and directly modeled (e.g., Fischer, 2009).

Given the above rationale, abusive supervision is hypothesized to indirectly decrease performance through feelings of shame for those with a high PD orientation. This is because the high PD will constrain their ability to approach the source of the shame and improve the situation, thus, they will withdraw from the situation further decreasing performance ratings. For those low on PD orientation, individuals will still likely feel shame, however, they will manage the abusive supervision by using approach behaviors at work and with the supervisor. Thus, shame is unlikely to link abusive supervision to performance decrements because the shame will cause the
employee to be proactive in canceling out such negative effects.

H5: The relation between shame and a) in-role performance and b) OCBs is moderated by subordinate PD such that the negative effect of shame on the outcomes is stronger when PD is high.

H6: The indirect effect from abusive supervision to a) in-role performance and b) OCBs is moderated by subordinate PD, such that the effect is stronger when PD is high.
CHAPTER II. METHOD

Recruitment Procedure and Response Rate

A field study was conducted with leader-subordinate dyads from several industries in Singapore. Undergraduate business students recruited these dyads for course credit. This type of snowballing technique for collecting matched supervisor-subordinate dyads has been used in prior research (e.g., Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005) and research indicates that the quality of data using this approach is similar to more traditional approaches (e.g., Smith, Tisak, Hahn, & Schmeider, 1997). All participants were at least 18 years of age, worked full time (minimum of 30 hours per week), had a supervisor/subordinate working relationship of at least 3 months, and were English-speaking.

An a-priori power analysis was conducted to determine the number of participants needed to achieve a .95 level of power with an alpha level of .05. A power analysis with the assumption of a moderate effect size ($r = .30$) was conducted with the program G*power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). Given that no quantitative study has assessed the relation between abusive supervision and shame, Hoobler and Hu’s (2013) effect of abusive supervision on state negative affect ($r = .32$) was used as a guide. Given five variables in the model (the most that would be in the model at a given time, including control variables), 195 participants are needed to achieve the desired power level.

Two surveys were sent to subordinates approximately one week apart. The single supervisor survey was sent approximately one week after the second subordinate survey. The surveys were sent out to 294 dyads, of which 275 subordinates completed the first survey (93.5% response rate). Of those, 266 people completed the second survey (96.7% response rate). 240 supervisors also completed the survey and were able to be matched to subordinate data. Several
attention check items were included throughout the surveys to flag careless responding. A total of 29 cases were removed for failing at least one of the attention check items (e.g., “please just click strongly disagree for this item”). This yielded a final sample size of 211 matched dyads.

**Sample Characteristics**

The sample characteristics generally matched the broader Singaporean working population. The age of subordinates ranged from 20 to 63 with an average age of 36 years (SD = 11 years.). Supervisor age ranged from 22 to 79 with a mean of 45 (SD = 11). A majority of the subordinates were women (54%) and a majority of the supervisors were men (62%). Fitting with the ethnic makeup of Singapore, the majority of respondents were ethnic Chinese for the subordinate sample (86%) as well as for the supervisor sample (86%). Given the large number of expatriate workers in Singapore, the sample contained a mix of nationalities. However, 82% of subordinates and 86% of supervisors identified as Singaporean, with the remaining participants hailing from various countries around the world. The average company tenure for subordinates was 7 years (SD = 8 years) and 12 years (SD = 10 years) for supervisors. The average length of time that subordinates reported working for their current supervisors was 7 years (SD = 8 years).

**Measures**

The first subordinate survey contained items for abusive supervision, PD, control variables, and demographics. The second survey contained the shame items. Finally, the supervisor survey contained the performance and OCB items as well as demographic questions. See Appendix A for all study items.

**Abusive Supervision.** Abusive supervision was measured with 15 items developed by Tepper (2000). Subordinates responded to items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (I cannot remember him/her ever using this behavior with me) to 5 (He/she uses this behavior very often
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with me). A sample item is, “My boss tells me I am incompetent.” The scale demonstrated good internal consistency (α = .91).

**PD.** PD was measured at the individual level with a scale developed by Farh, Hackett, and Liang (2007). Subordinates responded to six items about their perspective on the role of those in higher-power positions. The response options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample item is, “Employees should not disagree with management decisions.” The scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (α = .72).

**Experienced Shame.** Feelings of experienced shame at work were measured with the shame dimension of the State Shame and Guilt Scale (Marschall, Sanftner, & Tangney, 1994). The instructions were adapted to refer to the respondent’s experience of shame in general when interacting with their supervisor. The measure contains 5 items, which are rated on a Likert scale from 1 (Never) to 7 (All the time). An example item is, “I feel humiliated, disgraced.” The scale demonstrated good internal consistency (α = .80).

**In-role Job Performance.** In-role job performance was measured with seven items developed by Williams and Anderson (1991). Supervisors rated the extent to which the target subordinate performs well on the job. The 7 items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always). An example item is, “This subordinate fulfills responsibilities specified in the job description.” The scale demonstrated good internal consistency (α = .83).

**Organizational Citizenship Behaviors.** OCBs directed at the individual (OCBI) and the organization (OCBO) were measured with a scale developed by Lee and Allen (2002). Supervisors responded to 16 items on a 1 (never) to 7 (always) scale. A sample OCBI item is, “Goes out of the way to make newer employees feel welcome in the work group,” and a sample OCBO item is, “Attends functions that are not required but that help the organization’s image.”
For this study, an overall composite OCB measure was used. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$).

**Control Variables and Demographics.** As a more conservative test of this study’s hypotheses, the control variables of positive and negative affectivity (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) were included in order to parse out the effects of trait affectivity on state feelings of shame. This scale consists of 20 adjectives (10 positive and 10 negative). Participants were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (very slightly or not at all) to 5 (extremely) the degree to which they felt each emotion (e.g., excited, upset) generally. Both the positive and negative affectivity scales demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = .89$ and .86, respectively).

Job tenure was also included as a control because length of employment at a company likely influences job performance ratings (e.g., poor performers either improve over time or leave the organization). This question was included on the demographic questionnaire.
CHAPTER III. RESULTS

Analytic Strategy

Hierarchical linear regression was used to test hypotheses about bivariate relations so that the effect above and beyond the control variables could be isolated. In addition, Hayes’ (2012) PROCESS macro for SPSS was used to estimate indirect, conditional, and conditional indirect effects. The program ran a total of three models; the first was the mediator model, which accounted for the effect between abusive supervision on feeling of shame in addition to the control variables. This model was nested within two separate dependent variable models (one for each dependent variable), which included the effects of shame and PD on the outcome variables (in-role performance and OCBs). The indirect effects were calculated using the product of coefficients strategy (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). This is done by calculating the product of the regression coefficients in the mediator and dependent model, which yields a point estimate of the effect. A z test with an associated standard error is then used to test for statistical significance of the effect. Given that this product point estimate may violate assumptions of normality in parametric significance tests, researchers advocate for a bootstrapping method (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). As such, bootstrapping with 5000 samples to estimate 95% bias-corrected and accelerated bootstrap confidence intervals was used.

Descriptive Statistics and Preliminary Analyses

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations for all study variables, including the control variables of positive affectivity, negative affectivity, and company tenure. All correlations were in the expected direction. For example, abusive supervision positively related to experienced shame ($r = .27, p < .01$) and negatively related to both in-role performance ($r = -.27, p < .01$) and OCBs ($r = -.15, p < .05$). The relations between
abusive supervision and in-role performance as well as abusive supervision and OCBs are consistent with previous research which have found correlations of -.23 (Harris et al., 2007) and -.14 (Zellars et al., 2002) respectively. In addition, supervisory shame negatively related to in-role performance ($r = -.19, p < .01$) as expected, though the relation with OCBs failed to reach significance.

Given that there were three measurement periods, it is important to assess whether any differences exist on key study variables or demographics for those who dropped out after the first survey or those whose supervisors did not complete the survey. For variables collected on survey 1, independent samples t-tests were used to compare means for continuous variables (abusive supervision, PD, positive affectivity, negative affectivity, tenure, and age) and a chi-square test for categorical variables (gender and race). No significant statistically significant differences were identified for either the group with attrition at survey two or the group with attrition on the supervisor survey.

**Hypothesis Tests**

Hypothesis 1 posited that abusive supervision would negatively relate to a) in-role performance and b) OCBs. Importantly, this effect was expected to hold when controlling for positive affectivity, negative affectivity, and tenure. As such, the control variables were entered in the first step of the regression and abusive supervision was entered in the second step. Step 1 of the model was statistically significant, $F(3) = 3.21, p < .05$, and explained 4.7% of the variance in performance. In the second step, abusive supervision was negatively related to in-role performance ($b = -.27, p < .01$) accounting for an additional 6.0% of the variance. Thus, Hypothesis 1a was supported. The same model was then run with OCBs as the outcome. Step 1 of the model was statistically significant, $F(3) = 4.94, p < .01$, and explained 7.0% of the
variance. However, the effect of abusive supervision on OCBs was not statistically significant in the second step ($b = -.18, p = .06$). Thus, Hypothesis 1b was not supported. See Table 2 for the full regression results.

Hypothesis 2 stated that abusive supervision positively relates to feelings of shame at work, above and beyond the effects of the control variables. Similar to Hypothesis 1, the control variables were entered in the first step of the model. Step 1 was statistically significant, $F(3) = 8.22, p < .01$, and accounted for 10.9% of the variance in shame. In step 2, abusive supervision was positively associated with feelings of shame ($b = .20, p < .01$) explaining an additional 5.2% of the variance. As such, Hypothesis 2 was supported. See Table 3 for the full regression results.

Hypothesis 3 stated that feelings of shame negatively relate to a) in-role performance and b) OCBs after accounting for the variance explained by the control variables. The first step of the regression was statistically significant, $F(3) = 3.11, p < .05$, with the control variables accounting for 5.0% of the variance in in-role performance. The effect of shame on in-role performance, however, did not reach significance ($b = -.18, p = .05$). Given this, Hypothesis 3a was not supported. Similarly, the first step of the model for OCBs was statistically significant, $F(3) = 4.35, p < .01$, accounting for 6.5% of the variance. The addition of shame in the second step, however, was not statistically significant ($b = .01, p > .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3b was not supported. See Table 4 for the full regression results.

Hypothesis 4 stated that abusive supervision indirectly relates to a) in-role performance and b) OCBs through feelings of shame. First, the indirect effect on in-role performance through shame was tested. As can be seen in Table 5, the product of the coefficients ($b = -.02, SE = .03$) was not statistically significant because the 95% confidence interval included 0 $[-.11, .01]$. Thus,
there was not a statistically significant indirect effect of abusive supervision on in-role performance through shame and Hypothesis 4a was not supported.

Next, the indirect effect of abusive supervision on OCBs through shame was assessed. As seen in Table 5, the indirect effect ($b = .01$, $SE = .03$) was not statistically significant because the 95% confidence interval included 0 [-.04, .09]. Thus, Hypothesis 4b was also not supported.

Hypothesis 5 posited that the relations between a) shame and in-role performance as well as b) shame and OCBs would be moderated by PD such that the effects are exacerbated when PD is high. A hierarchical regression model was tested with the control variables, abusive supervision, shame, and PD at step 1, and the interaction term of shame by PD at step 2. Shame and PD were mean centered prior to the analysis. As can be seen in Table 6, the first step of the model for in-role performance was statistically significant, $F(6) = 4.31, p < .01$, and accounted for 12.4% of the variance. The addition of the interaction term in step 2 was also statistically significant ($b = -.44, p < .01$) and accounted for an additional 3.2% of the variance. A plot of the interaction (See Figure 2) indicated that the effect of shame on in-role performance was stronger for those with higher PD values. A simple slopes analysis showed that at 1 SD below the mean for PD, the effect was not statistically significant ($b = .07, t = .64, p > .05$). However, at 1 SD above the mean, the effect was statistically significant and negative ($b = -.43, t = -3.00, p < .01$). As such, Hypothesis 5a was supported.

The same equation was used to test the model with OCBs as the outcome. The first step was statistically significant ($F(6) = 2.69, p < .05$) and accounted for 8.1% of the variance. The interaction term entered at step 2 was also statistically significant ($b = -.48, t = -2.27, p < .05$) and explained an additional 2.5% of the variance. As can be seen in Figure 3, the interaction was in the expected direction such that the slope was negative for those with high PD values.
However, a simple slopes analysis showed that at 1 SD above the mean of PD, the shame-OCB relation was not statistically significant ($b = -.28, t = -1.50, p > .05$). In addition, at 1 SD below the mean, the relation also did not reach significance, $b = .27, t = 1.86, p = .07$. Given the statistically significant interaction term, Hypothesis 5b was supported.

Hypothesis 6 stated that the indirect effect of abusive supervision on a) in-role performance and b) OCBs is stronger when PD is high. The Johnson-Neyman technique (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007), which allows for the probing of the significance of the indirect effect at different levels of moderator, was used to determine if the effect is weaker or non-significant at low levels of PD. As can be seen in Table 7, the indirect effect of abusive supervision on in-role performance through shame was not statistically significant at 1 SD below the mean of PD (Effect = .01, SE = .03, 95% CI [-.03, .12]). However, the indirect effect was statistically significant at the mean of PD (Effect = -.03, SE = .02, 95% CI [-.11, -.002]) and 1 SD above the mean of PD (Effect = -.08, SE = .05, 95% CI [-.23, -.01]). Thus, Hypothesis 6a was supported. Next, the indirect effect on OCBs was tested. The effect was not statistically significant at any level of PD. As such, Hypothesis 6b was not supported.
CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION

This study contributes to our understanding of the negative effects that abusive supervision has on employees. Drawing from social identity theory and extant research on social emotions, it was predicted that the experience of shame would mediate the relation between abusive supervision and performance as well as OCBs. Departing from most research on abusive supervision, which typically uses a social-exchange framework to make predictions about the effects of abusive supervision, the experience of such abuse was theorized to affect strong self-focused emotions, of which shame is a part. This is particularly important when considering the role of the follower’s PD values. The general consensus in the literature is that because such hierarchical abuse is more prevalent and normative in high PD cultures, it is perceived as less unjust, thus attenuating the negative effects on employee outcomes. However, this approach fails to consider how high PD followers might regulate and cope with the experience of shame that results from abusive supervision. As such, this study adds to the small but growing body of literature on the effects that abusive supervision has on the affective experiences of followers and is the first study to show how these effects can actually be exacerbated for followers who have more reverence for their leaders, or PD.

The Role of Shame

This study supported the importance of shame as an important explanatory variable in the relation between abusive supervision and employee outcomes. Previous qualitative research found that bullying at work leads to experiences of humiliation and shame and these feelings are likely to last a long time after the bullying has ended (Hallberg & Strandmark, 2006). The present study contributes to this research by testing the strength of the relation between abusive supervision and shame in the work setting, which was positive and strong ($r = .27$). Given that
shame is an inwardly focused emotion related to the belief that one has not lived up to expectations, it seems that abusive supervision might be taken as legitimate feedback by employees in this sample. However, shame did not relate directly to the outcomes in the study nor did it mediate the abusive supervision – outcome relation as expected. This is not to say that shame is an unimportant predictor of employee performance. Rather, it was likely non-significant because the second stage of the model is moderated by PD, thus muting or cancelling out the overall indirect effect.

**PD Orientation**

It is clear that shame has differential effects on behavior depending on the person or the situation (de Hooge, et al., 2010). This study assessed the role of individual differences in PD orientation in the shame-performance and OCB relations. Results indicated that shame mediated the relation between abusive supervision and job performance only when the PD of the follower was high. When PD was low, the indirect effect of abusive supervision through shame was not significant, likely because shame is less debilitating for those followers. The results were more mixed for OCBs. Although PD moderated the shame-OCB relation, the indirect effect through shame was non-significant at both high and low levels of follower PD.

This study extends the work of de Hooge and colleagues (2010) to show that cultural values likely affect the degree to which a situation is perceived as “difficult or risky” and thus whether shame will result in withdrawal and worse performance. Specifically, these findings support the notion that high PD followers perceive their relationship with supervisors to be one that is inherently risky. This is congruent with previous research, which shows that high PD followers are less likely to seek feedback from supervisors (de Luque & Sommer, 2000), perhaps in part because it is risky to one’s self-concept if the feedback is negative. This finding also fits
with the results from Lian and colleagues (2012), who found that high PD followers are more likely to perceive abusive supervision as more normative and just. Because they perceive such abuse of power to be common and even justified, it is risky to put forth more effort because it exposes the person to further abuse and feelings of shame.

It is not clear why the conditional indirect effect on OCBs was not significant. It is possible that OCBs are less “risky” behaviors to engage in to restore the ego. In other words, because high PD followers who experience shame are reluctant to make themselves vulnerable to further criticism, they may be more likely to engage in citizenship behaviors that do not test one’s skill or competence (e.g., show concern for colleagues or show loyalty to the organization). Engaging in more task-relevant behaviors, however, is likely to open the person up to further scrutiny and would be undesirable for a high PD follower who has been shamed.

As previously discussed, research has generally shown that PD attenuates relations between abusive supervision and outcomes (Lian et al., 2012). As an exploratory analysis, I tested the interaction of abusive supervision and PD on feelings of shame. The interaction was not significant, indicating that abuse leads to shame in followers regardless of PD values. This supports the notion that high PD followers are not always shielded by the negative effects of abusive supervision. In fact, when considering the effects of shame on outcomes for high PD followers, it is clear that abuse is even more harmful for high PD followers through this experience of shame.

These findings are particularly important because abusive supervision is more likely to occur in high PD cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Tyler, Lind, & Huo, 2000), where it is likely to be used a tool to maintain the status quo of the hierarchical relationship (see Daniels & Greguas, 2014). However, the shame experienced by followers who share this high PD value is more
debilitating for performance than their low PD counterparts.

**Practical Implications**

Abusive supervision is sometimes used to motivate employees to perform better (Tepper et al., 2011). Previous studies have shown that for low PD followers, this causes them to perceive the behavior to be unjust and more likely to reduce effort on the job in an effort to restore equity (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007; Zellers et al., 2002). The results of the current study show that followers with high PD will perform worse as a result of the shame experienced at the hand of those with more status/power. Thus, the most obvious implication is for organizations to develop zero-tolerance policies for abusive supervision, so that employee performance and other employee outcomes do not suffer.

Perhaps a more viable option to reduce abusive supervision would be to develop training and intervention programs for supervisors to manage anger/aggression, cope with stressors, and interact with subordinates in more constructive ways. For example, it would also be helpful to develop programs that make organizational leaders aware of findings like those in this study to convince them that abuse does not improve performance, even if they are in a high PD culture, where it may be more normative. This may require changing the climate for abuse, which makes abuse seem like a viable way to treat subordinates (Priesemuth, Schminke, Ambrose, & Folger, 2014).

Given the adverse role of shame for high PD followers, organizations could also help employees to better deal with shame in the workplace. Training that focuses on more active responses to the experience of shame could be useful. For example, there is a large body of literature on emotional labor in the workplace that outlines healthy ways to regulate emotions at work (see Grandey and Gabriel, in press). For example, cognitively reappraising the situation to
feel less of a negative emotion has been shown to reduce the experience of that emotion without the actor experiencing much strain as a result (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). In addition, there is research to support that meditation and mindfulness trainings are associated with lower proneness to shame (Woods & Proeve, 2014). Though more research is certainly needed on these techniques, this appears to be a promising avenue for reducing feelings of shame and self-doubt in the workplace.

Finally, encouraging employees to air grievances about supervisors in “safer” ways, such as anonymous whistleblowing channels, could be effective. It has been shown that high PD followers are more likely to withhold voice behaviors toward supervisors (Huang, Vliert, & Vegt, 2005) and this is especially likely when supervisors are abusive. Thus, more indirect channels need to be made available so that the behavior can be addressed by the appropriate authorities (e.g., human resource managers or senior management).

Limitations

Though this study has some key strengths (e.g., multi-source, multi-wave data), it is not without limitations. One limitation is the use of a snowball sample, whereby students recruited supervisor-subordinate dyads to participate in the study. This could systematically bias some of the relations reported because students may recruit dyads that are relatively friendly with each other. That is, if a student recruited a supervisor who, in turn, recruited a subordinate, he/she would likely choose a subordinate with whom there is already a good relationship. This might, for example, result in floor effects for the abusive supervision variable. However, as mentioned in the method, research indicates that this approach yields data quality that is comparable to other methods (e.g., Smith et al., 1997). Also, the mean and variance for abusive supervision were very similar to that of other published research (e.g., Tepper, 2000). Related, there was also restriction
of range on the in-role performance measure \((M = 4.24, SD = .46)\). Despite these issues, there were still significant effects for both of these variables. It should be noted, though, that these effect sizes may be deflated given such restriction of range.

Another primary drawback of this study is that, although collected across three time-separated surveys, the data are correlational and essentially cross-sectional. Thus, it is not possible to make causal inferences for the mediated model. It is possible that the causality is reversed and poor performance leads to abuse from one’s supervisor through feelings of shame. However, it is not clear why this effect would be stronger for high PD followers. It is certainly possible that a negative feedback loop exists whereby poor performance leads to more abuse, which leads to more shame and eventually even poorer performance. In fact, low perceived employee performance does predict abusive supervision (Tepper et al., 2011). If this downward spiral exists, then this study is a first step at understanding the abusive supervision-performance aspect of the loop.

Finally, it is possible that the abusive supervision-shame relation is inflated due to common method variance, given that both variables are self-reported (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, Spector (2006) recommends that researchers take care to consider why a common method effect might be present and to take steps to reduce it. Such an effect might be present because trait affectivity (positive and negative) might bias both one’s interpretation of abusive behaviors as well as one’s reported experience of shame. To reduce any such effect, positive and negative affect were controlled for in all analyses.

**Future Directions**

This study is a first step at understanding the role that shame and PD play in the relation between abusive supervision and job performance. There are several fruitful avenues to build upon this study. First, it would be important to test this model with an experimental method to
determine causality. For example, Mitchell and Ambrose (2012) designed a clever experiment where supervisor aggression (a construct similar to short-term abusive supervision) was manipulated in a class by including aggressive or non-aggressive comments on student papers. Other paradigms could include using confederates to work as team leaders in the lab, where some are abusive in their interactions with team members. This would provide more confidence in the direction of the causality. It would also be interesting to use cross-lagged survey designs (e.g., Lian, Ferris, Morrison, & Brown, 2014) to provide some evidence of the direction of causality. Finally, in terms of method, it would be prudent to measure these variables at the event or day level, given that these processes are likely occurring at those levels. Using an experience-sampling method (ESM) would be better able to account for discrete feelings of shame in response to specific abusive supervisory behaviors.

Future research should also consider a fuller range of employee emotions and the conditions under which employees are likely to experience them with abusive supervisors. For example, abusive supervision is also theorized to relate to feelings of anger (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), which comes with an entirely different set of action tendencies. Moderators could be assessed to determine whether situational or individual differences affect the emotions that employees are likely to feel as a result of abusive supervision. For example, high self-efficacious followers may be more likely to appraise abusive supervision as unwarranted aggression and thus experience anger in response, whereas low self-efficacious followers may appraise that behavior as legitimate feedback and experience shame. Perceptions of leader traits might also moderate the abusive supervision-emotion relation. Perceived trait anger of the supervisor might signal that the problem in the abusive situation is the supervisor and not the subordinate. Similarly, a subordinate who is singled out as the only target of abuse might experience more
shame because he/she might perceive that to mean that the abusive behavior is unique and thus more valid.

The role of PD values was considered in this study, but more attention should be paid to additional cultural values in abusive supervision research. One relevant cultural value would be collectivism, which is a value to prioritize group goals over individual goals (Hofstede, 1980). High collectivism could lead subordinates who are victims of abusive supervision to experience even more distress or shame because it is a symbol of group disharmony. However, it may also prompt the subordinate to want to make amends with the supervisor, thus resolving the conflict. Indeed, Bagozzi and colleagues (2003) found that shame as a result of negative customer interactions lead to more relationship building and OCBs for Filipinos (a highly collectivistic society) and to more protective self-regulatory action in Dutch (a highly individualistic society). It would be interesting to model both collectivism and PD to see how these effects might compete, given their high correlation.

Though most research on abusive supervision has concluded that it has generally negative effects, research should continue to assess whether it may have some benefit in some circumstances. For example, in military or sports settings, behaviors that would be considered abusive on Tepper’s (2000) scale (e.g., is rude to me; reminds me of past mistakes and failures), are often used to motivate others. Perhaps in extreme situations like the military, a certain level of abuse is needed to discipline and train subordinates to handle extremely adverse situations.

Related to the above point, there needs to be broader construct validity and measurement questions asked about the construct of abusive supervision. That is, researchers theorize and demonstrate that abusive supervision is more normative in high PD cultures and that this accounts for weaker relations with constructs like injustice. However, if these behaviors are
normative in some cultures, perhaps they would not be classified as abusive in the first place. Because of this, it is unclear whether the items for this scale are even operating the same cross-culturally. These are questions that should be answered as more cultural research is conducted on this construct.

Conclusion

The present study contributes to the literature on abusive supervision by showing that, even though it is commonly used with high PD subordinates, it can be harmful for performance. In particular, it indirectly and negatively relates to performance through the experience of shame, likely because of cultural differences in how people cope with it. This study also lays the groundwork for more research on workplace shame, a largely unstudied discrete emotion in the organizational sciences that likely has important implications for a wide range of workplace phenomena. Many questions remain regarding the effects of abusive supervision but hopefully this study serves as a foundation for more scholarly inquiry into its affective mechanisms and the role of the cultural context.
REFERENCES


ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND SHAME


Table 1
Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Internal Reliabilities

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Note: *p<.05. **p<.01. Reliability estimates reported in parentheses along the diagonal.
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*Note: *p<.05. **p<.01.
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Hypothesis 2 Regression Results

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Table 4
Hypothesis 3 Regression Results

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Note: *p<.05. **p<.01.
Table 5
Hypothesis 4 Indirect Effects of Abusive Supervision on Outcomes through Shame

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Note: *p<.05. **p<.01. Upper and lower limits presented for 95% confidence interval.
Table 6
Hypothesis 5 Moderated Regression Results

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Note: *p<.05, **p<.01.
Table 7
Hypothesis 6 Conditional Indirect Effect Results

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<tr>
<td>+1 SD (.57)</td>
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</table>

Outcome: In-role Performance

Outcome: OCBs
Figure 1

Hypothesized Model

Abusive Supervision → Feelings of Shame → Job Performance

Power Distance
Figure 2

Interaction of Shame and PD on In-role Performance
Figure 3

Interaction of Shame and PD on OCBs
APPENDIX A: STUDY MEASURES

A. Abusive Supervision

1. Ridicules me
2. Tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid
3. Gives me the silent treatment
4. Puts me down in front of others
5. Invades my privacy
6. Reminds me of my past mistakes and failures
7. Doesn't give me credit for jobs requiring a lot of effort
8. Blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment
9. Breaks promises he/she makes
10. Expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason
11. Makes negative comments about me to others
12. Is rude to me
13. Does not allow me to interact with my coworkers
14. Tells me I'm incompetent
15. Lies to me
B. Power Distance

1. Managers should make most decisions without consulting subordinates.
2. It is frequently necessary for a manager to use authority and power when dealing with subordinates.
3. Managers should seldom ask for the opinion of employees.
4. Managers should avoid off the job social contacts with employees.
5. Employees should not disagree with management decisions.
6. Managers should not delegate important tasks to employees.
C. Shame

1. I want to sink into the floor and disappear
2. I feel small
3. I feel like a bad person
4. I feel humiliated, disgraced
5. I feel worthless, powerless
D. In-role Performance

1. Adequately completes assigned duties.
2. Engages in activities that will directly affect his or her performance evaluation.
3. Fails to perform essential duties.
5. Meets formal performance requirements of the job.
6. Neglects aspects of the job he or she is obliged to perform.
7. Performs tasks that are expected of him or her.
E. Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

**OCBI**

How often does this employee…

1. Help others who have been absent.
2. Willingly give your time to help others who have work-related problems.
3. Adjust your work schedule to accommodate other employees’ requests or time off.
4. Go out of the way to make newer employees feel welcome in the work group.
5. Show genuine concern and courtesy toward coworkers, even under the most trying business or personal situations.
6. Give up time to help others who have work or nonwork problems.
7. Assist others with their duties.
8. Share personal property with others to help their work.

**OCBO**

1. Attend functions that are not required but that help the organizational image.
2. Keep up with developments in the organization.
3. Defend the organization when other employees criticize it.
4. Show pride when representing the organization in public.
5. Offer ideas to improve the functioning of the organization.
6. Express loyalty toward the organization.
7. Take action to protect the organization from potential problems.
8. Demonstrate concern about the image of the organization.
F. Positive and Negative Affectivity

1. Interested
2. Distressed
3. Excited
4. Upset
5. Strong
6. Guilty
7. Scared
8. Hostile
9. Enthusiastic
10. Proud
11. Irritable
12. Alert
13. Ashamed
14. Inspired
15. Nervous
16. Determined
17. Attentive
18. Jittery
19. Active
20. Afraid
G. Demographic Information

1. What is your gender? _____ Female _____ Male
2. What is your age? _____ years
3. What is your race? (check one) _____ Chinese _____ Malay _____ Indian _____ Caucasian _____ Eurasian _____ Other (please list): _____________________________
4. What is your nationality? _________________________________
5. How long have you: Worked for this company? _____ years _____ months

    Held your current position? _____ years _____ months
6. What level are you at within this organization? (please circle one below)

Non-management First-line supervisor Middle-management Upper-management

7. Approximately how many people work in your organization? ________ In your work unit? ________
8. Is this the first time you have completed this survey? _____ Yes _____ No
5. How many full-time jobs (i.e., 30-40 hours per week) have you held (circle one)?

    0  1  2  3  4  5  6 or more
6. How many part-time jobs have you held (circle one)?

    0  1  2  3  4  5  6 or more
7. In which country do you primarily work?________________________
8. What is your email address?___________________________________
9. What are the last four digits of your telephone number (this information will be used to match your responses across the surveys)_____________________
APPENDIX B: HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

BGSU
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of Research Compliance

DATE: October 6, 2014
TO: Michael Daniels, MA
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board
PROJECT TITLE: [662075-3] Abusive Leadership, Shame, and Performance
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: October 6, 2014
EXPIRATION DATE: September 22, 2015
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on September 22, 2015. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board’s records.