

Research on the Influence and Measures of Abusive Supervision on Employees' Proactive Behavior Based on AMOS 24 Software

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Abstract—As a form of “cold violence” in the workplace, abusive supervision has a negative impact on employee behavior and even the development of the organization. Therefore, how to effectively prevent and respond to abusive supervision drew the attention of scholars and managers. Based on the theory of resource conservation, this study investigated the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' proactive behavior in Chinese cultural context and the moderating effects of emotional intelligence and traditionality. The empirical test was conducted by Harman single factor test method, correlation analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, multiple linear regression analysis and other methods. Research results show that abusive supervision has a significant negative impact on employees' proactive behavior, and emotional intelligence and traditionality plays a moderating role between abusive supervision and employees' proactive behavior. The research is helpful to deepen the research on the influence mechanism of abusive supervision and has some enlightening effect on the practice of enterprise management.

Keywords-abuse supervision; proactive behavior; emotional intelligence; traditionality

1 INTRODUCTION

With the continuous intensification of corporate competition, if a company wants to achieve high-quality development and gain a place in a complex market environment, it not only needs to rely on the strength of the management, but also needs to fully mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of employees. In the workplace, the management style of superiors directly influences the emotions and behaviors of subordinates ^[1]. Therefore, paying attention to the differences in the impact of different leadership styles on employee initiative will help companies provide practical guidance to improve the company's competitiveness. Through the analysis of the previous literature, it is found that most of the literature focuses on the influence of positive leadership behavior on employees' proactive behavior, and seldom discusses the negative impact of leadership behavior on employees. Therefore, the primary purpose of this research is

to examine the impact of abusive supervision on the proactive of employees in terms of negative leadership behavior.

Abusive supervision is the perception of subordinates' continuous verbal or non-verbal hostile behaviour by subordinates that does not include physical contact with their boss, such as mockery and taunting ^[2]. From an individual perspective, abusive supervision can cause employees to resist, affect employee family satisfaction ^[3], and reduce employee performance ^[4]; from an organizational perspective, abusive supervision can cause employees to produce counterproductive behaviors . Although some studies have confirmed the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' proactive behavior, the role of emotional intelligence at the individual level has been neglected. In view of this, the second purpose of this research is to explore the moderating role of emotional intelligence in abusive supervision and employees' proactive behavior.

In addition, because abusive supervision is a concept of a category of perception, abusive supervision is often adjusted by subordinate characteristics ^[5]. China has been influenced by traditional Confucianism since ancient times. Traditionality is one of the most important value variables that constrains Chinese people. In view of this, the third purpose of this study is to analyse the moderating role of traditionality in abusive supervision and employees' proactive behavior.

2 THEORY AND ASSUMPTIONS

2.1 Abuse supervision and employees' proactive behavior

Abuse supervision is a kind of hardship that employees go through in their work, Chen Mengyuan (2019) proposed that abusive supervision is an employee's perception of the psychologically unkind treatment of leaders. Conceptually, although abusive supervision is destructive, there is no physical contact with employees. This is essentially a "cold and violent" leadership behavior. Therefore, long-term abuse by supervisors will affect different work behaviors of employees. Therefore, long-term abusive supervision by the superiors will affect different work behaviors of employees.

Based on the theory of resource conservation, when emotional needs are beyond the reach that individuals can endure in interpersonal communication, it will affect individual behavior. Employees experiencing abuse will feel threatened by the loss of resources, like a harmonious superior-subordinate relationship between superior and subordinate and self-esteem. In order to restore the balance of resources, employees will reduce organizational citizenship behavior ^{[6][7]}. Active behavior, as an organizational citizenship behavior, will definitely be affected by abusive supervision. Based on this, hypothesis 1:

H1: Abuse supervision negatively affects employees' proactive behavior.

2.2 Regulation of emotional intelligence

Bar-on (1997) defines emotional intelligence as: "a series of non-cognitive abilities, competencies, and skills that affect an individual's ability to successfully handle situational

needs and cope with stress.”^[8] Compared with Western research, domestic research on emotional intelligence started late. Chen Jiayao (2002) considers emotional intelligence as a non-cognitive psychology, which will affect the success of individuals in study, life and work^[9]. Xu Yuanli (2004) believes that emotional intelligence is the ability to process and deal with emotions and problems^[10]. Lu Jiamei (2005) defines emotional intelligence as the personality psychological characteristics of people successfully completing emotional activities^[11].

The emotional intelligence of employees is an important personal trait that enables employees to adjust their emotions. Nozaki (2015) proposed that employees with high emotional intelligence should not only better understand their own emotions, but also correctly understand the emotions of others^[12]. And employees with high emotional intelligence observe the emotional changes of others and can use this information to improve the quality of interpersonal interaction^[13]. Abusive supervision is accompanied by the tension between leaders and subordinates. Based on the theory of resource preservation, under pressure situations, employees with high emotional intelligence will actively construct and maintain their current resource reserves to cope with possible future resource loss situations, can take a proactive approach to deal with abusive supervision, so as to resolve potential conflicts and contradictions in the enterprise. To some extent, this creates a good atmosphere for the organization and fosters employee initiative. Based on this, hypothesis 2:

H2: Emotional intelligence plays a moderating role between aggression supervision and employees' proactive behavior. That is, the higher the employee's emotional intelligence, the weaker the negative relationship between supervisor abusive supervision and employees' proactive behavior.

2.3 Regulation of traditionality

In previous studies on the character and direction of cultural values, traditionality has been valued by scholars. Traditionality refers to a set of organized ideological concepts, temperament characteristics, cognitive attitudes, values orientations and behavioral intentions possessed by individuals in traditional society, which mainly includes five dimensions^[13]. Existing research believes that traditional performance mitigating the negative impact of abusive supervision will weaken the negative impact of trust in supervisors and reduce the negative impact on job performance^{[14][15][16]}.

China has been influenced by traditional Confucianism since ancient times. Traditionality is one of the most important value variables that restrain Chinese people. Under the leadership environment of “high power distance” in our country, when being treated unfairly by superior leaders, employees with high traditionality will not have bad psychology, because for employees, the leader's evaluation of himself is a career promotion. In order to meet the needs of the authoritative values, employees will digest the improper behaviors of their leaders on their own, and improve their work initiative to gain the trust of their superiors. Based on this, hypothesis 3:

H3: Traditionality plays a moderating role between abusive supervision and employees' proactive behavior, that is, the higher the employee's traditionality, the weaker the negative relationship between abusive supervision and employees' proactive behavior.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to better ensure the authenticity of the data, this article uses an anonymous questionnaire on the Internet to carry out the survey. Before the official start of the survey, 30 questionnaires were issued for pre-survey. After testing, the scales used in this study passed the reliability and validity test. The official survey period runs from February 2020 to March 2021. A total of 240 questionnaires were returned, including 164 that were valid, with an effective collection rate of 68.33%.

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of this study, all scales used in this study are mature scales. The abusive supervision adopts the scale designed by Tepper in 2000, which contains 15 items in total, and the reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.94; the initiative adopts the scale developed by Frese, Fay and Hilburger in 1997^[17], with a total of 7 items. The reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.84; the emotional intelligence uses a scale compiled by Wong and Law of the Chinese University of Hong Kong^[18], with a total of 16 items, and the reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.93; the traditionality developed by Farh in 1997 There are 5 items in the scale^[19], and the reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.78. The scales used in this study are all reliable.

In addition, previous research has shown that gender, age, and education can affect employees' active behavior. With this in mind, these three variables are used as control variables.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Confirmatory factor analysis and common method deviation test

In order to test the discriminant validity between the four variables, this study used AMOS 24 software to perform a confirmatory factor analysis on the above variables. The results are shown in Tab 1. It can be found that the four-factor model fits well ($\chi^2 / df = 2.38$, RMSEA = 0.09, RMR = 0.10, CFI = 0.91, IFI = 0.91), all meet or close to the standard required by the index, indicating that this study are good discriminant validity for the measurement of the four key variables. In addition, this study uses the Harman one-factor test method to perform exploratory factor analysis on all measurement issues of the four factors. The variance contribution rate of the first factor without rotation is 32.217%, which is within the allowable threshold. There is no serious common method deviation problem in the data, and the following data analysis can be performed.

Table 1 Data analysis and results

TMeasurement model ^a	IFI	RMR	CFI	RMSEA _A	χ^2/df
Four-factor model	0.91	0.10	0.91	0.09	2.38
Three-factor mode a	0.76	0.19	0.76	0.15	4.52
Three-factor model b	0.65	0.11	0.64	0.18	6.20
Single factor model	0.48	0.11	0.48	0.33	18.77

Zero model	0.81	0.14	0.72	0.13	3.82
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a. Because there are many items for the two variables of abuse supervision and emotional intelligence (greater than or equal to 10 items), before performing confirmatory factor analysis, we will use the method of Mathieu and Farr (1991) The items are reduced to three items [20]. Three-factor model a: Combine abuse supervision and traditionality into one factor; Three-factor model b combines abuse supervision and emotional intelligence into one factor; single-factor model combines four measurement items into one factor.

4.2 Descriptive statistics

Tab 2 summarizes the mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient, and reliability coefficient of each major variable. According to the data in Tab 2, it can be seen that abusive supervision is significantly negatively related to proactivity ($r = -0.41, p < 0.01$). Therefore, the correlation coefficient results provide preliminary evidence for hypothesis testing.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis results

V	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.G	1.50	0.50	1						
2.A	2.07	0.82	0.16*	1					
3.E	2.66	0.76	-0.08	-0.21**	1				
4.AS	1.76	0.70	0.04	-0.04	-0.09	1			
5.EI	4.06	0.54	-0.09	0.19*	-0.04	-0.42**	1		
6.PB	4.11	0.55	-0.06	0.15	0.04	-0.41**	0.75**	1	
7.TR	3.50	0.83	-0.14	0.05	0.11	-0.01	0.34**	0.27**	1

V=Variable;M=Mean;SD= Standard Deviation ;G=Gender; A=Age; E= Education; AS= Abusive Supervision ; EI= Emotional Intelligence; PB=Proactive Behavior; TR= Traditionality; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$. Same below.

4.3 Hypothetical test

4.3.1 Test of the Regulation Effects of Emotional Intelligence

In this study, the hierarchical regression method was used to test the adjustment effect. First, the variables were centralized, and then the control variables, independent variables, adjustment variables, and interaction terms were added in four steps to analyze the dependent variables. As can be seen from Table 3, abuse supervision has a significant negative impact on employee proactivity ($M2, B = -0.40, P < 0.01$). Hypothesis 1 is verified. The interaction terms of abuse supervision and emotional intelligence have a significant positive impact on employee proactive behavior ($M5, B = 0.14, p < 0.05$), indicating that the higher the emotional intelligence of employees, The higher the emotional intelligence, the weaker the negative relationship between abusive supervision and employee proactive behavior. Strongly tested Hypothesis 2. In order to further explain the moderating effects of emotional intelligence, this study conducted a map of the moderating effects. It can be seen from Fig 1 that employees with

high emotional intelligence level have less influence on work initiative when facing abuse supervision.

Table 3 Test of Regulation Effect

Dependent Variable: Proactivity						
V	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
	B	B	B	B	B	B
G	-0.09	-0.07	0.01	-0.03	0.00	-0.06
A	0.18*	0.15*	0.02	0.12	0.03	0.10
E	0.05	0.03	0.07	-0.00	0.06	0.01
AS		-0.40**	-0.11	-0.40**	-0.12	-0.41**
EI			0.70**		0.79**	
TR				0.26**		0.46**
AS*EI					0.14*	
AS*TR						0.29**
R2	0.04	0.19	0.26	0.58	0.30	0.59
ΔR2	0.04	0.16	0.0	0.39	0.05	0.01
F	1.92	9.44	43.56	10.86	37.74	11.432

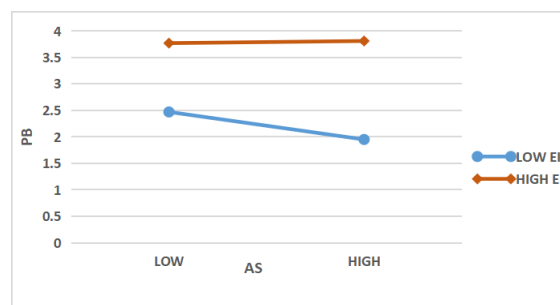


Figure 1. The Moderating Effect of Emotional Intelligence on the Relationship between Abusive Supervision and Employees' Proactive Behavior

4.3.2 Testing of the Regulation Effects of Traditionality

In order to test the hypothesis of traditionality moderating effect, this paper introduces the traditionality of moderating variables to form M4, and introduces the interaction terms of abusive supervision and traditionality to form M6. It can be seen from Tab 3 that the interaction between abusive supervision and emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on employee proactive behavior (M6, B = 0.29, p < 0.01), indicating that the higher the employee traditionality, the weaker the negative relationship between abusive supervision and employee proactive behavior. Strongly tested Hypothesis 3. And according to Fig 2, it can be seen that employees with high traditionality have less influence on work proactive behavior when faced with abusive supervision.

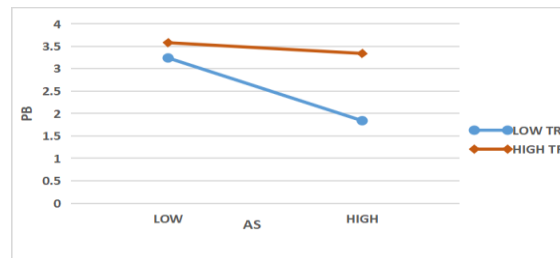


Figure 2. The Moderating Effect of Traditionality on the Relationship between Abusive Supervision and Employees' Proactive Behavior

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This study proposes a model of active motivation, meaning that emotional intelligence and traditionality are two important moderators in the relationship between abusive supervision and employees' proactive behavior. The results of this article show that abuse supervision negatively affects employees' proactive behavior; the impact of abuse supervision on employees' proactive behavior also varies according to the level of emotional intelligence of employees, and employees with high emotional intelligence can digest the effects of abuse supervision on their own, the negative relationship between abusive supervision and employee proactive behavior becomes weaker; moreover, the results also show that traditionality plays a negative regulating role in the relationship between abusive supervision and proactivity, and employees with high traditionality can effectively alleviate the negative impact of abuse supervision on work proactivity.

5.2 Suggestions

Research findings have an impact on organizational management practices. First of all, in the daily organizational management process, the abusive supervision behavior of the superior leadership will affect the employee's proactive behavior. Therefore, the superior leadership should adopt a humane leadership style, respect the personality of employees in the work, and conduct real-time supervision, find superior leaders who have abusive supervision behaviors or management tendency in a timely manner. Second, in addition to paying attention to employees' explicit knowledge, skills, and performance, they should also pay close attention to managing employees' implicit emotional intelligence. Thirdly, companies should intervene from the training of cultural values in order to achieve self-regulation of employee behaviors, so as to avoid the negative impact of abusive supervision.

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