

MODERATING ROLE OF POWER DISTANCE ORIENTATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR IN SRI LANKA'S APPAREL ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

In organizational settings, abusive supervision is influenced by various factors related to both supervisors and subordinates. Supervisor-related antecedents include power distance orientation, which refers to the extent to which subordinates accept unequal power distribution. This cultural dimension significantly shapes behaviors and expectations within the workplace's power dynamics. Downstream-related antecedents include organizational citizenship behavior, which encompasses voluntary actions that benefit the organization. In high-power distance cultures, employees are more accepting of hierarchical order and authority, leading to greater tolerance for abusive supervision. Conversely, low-power distance cultures foster expectations of egalitarian relationships and reduce tolerance for such behaviors. This study aimed to clarify the negative impact of abusive supervision on organizational citizenship behavior and elucidate the moderating role of power distance orientation. Employing social comparison theory, this study examines how employees' perceptions of fairness and equity influence their responses to supervisory behavior, particularly in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. Data were collected using questionnaires from apparel organizations in Sri Lanka employing a convenience sampling method. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 224 were returned and deemed usable. The study found that power distance orientation significantly moderated the relationship between abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Employees with a high-power distance orientation tend to tolerate abusive supervision, viewing it as part of a hierarchical structure, and thus show less reduction in OCB. In contrast, employees with a low power distance orientation perceive abusive supervision as unfair, which has a stronger negative impact on their OCB. Our study underscores the importance of organizations recognizing and mitigating the adverse effects of abusive supervision on organizational citizenship behavior. Additionally, understanding the role of power distance orientation can help organizations recognize how cultural dimensions influence the acceptance of abusive supervision. High power distance cultures may inadvertently tolerate or even normalize abusive behaviors, which can negatively impact employee morale and performance.

Keywords: Abusive supervision, organizational citizenship behavior, power distance, Social Comparison Theory.