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What Makes Abusive Supervision Survive?
Self-Efficacy and the Perception of Authenticity Alleviate the Negative Consequences of Abusive Supervision.

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Drawing from the conservation of resources theory, this study examines the relationship between abusive supervision, and subordinates' task performance and withdrawal behavior, by focusing on the moderating role of self-efficacy and the perception of authenticity. Data was collected from a sample of 238 matched supervisor–subordinate dyads in the Taiwanese military. Results indicated that subordinates were likely to perform more poorly on tasks and show withdrawal behavior when their supervisors were more abusive, and the relationship between abusive supervision and subordinates' task performance and withdrawal behavior was weaker among subordinates who were higher in self-efficacy or in perception of authenticity. Both the theoretical and the practical implications are discussed.

Key word: abusive supervision, self-efficacy, perception of authenticity, task performance, withdrawal behavior.

Introduction

Whereas previous studies have focused on positive leadership, current management research is investigating abusive supervision (Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, and Carr, 2007). Abusive supervision refers to "subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behavior, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000). The behavior includes "using derogatory names, engaging in explosive outbursts (e.g., yelling or screaming at someone for disagreeing), intimidating with threats of job loss, withholding necessary information, aggressive eye contact, the silent treatment, and humiliating or ridiculing someone in front of others" (Keashly, 1997, p. 87). It is well documented that "employees tend to see their immediate supervisor as one of their greatest sources of stress at work" (Hogan, Raskin, and Fazzin, 1990). Although this research has enhanced our understanding of abusive supervision, previous studies have investigated how abused employees feel rather than how they perform. Confronted with abusive supervision, employees demonstrate two types of behavior as coping strategies: withdrawing from the workplace (Wright and Cropanzano, 1998), and reducing performance (Hobfoll, 1988). For abused subordinates, reduced-effort behavior may be a function of avoiding the loss of resources. Although decreased task performance and increased withdrawal behavior have considerable implications for organizations and employees, they are rarely considered in investigations of abusive supervision.

A stream of research has begun to identify the personal and situational factors that moderate the task performance and withdrawal behavior that results from abusive supervision. Most studies have focused on the individual's perceptions of his or her resources (i.e., job autonomy), which can buffer the strain of abusive supervision (Lin, Wang, and Chen, 2012; Mitchell and Ambrose, 2007). We responded to the need for greater attention to the broader organizational context, to understand organizational stress and identify unit-level interventions (Bacharach and Bamberger, 2007). We propose that informal organizational norms in a work unit, specifically the extent that colleagues value authentic expression of emotions with each other (i.e., perception of authenticity; Grandey, Foo, Groth, and Goodwin, 2012), can alleviate the experience of abusive supervision, and help subordinates to avoid decreased task performance and increased withdrawal behavior.

To address the problem of insufficient research, this study makes theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions to the literature on negative supervision. Drawing on the conservation of resource theory (COR, Hobfoll and Freedy, 1993), the first purpose of this study was to provide a more complete understanding of the dynamics that influence subordinate-leader interaction, by testing the main predictive role that the leader's abusive supervision plays on the subordinates' task performance and withdrawal

behavior. The second purpose of this study was to extend the COR theory by examining the moderating roles that individual-level resources-self-efficacy and unit-level resources-perception of authenticity play on the relationship between the abusive supervision and subordinates' task performance and withdrawal behavior. The third purpose of this study was to compare two moderating roles: the intrapersonal-resource of self-efficacy, and the interpersonal-resource of perception of authenticity. We argued that moderating the resources would produce a distinct effect on the relationship between task performance and withdrawal behavior.

Theoretical background

As a resource-based theory of stress, the conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) provides a theoretical explanation for the effect of an abusive superior on a subordinate's task performance and withdrawal behavior. The basic tenet of COR proposes that people strive to obtain and maintain resources that they value. Hobfoll (1989) defines resources as "objects, personality characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, or energies" (pp. 516). This suggests that various factors, both objective (e.g., money, a home) and psychological (e.g., self-esteem, social support), could be viewed as personal resources (Grandey et al., 2012). It is when these primary resources are threatened or actually lost that people might perceive stress.

At an organizational level, interpersonal stressors are among the most threatening causes of stress that might threaten resources (Grandey et al., 2012). However, in contrast to colleagues and customers, employees "tend to see their immediate supervisor as one of their greatest sources of stress at work" (Hogan, Raskin, and Fazzin, 1990), because they commonly determine employee advancement, compensation, and feedback (Burton and Hoobler, 2006). Additionally supervisors are crucial social resources who can offer support and suggestions in the workplace. For employees, the achievement of positive resource conservation outcomes relies largely on the extent to which they can regain resources from their supervisors. For example, after investing their resources (e.g., time, stamina) in meeting job demands, subordinates might regain resources by receiving affirmation from the supervisor, such as encouragement, praise, or promotion.

Nevertheless, "when this relationship is a dysfunctional one, it stands to have particularly salient and devastating consequences for employees" (Burton and Hoobler, 2006). For this reason, abusive supervision might be a key source of resource loss. Abusive supervisors might not only stop offer resources but also deplete subordinates' resources through inappropriate behavior, such as "ridiculing subordinates in front of others, withholding important information, using disparaging language, threats, and intimidation tactics" (Zellars, Tepper, and Duffy, 2002). Although these behaviors are

not direct physical attacks, such a leadership style may consume a subordinate's resources as an indirect consequence.

If the resource cannot be regained from work or the employee gains less than they are investing, they may not have enough resources to efficiently regulate their job-related behavior and emotions (Vohs and Heatherton, 2000). It is highly unlikely that abused subordinates will regain resources from supervisors, and this may cause additional resource-loss. Abused subordinates not only invest resources in their work, but also in dealing with the abusive supervisor. The imbalance between give and take might affect their performance, because performance requires effort, and effort requires resources (Hobfoll, 1989). To protect their remaining resources, employees might engage in efforts to avoid further loss. These choices may have an impact on performance (Witt and Carlson, 2006).

Previous studies (Witt and Carlson, 2006) have indicated that when resources reach minimally acceptable levels, workers withhold effort to preserve personal resources and accept a decrease in performance that is similar to athletes slowing down when tired or out of breath (Witt and Carlson, 2006). That is, the resource losses that result from abusive supervision might lead to lowered performance levels. Thus, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: Abusive supervision negatively relates to task performance.

Employees do not passively wait for resources to be depleted, and will strive to protect their resources. Hence, employees act to preserve these resources by withdrawing from work (Sliter et al., 2012). When abused subordinates have already lost resources, they tend to adopt less-efficient or maladaptive loss-control strategies.

Research has shown that "employees who perceive mistreatments are likely to show higher withdrawal than those who do not perceive mistreatment" (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2004). Other studies have suggested that people who report lower resources have been shown to report higher levels of withdrawal from the workplace (Taris, Schreurs, and Van Iersel-Van Silfhout, 2001). Withdrawal behavior refers to "any purposeful behavior by which an employee endeavors to avoid work or a reduction in an employee's sociopsychological attraction to or interest in the work or the organization" (Bluedorn, 1982). This behavior might avoid resource loss and protect against stressors that damage resources.

Leiter (1991) theorized that employees use absenteeism as a coping mechanism. For example, after dealing with abusive supervision, employees may replenish or restore resources by engaging in behavior such as taking long breaks, and being absent when

not really sick (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2004). However, with accumulating dissatisfactiondissfication and a depletion of resources, employees will eliminate resource-deprivation by increasing absenteeism or looking for other jobs. Therefore, the experience of mistreatment plays an important role in subordinates' avoidance of a dissatisfying work situation through withdrawal (Hulin, 1991). As such, we propose:

Hypothesis 2: Abusive supervision positively relates to withdrawal behavior.

The moderating effect of self-efficacy and the perception of authenticity

According to COR, the individual might find an alternative method of replenishing lost resources. We argue that abused employees could recover from intrapersonal-resource and interpersonal-resource. Personal characteristics could be viewed as resources in that they affect how people manipulate and cope with the loss of resources (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2001; Grandey and Cropanzano, 1999; Riolli and Savicki, 2003). Self-efficacy has been a crucial variance in studies on stress and strain, but was considered secondary in studies on COR. However, in line with COR, self-efficacy is part of an individual's psychological capital (Luthans and Yousself, 2007), and is a critical personal resource. This research analyzes the role of self-efficacy on COR.

The work environment is an important factor that should be considered when employees experience mistreatment from abusive supervision. We argue that the type of behavior valued in the work environment provides the resources for subordinates. This notion of valued behavior in the work environment is likened to the definition of organizational climate (Hofmann, Morgeson and Gerras, 2003). Schneider (1990) defined climate as the perceptions of the events, practices, and procedures, as well as the kind of behavior that gets rewarded, supported, and expected in a particular organizational setting. Grandey et al (2012) suggested that the perception of authenticity is the extent to which people encourage and support authentic emotional expression among group members, and that negative experience is alleviated when employees have perceptive authenticity. Hence, the perception of authenticiy could be another resource in the workplace.

Self-efficacy as an intrapersonal resource for moderating abusive supervision and task performance

Self-efficacy is considered to be a crucial variable for enhancing all aspects of human performance (Druckman, 2004). Self-efficacy refers to "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Previous studies (Litt, 1988; Xie and Schaubroeck, 2001) have suggested that self-efficacy might be one of the key moderators that may influence the relationships between stressors and strains.

Subordinates with high self-efficacy who work in an environment with abusive supervision may be able to reduce stressors because it "may affect stress appraisal and therefore can protect people against stress and reduce strains" (Lu, Chang, and Lai, 2011). Subordinates might decrease negative effects by reappraising the mistreatment experience. Additionally, Bandura argued that the "belief that one can relieve unpleasant emotional states, whatever their source, makes them less aversive" (Bandura, 1977, p.151). Thus, efficacy beliefs nourish intrinsic motivation by enhancing perceptions of self-competence (Bandura, 1986; Deci and Ryan, 1985). Employees might believe they can relieve negative feelings resulting from abusive supervision, and improve self-confidence to execute performance, in turn reducing the effect of abusive supervision on future performance.

In line with COR, the personal characteristic of self-efficacy is viewed as a personal resource (Hobfoll, 1989), and psychological capital (Luthans and Youssef, 2007). This has been found to have a direct effect on decreasing job stressors and strains (Jex, Bliese, Buzzell, and Primeau, 2001; Schaubroeck and Merritt, 1997).

Employees with a high degree of self-efficacy are "more likely to behold the belief of maintaining high levels of job performance in the presence of challenging job-related stressors" (Lu et al., 2011). Bandura (1977) suggested that efficacy expectations can affect the choice of environment. For example, "a worker with low self-efficacy may elect to call in sick rather than face another day of frustration on a job he or she feels unable to do" (McDonald and Siegall, 1992). Someone with low self-efficacy would attempt to avoid adversity (i.e., withdraw). A subordinate with high self-efficacy copes with abusive supervision by reappraisal, reduces resources depleted by abusive supervision, and replenishes resources to maintain task performance and reduce withdrawal behavior. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 3: Self-efficacy moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance in such a way that the negative relationship is weaker for subordinates with higher levels of self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 4: Self-efficacy moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and withdrawal behavior in such a way that the positive relationship is weaker for subordinates with higher levels of self-efficacy.

Perception of authenticity as an interpersonal resource for moderating abusive supervision and task performance
When resource losses have occurred, the individual is motivated to replenish resources through "emotional respite" (Hobfoll, 2002). Research has indicated that employees

either coped privately with their negative emotion or expressed emotions among coworkers (e.g., Hochschild, 1983; Lewis, 2005; Martin, Knopoff, and Beckman, 1998), which means the unit level of workplace perception buffers employees from socio-emotional work stressors (Drach-Zahavy, 2008, 2010; Le Blanc, Hox, Schaufeli, Taris, and Peeters, 2007).

Work units with the perception of authenticity offer abused employees a place to release emotion and to recover, which is one means of emotional respite. The perception of authenticity refers to "the perceived acceptance of, and respect for, unit members expressing felt emotions when interacting with coworkers" (Grandey et al., 2012). For example, subordinates speak negatively about abusive supervision and convey suppressed emotion in the unit. After venting stress and negative emotion, employees carried less or no negative emotion, and were able to perform the job. However, when the work unit did not have a perception of authenticity employees stifled their impulse to preserve resources and experienced additional resource losses (Grandey et al., 2012).

We propose that perception of authenticity is a unit-level resource, which offers respite from negative emotion caused by abusive supervision, and replenishes resources in units with authenticity. Additional resources are available and are invested in task accomplishment (Fritz and Sonnentag, 2005), and withdrawal behavior might be alleviated by the perception of authenticity. For example, a person's investment in task accomplishment is affected by withdrawal. Thus, we assume that the perception of authenticity moderates the relationship between abusive supervision, job performance, and withdrawal behavior.

Hypothesis 5: The perception of authenticity moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance in such a way that the negative relationship is weaker for groups with a high level of perception of authenticity.

Hypothesis 6: The perception of authenticity moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and withdrawal behavior in such a way that the positive relationship is weaker for groups with a high level of perception of authenticity.

The divergence moderating effect of self-efficacy and the perception of authenticity
Barnett and Hyde (2001) suggested that "active engagement in one domain provides resources that enhance success in the other domain". This implies the application of resources acquired through self-efficacy and the perception of authenticity provides additional resources that enhance success in task performance and decrease withdrawal behavior. The effect of moderators should be based on the goal that employees value, because the two kinds of resources are different from one another. The first is an

internal resource of personal character, which is stable and consistent in varying states, and difficult to change. However, the second is an external resource, which could be changed and molded, depending on the unit. The resources would subsequently influence performance in separate ways.

For example, task performance is connected to personal achievement, which is dependent on employees. Thus, personal resources might be able to moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance. Likewise, the perception of authenticity plays an important role in the relationship between abusive supervision and withdrawal behavior. Frese (1999) suggested that dysfunctional social relationships would be more affected by the moderated social resources than the nonsocial resources. For example, an employee who reacts to resource loss with withdrawal behavior may show less of this behavior when he or she receives social resources. Thus, personal resources should function as a buffer more regularly in relation to task performance than the withdrawal behavior. Additionally, the perception of authenticity should function as buffer more regularly in relation to withdrawal behavior than self-efficacy. We therefore hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 7: The moderating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance is stronger than the unit-level perception of authenticity.

Hypothesis 8: The moderating effect of the unit-level perception of authenticity on the relationship between abusive supervision and withdrawal behavior is stronger than self-efficacy.

Method

Participants and procedure

Surveys were collected by exercise the manner of dyads. Survey packs were sent to managers, who delivered them to their immediate subordinates. Subordinates completed measures of abusive supervision, general self-efficacy and perception of authenticity, and managers provided ratings of task performance. A 6-point Likert-type scale (1=absolutely disagree, 6=absolutely agree) was used for all items. Back translation was applied in the translation of all scales: the scales were translated into Chinese by a researcher, and then translated back to English by another researcher fluent in both languages to exclude any misinterpretations of the original scales (Brislin, 1980).

Data were obtained from 300 dyads. We obtained access to the participants through the personal contacts of one of the authors and then asked individuals people in each unit to serve as contacts for recruiting voluntary participants. These people hand-distributed

and collected paper-and-pencil survey questionnaires and returned them to the researchers. A cover letter explained the survey process, assured complete confidentiality, and instructed participants to seal their completed survey questionnaires in the return envelopes. Specifically, members were ensured that their immediate supervisors did not know their survey responses. A total of 272 dyads' surveys were returned (for a 90.67% response rate). Eliminating surveys with missing data yielded a sample of 237 officers and a useful response rate of 87.13%. Respondents were primarily men (89.3%); their average age was 24.89 years (SD=3.96); their average tenure in their current unit was 2.80 years (SD=2.92); and 46.9% held a senior-high degree, 50% an undergraduate degree, and 3.1% a graduate degree.

Measures

Abusive supervision was measured with Tepper's (2000) 15-item scale. Items included "lies to me," "gives me the silent treatment," and "blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment." Cronbach's α coefficient for the scale was .967.

Self-Efficacy was measured with 10 items from General Self-Efficacy Scale (GESE) developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995), and revised by Zhang and Schwarzer (1995). Items included "I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough," and "If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want." Cronbach's α coefficient for the scale was .940.

Perception of Authenticity was measured with a seven-item scale developed by Grandey, Foo, Groth, and Goodwin (2012). Items included "If you show anxiety or distress with this team, it is held against you," and "Members of this team are able to discuss how they feel about problems and issues." Cronbach's α coefficient for the scale was .720.

Task performance was measured with three items adapted from Williams and Anderson's (1991) In-Role Behavior Scale. Items were "This subordinate fulfills the responsibilities specified in his/her job description," "This subordinate performs the tasks that are expected as part of the job," and "This subordinate meets performance expectations." Cronbach's α coefficient for the scale was .904.

Withdrawal behavior was measured with three items, a modified version of the measure developed by Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, and Mainous III (1988). Items were "This subordinate just does not put much effort into work," "This subordinate arrives at work late just because he or she really is not in the mood for work that day," and "Sometimes when this subordinate does not feel like working he or she will work slowly or make errors". Cronbach's α coefficient for the scale was .884.

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis

Prior to the hypothesis verification, this study first applied LISREL 8.72 to perform a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on all variables (abusive supervision, self-efficacy, perception of authenticity, task performance, and withdrawal behavior) to examine the validity of the study concepts. The results of CFA showed that $\chi2$ (*df*= 619, N = 238) = 3500.30, indicating that significance was achieved. However, most model-moderating indicators verified the five-factor model to be acceptable in terms of goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .63, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .058, normed fit index (NFI) = .89, non-normed fit index (NNFI) = .90, comparative-fit index (CFI) = .91, and parsimony goodness of fit index (PGFI) = .56.

In addition, loading *t* tests of all factors in the five-factor model achieved significance, indicating that questions categorized under the same factor reflected the same concept. Furthermore, according to Table 1, the results of chi-square difference tests indicated that, compared to the one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 4559.73, Δdf = 10, *p* < .001), three-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 497.46, Δdf = 7, *p* < .01), and four-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 230.08, Δdf = 4, *p* < .01), the preliminary five-factor model provided the best moderation. Thus, the chi-square difference tests indicated that the five concepts could be easily distinguished from each other, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Model Summary for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (*N*=238)

Model	χ^2	*df*	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	GFI	SRMR	NFI	NNFI	CFI	PGFI
Single factor model	8060.03	629	4559.73***	10	.26	.240	.74	.74	.76	.24
Three-factor model	3997.76	626	497.46**	7	.59	.081	.87	.88	.89	.52
Four-factor model	3730.38	623	230.08**	4	.61	.079	.88	.89	.90	.54
Five-factor model	3500.30	619	-	-	.63	.058	.89	.90	.91	.56

Single factor model performed all data merged.

Three-factor model performed the data of self-efficacy and perception of authenticity merged task performance and withdraw behavior merge.

Four-factor model performed the data of self-efficacy and perception of authenticity merged.

Five-factor model performed the data of abusive supervision, self-efficacy, perception of authenticity, task performance, and withdraw behavior merged.

Note: *p<.05、** p<.01、*** p<.001

Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows the mean values, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient matrix of different variables. The mean value for abusive supervision was 2.07, standard deviation (SD) = .89, indicating that subordinates perceived their supervisors as abusive. The mean value for self-efficacy was 4.12 (SD = .86) and the mean value for perception of authenticity was 4.23 (SD = .79), indicating that subordinates commonly possessed

self-efficacy and perceived authenticity. The mean value for subordinates' task performance was 4.62 (SD = .86) and the mean value for withdrawal behavior was 2.44 (SD = .98), which was substantially low, indicating mild levels of decline in performance for abused subordinates.

As for the correlation between variables, abusive supervision was negatively correlated with task performance ($r = -.28$, $p < .01$) and positively correlated with withdrawal behavior ($r = .17$, $p < .01$). This indicates that when subordinates perceived supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behavior, it produced a greater tendency for decreased task performance and increased withdrawal behavior. These analysis results are consistent with previous hypotheses. As for the correlation between self-efficacy and perception of authenticity, a positive correlation existed between self-efficacy ($r = .21$, $p < .01$), the perception of authenticity ($r = .15$, $p < .05$) and task performance, and a negative correlation existed between self-efficacy ($r = -.21$, $p < .01$), the perception of authenticity ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$) and withdrawal behavior. This indicated that when abused employees had higher self-efficacy and the perception of authenticity, they tended to perform productively and avoid behaviorally withdrawing.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities (*N*=238)

Variables	Mean	S.D.[a]	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1.Subordinate's gender	1.11	.31	—							
2.Subordinate's age	24.89	3.97	.20**	—						
3.Subordinate's education	1.96	.98	-.09	.22**	—					
4. Subordinate's seniority	2.80	2.92	.36**	.83**	-.03	—				
5.Abusive supervision	2.07	.89	-.05	-.08	.03	-.09	—			
6.Self-efficacy	4.12	.86	.08	.10	.01	.15*	-.17**	—		
7.Perception of authenticity	4.23	.79	.01	.06	.04	.10	-.35**	.64**	—	
8.Task performance	4.62	.86	.07	-.02	-.11	.01	-.28**	.21**	.15*	—
9.Withdraw behavior	2.44	.98	-.04	-.04	.06	-.08	.17**	-.21**	-.16*	-.70**

[a]:S.D. = Standard Deviation

[b]: Internal consistency values (Cronbach's Alpha) were shown on the across the diagonal parentheses.

*$p<.05$、**$p<.01$、***$p<.001$

Gender 1= male, 2=female

The relationship between abusive supervision, task performance and withdrawal behavior

This study verified its hypotheses through a multiple-hierarchical regression analysis. The analysis results are shown in Table 3 and 4. The M1 regression model in Table 3 and 4 shows that the gender, age, education, and seniority of employees had neither

significant relationship with task performance (β= .06, $p > .05$; β= -.00, $p > .05$; β= -.11, $p > .05$; β= .01, $p > .05$), nor significant relationship with withdrawal behavior (β= .00, $p > .05$; β= .03, $p > .05$; β= .05, $p > .05$; β= -.13, $p > .05$) .This indicates that the gender, age, education and seniority of employees had no significant relationship with task performance or withdrawal behavior. The results proved that demographics were not interfering with the outcomes in this study.

The M2 regression model in Table 3 indicated that abusive supervision is negatively related with task performance (β= -.28, $p < .01$), and it achieves a significantly predictive result for task performance. The M2 regression model in Table 4 indicated that abusive supervision is positively related with withdrawal behavior (β= .17, $p < .05$), and it achieves a significantly predictive result for withdrawal behavior. From the preceding results, we may conclude that the more abusive behavior supervisors display, the lower the productivity of subordinates and the more withdrawal behavior they perform. Thus, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported.

Table 3: Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis (*N*=238)

Variables	Task Performance				
	M1	**M2**	**M3**	**M4**	**M5**
Control variables					
1.Gender	.06	.06	.05	.06	.05
2.Age	-.00	-.04	-.00	-.02	-.00
3.Education Level	-.11	-.10	-.10	-.11	-.10
4.Senioity	.01	.01	-.07	-.03	-.07
Independent variables					
5.Abusive supervision (AS)		-.28**	-.24***	-.22**	-.25***
Moderator					
6.Self-efficacy (SE)			.18**		.20*
7.Perception of authenticity (POA)				.11	-.04
Interactive effect					
8.AS × SE			.20**		.22*
9.AS × POA				.13*	-.03
R^2	.02	.09***	.16***	.12	.16**
Adjusted R^2	.00	.07***	.13***	.09	.12**
ΔR^2	.02	.08***	.07***	.02	.07**
F	.99	4.45**	5.75***	4.03***	4.47***

Note: $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

Table 4: Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis (*N*=238)

Variables	Withdraw behavior				
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Control variables					
1.Gender	.00	.00	.01	-.00	.01
2.Age	.03	.05	.02	.03	.02
3.Education Level	.05	.04	.04	.05	.04
4.Senioity	-.13	-.13	-.07	-.09	-.07
Independent variables					
5.Abusive supervision (AS)		.17*	.13*	.10	.13
Moderator					
6.Self-efficacy (SE)			-.19**		-.18*
7.Perception of authenticity (POA)				-.14	.01
Interactive effect					
8.AS × SE			-.15*		-.14
9.AS × POA				-.12+	-.01
R^2	.02	.04*	.09**	.07	.09*
Adjusted R^2	-.00	.02*	.07**	.04	.06*
$\triangle R^2$	.02	.03*	.05**	.03	.05*
F	.89	1.95	3.20**	2.26*	2.47*

Note: $^+p < .1$; $^*p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

The moderating effect of self-efficacy and the perception of authenticity on the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance

To verify the regulatory effects of self-efficacy and perception of authenticity on the relationship between abusive supervision, task performance and withdrawal behavior, separately, this study adopted an analytical process proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986): introducing the independent variable, moderating variable, and interactive variables (independent variable × moderating variable) in sequence. If the interactive variables are successful in predicting the outcome variables, then the moderating effect is determined to be significant. The analysis results are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

The M3 regression model in Table 3 and 4 show that self-efficacy exerts a weakening effect on the negative relationship between abusive supervision and task performance ($\beta= .20$, $p < .01$), and the positive relationship between abusive supervision and withdrawal behavior ($\beta= -.15$, $p < .05$). These results indicate that the higher the self-efficacy of employees, the lower the possibility of decreased task performance and increased withdrawal behavior caused by abusive supervision. Self-efficacy can effectively inhibit the amount of negative consequences attributed to abusive

supervision. The analysis results therefore support both Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4.

The M4 regression model in Table 3 and 4 show that perception of authenticity exerts a weakening effect on the negative relationship between abusive supervision and task performance ($\beta= .13$, $p < .05$), and the positive relationship between abusive supervision and withdrawal behavior ($\beta= -.12$, $p < .1$). These results indicate that the stronger the authenticity employees perceived, the lower the possibility of decreased task performance and increased withdrawal behavior caused by abusive supervision. Perception of authenticity can effectively inhibit the amount of negative consequences attributed to abusive supervision. The analysis results therefore support both Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6.

The M5 regression model in Table 3 shows that the weakening effect of self-efficacy ($\beta= .22$, $p < .05$) on the relationship between abusive supervision and task performance is stronger than the perception of authenticity ($\beta= -.03$, $p > .05$). However, the M5 regression model in Table 4 shows that the weakening effect of perception of authenticity is not statistically significant on the relationship between abusive supervision and withdrawal behavior. These results indicate that moderating effect of self-efficacy is stronger than the perception of authenticity on the relationship between abusive supervision, task performance and withdrawal behavior, separately. Hence, Hypothesis 7 was supported but Hypothesis 8 was not.

To further verify the moderating effects of self-efficacy and perception of authenticity on the relationship between abusive supervision, task performance and withdrawal behavior, separately, this study refers to a method suggested by Aiken and West (1991). We took the average values of abusive supervision, self-efficacy and perception of authenticity and added or subtracted one standard deviation, then applied this value in a regression model and in an illustration (as shown in Figures 1 to 4). The results indicate that self-efficacy and the perception of authenticity played a moderating role by weakening the effects of abusive supervision on task performance. When employees with higher self-efficacy perceived more authenticity, the negative relationship between abusive supervision and task performance was weakened. Likewise, the positive relationship between abusive supervision and withdrawal behavior was weakened when employees with higher self-efficacy perceived more authenticity.
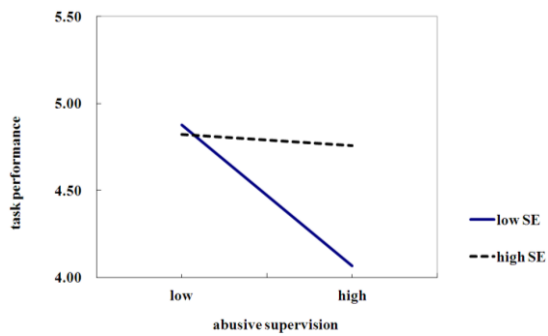
Fig. 1.

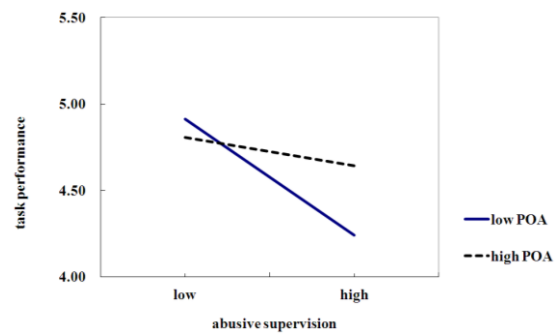Interactive effect of abusive supervision and self-efficacy (SE) on task performance.

Fig. 2.

Interactive effect of abusive supervision and the perception of authenticity (POA) on task performance.
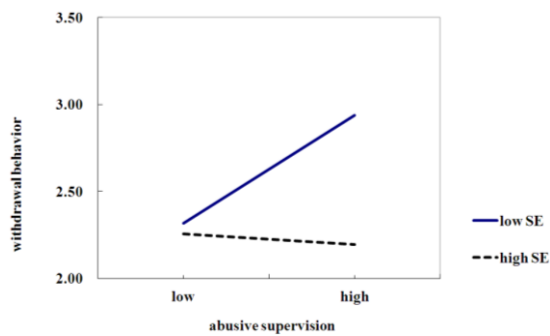

Fig. 3.

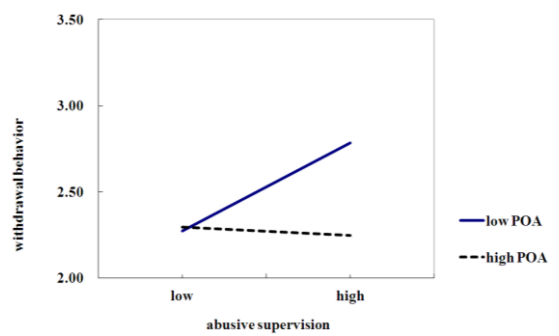Interactive effect of abusive supervision and self-efficacy (SE) on withdrawal behavior.

Fig. 4.

Interactive effect of abusive supervision and the perception of authenticity (POA) on withdrawal behavior.

Discussion

This study was performed with the following three purposes: (1) to understand the relationship between abusive supervision, the subordinate's task performance, and withdrawal behavior; (2) to investigate the moderating effect of self-efficacy and perception of authenticity on these relationships; and (3) to compare the effect of two moderators on these correlations. The results indicate that abusive supervision correlated negatively with subordinates' task performance and correlated positively with the abused withdrawal behavior. In addition, self-efficacy and the perception of authenticity exerted weakening effects on the relationship between abusive supervision, task performance and withdrawal behavior, separately. Therefore, self-efficacy and the perception of authenticity can effectively inhibit the decrease of task performance and the increase of withdrawal behavior as caused by abusive supervision.

However, that the effect of self-efficacy on task performance and withdrawal behavior was stronger than the effect of the perception of authenticity does not support Hypothesis 8. A possible reason is that self-efficacy is a specific cognitive characteristic, which could replenish the lost resources of abused subordinates immediately. In addition, when confronted with abusive supervision, subordinates with higher self-efficacy may perceive low stress because they view the abusive behavior as a challenge. This personal trait could protect

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subordinates against the feeling of stress.

Second, compared with self-efficacy, the perception of authenticity is an indirect method of replenish lost resources for abused subordinates who cannot deal with the negative experience resulting from abusive supervision. When resources cannot be conserved by the individual (with self-efficacy), they might be replenished by the perception of authenticity.

The results of this research not only supplement the literature, linking abusive supervision with task performance and withdrawal behavior, but also provide an in-depth analysis of the relationship between these correlations. In this way our study contributes to the theoretical discussion and provides organizations with an aspect for improvement in reducing abusive behavior and its consequences.

Theoretical implications
Extant studies have identified a consistent link between abusive supervision and subordinates' organizational deviance (Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, and Duffy, 2008). Our study contributes to this line of inquiry. First, our research explores weather abusive supervision is related to subordinates' task performance and withdrawal behavior. We conceptualized supervisors' abusive behavior as a proximal predictor of subordinates' performance decline and engagement avoidance. Based on the COR theory, the finding that abusive supervision is negatively related to subordinates' task performance suggests that abusive supervision drains subordinates' personal resources. As a result, they may decrease effort. Furthermore, to conserve their resources, abused subordinates may use withdrawal behavior as a coping strategy. This discovery can suggests how abused subordinates might decrease performance and withdraw.

Second, we extended the previous research on COR theory by investigating whether the strength of the relationship depends on the extent of subordinates' personal resources. These findings suggest that self-efficacy and the perception of authenticity play an important role in the relationship between abusive supervision, task performance and withdrawal behavior. When subordinates have higher self-efficacy or more perception of authenticity, they do not show less effort in task performance or avoid engaging. This pattern suggests that people might replenish their resources with their self-belief or perception. Both resources can explain the effects of abusive supervisory behavior on subordinates' productivity and, ultimately, on their reduced efforts at engaging in the work.

Practical implications
The current findings have substantial practical implications. Our finding that abusive supervision is most likely to lead to the reduced effort and, subsequently, task performance and withdrawal behavior of subordinates should be taken as an important warning to

organizations to eliminate all forms of abusive supervisory behavior. In addition, organizations can develop programs training supervisors to be aware of their relationships with subordinates and helping supervisors develop suitable managerial behavior. Furthermore, the disposition of candidates should be considered when organizations select employees for managerial positions.

Another implication of our study relates to subordinates' traits and perception of authenticity with regard to abusive supervisory behavior. Accordingly, organizations should consider the role of subordinates' traits and the climate of the work unit, when they take steps to reinforce managers' awareness of abusive supervision's harmful effects. In particular, supervisors should be warned that abusive supervision will have more harmful effects on subordinates' performance and organizational behavior if subordinates have lower self-efficacy. In addition, our study found when subordinates perceived authenticity, they could successfully reduce the predictive effect of abusive supervision on task performance and withdrawal behavior. Thus, organizations should implement training programs that assist employees in improving their self-efficacy and setting up a climate of authenticity. For instance, they could be taught to overcome adversity and become more trusting in the face of negative events. Finally, organizations should provide an employee grievance system (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2004) to prevent managers' abusive behavior.

Limitations and future research
Like any study, our research is not without limitations that we must acknowledge and that should be addressed in future research. The first limitation raises concerns about the possibility of reverse causality. Although the presented data for this study are cross-sectional, inferences of causality should be made with caution. Although we make the argument that abusive supervision has negative effects on employees' task performance and positive effects on withdrawal behavior, we cannot completely rule out the possibility that the inflating effects of reverse causality explains the observed relationships. It remains plausible that abusive supervision may result in performance decline and deviant behavior. Also, poor performance or withdrawal behavior might make the supervisors more abusive toward their subordinates. Hence, future research should provide evidence of causation from longitudinal research.

A second limitation has to do with the generalizability of our findings. Our sample was collected from the military. However, the military is a highly hierarchical organization and respects military discipline. That is to say, abusive behavior that supervisors show against subordinates may be sanctioned, and subordinates' behavior may be restricted. Thus, it would be valuable to investigate whether the same effects would occur in other companies.

A third limitation of our research is that majority of the supervisors in our data were male, this restriction might have influenced the relationships analyzed in the current study and cannot be

generalized or applied across genders. Thus, the purpose of future research would be to study the proposed effects in terms of genders, and explore the possible differences contributed by gender.

Finally, the current study chose task performance and withdrawal behavior as the outcomes of interest. However, because task performance is associated with personal income, the process between abusive supervision and task performance should be explored, as well as withdrawal behavior. Thus, future research could extend our model to understand processes between these relationships.

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