

Losing Your Calm or Losing Control: Two Paths to Retaliatory Deviance in Response to
Abusive Supervision

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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ABSTRACT

Retaliation is a well-established response to abusive supervision. Leading edge research explains the occurrence of supervisor-directed retaliation through processes associated with the strength model of self-control (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007). The present research builds on these ideas by considering the role of emotions in the retaliatory processes. 407 participants completed an online survey that included questionnaires measuring personality traits associated with self-control and emotional experiences. Findings indicate that a predisposition to negative emotional experiences predicts retaliatory behavior in response to abusive supervision, even for individuals with a high capacity for self-control. It is suggested that future research should determine whether emotion-driven retaliation is mediated by a desire for revenge.

Keywords: abusive supervision, retaliation, self-control, ego depletion, emotions, revenge temperament, stressor, deviance

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To my parents

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INTRODUCTION

Tepper (2007; 2000) defines abusive supervision as “subordinates’ perception of the extent to which supervisors engage in sustained displays of hostile verbal and nonverbal behavior excluding physical contact”. Abusive supervision has been linked to a variety of negative subordinate outcomes such as diminished job satisfaction, diminished job commitment, problem drinking, workplace deviance, diminished citizenship behavior, and psychological distress (Tepper, 2007). Abusive supervision also leads to retaliation (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007); deviant acts, such as public humiliation directed at the offending party. This is a reaction that deserves attention. Left unchecked, acts of abusive supervision have the potential to bring about escalating cycles of provocation and retaliation between supervisors and subordinates (Kim & Smith, 1993; DeWall, Anderson, & Bushman, 2011).

Retaliation in the workplace has been traditionally understood as a punitive action in response to a perceived offence (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Bies & Tripp, 1996). For the retaliator, such behavior is pragmatic and serves the function of restoring equilibrium. It can also serve to restore self-esteem (Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2012). However, it is not pragmatic to retaliate against one’s supervisor, since this person will typically have the ability to marshal costly repercussions (Aquino, Bies & Tripp, 2001; 2006). Under ordinary circumstances, subordinates are dependent on the power of their supervisors (Tepper, Breaux, Carr, Geider, Hu, & Hua, 2009). Yet retaliation is moderated by variables other than relative power.

Thau and Mitchell (2010) identify two distinct psychological explanations for the occurrence of supervisor-directed retaliation. The authors label these the self-gain view,

and the self-control impairment view. While the self-gain view evokes the traditional account of retaliation, proposing that subordinates deliberately use retaliation to “even the score” with their supervisors, the self-control impairment view argues that retaliation arises when subordinates lose control of their behavior. In testing these competing explanations, Thau and Mitchell found evidence that the self-control impairment view best predicts retaliation to abusive supervision.

The self-control impairment view is theoretically grounded in the strength model of self-control. The strength model purports that the exertion of self-control at an initial point in time (a) may temporarily limit one’s capacity to exert further self-control at a later point in time (b), a process called “ego depletion” (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996; Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice 2007; Heatherton & Wagner, 2011). According to the self-control impairment view, the experience of abusive supervision triggers extensive cognitive processing for subordinates on the receiving end, which drains their self-control resources, leading to unplanned retaliation (Thau & Mitchell, 2010).

While self-control processes serve to regulate the expression of emotional impulses, they do not determine the immediate strength of such impulses (Hofmann, Friese & Strack, 2009; Carver, 2005), nor are they necessarily effective at intervening in the process where initial impulses transform into conscious desires (Hofmann & Van Dillen, 2012). Self-control therefore, may not adequately explain the finding that negative emotions exacerbate retaliation (Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluck, 1999).

A substantial body of research supports the notion that negative emotions predict retaliation and other forms of deviant behavior. This body of research has been

synthesized into the stressor-emotion model of counterproductive work behavior (Spector & Fox, 2005). In a broad stroke, this model suggests that workplace stressors cause negative emotions, which motivate deviant behavior. Moreover, the strength of these emotional reactions predicts the strength of deviant responses. Correspondingly, negative emotions also predict the desire for revenge (McCullough, Bellah, Kilpatrick, & Johnson, 2001).

The present research will extend the self-control account of supervisor-directed retaliation by integrating it with predictions from the stressor-emotion model. It is put forward that, although supervisor-directed retaliation is thought to be the result of ego depletion (Thau & Mitchel, 2010; Lian et al., 2012), negative emotions may also impel upward retaliatory acts by giving rise to a strong desire for revenge (Hofmann et al., 2012; McCullogh et al., 2001; Liu, Kwan, Wu, & Wu, 2010). The influences of self-control and negative emotions on retaliation will be tested in an online study of working adults in the United States and Canada. This research will contribute to the literature on abusive supervision and retaliation by challenging the explanatory power of ego depletion in predicting retaliation in the context of abusive supervision. In doing so, the current study will test the viability of a model involving distinct emotion-based, and self-control-based paths to upward retaliation.

The Strength Model of Self-Control and Retaliation

Self-control refers to the ability to willfully override behavioral impulses and engage in planned behavior (Tangney et al., 2004). The strength model of self-control argues that self-control is a limited resource. After using self-control in one situation, individuals can become ego depleted, making them less able to engage in planned

behavior in subsequent situations (Baumeister et al., 2007). While everyone may experience moments of ego depletion, research has shown that there are individual differences in the extent to which people are able to consistently engage self-controlled behavior (Tangney et al., 2004). People who are less inclined to lapses in self-control are said to have a high self-control capacity. Self-control capacity has been linked to many important life-outcomes. In particular, it is positively associated with academic achievement, and various indices of intra- and interpersonal wellbeing, while it is negatively associated with binge eating and alcohol consumption (Tangney et al. 2004).

Relevantly, the strength model of self-control has been applied to the study of aggressive retaliation. Considerable laboratory research has established a connection between ego depletion and aggression (Denson, Dewall, & Finkel, 2012). This line of work consistently demonstrates that ego depletion increases the propensity to retaliate, be it against strangers (DeWall, Baumeister, Stillman, & Gailliot, 2007; Denson, von Hippel, Kemp, & Teo, 2010) or intimate partners (Finkel, DeWall, & Slotter et al., 2009)

The work of Thau & Mitchell (2010) serves to bring ideas about self-control and retaliation to the topic of abusive supervision. These researchers suggest that retaliatory responses to abusive supervision are preceded by ego depletion. The strength of this argument is bolstered by evidence that people are not inclined to retaliate against power-holders in their organization (Aquino et al., 2001; 2006; Tepper et al.2009). Because retaliation in this case is irrational, it is argued that the occurrence of supervisor-directed retaliation must be the consequence of a lapse in self-control (Thau & Mitchell, 2010; Lian, Brown, Ferris, Liang, Keeping, & Morrison, 2012).

The Stressor-Emotion Model and Retaliation

The stressor-emotion model of counterproductive work behavior (Spector & Fox, 2005) provides an overarching account of why people engage in behaviors that are harmful to their organizations and the people within them. The model suggests that stressors in the work environment trigger the enactment of deviant behaviors. Yet, stressors do not have consistent effects across individuals. There are individual differences in how work stressors are experienced. For some, a given stressor may induce a strong negative emotional reaction, while others will be less negatively affected. Individuals, who are less negatively affected, are less likely to act out deviant behavior.

The model goes further to identify personality traits that influence emotional reactions to stressors. Traits such as negative affective disposition (NA) and the Big Five personality trait of neuroticism (emotional stability) involve chronic orientations toward negative emotional experiences (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988; Derrybery & Reed, 1994), and have been widely found to predict deviant behavior (e.g. Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluck, 1999, Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999; Penney & Spector, 2005; Bowling & Eschelman, 2010; Douglas & Martinko, 2001; Jockin, Arvey, & McGrue, 2001; Jensen & Patel, 2011; Penney, Hunter, & Perry, 2011). Traits related to negative emotions also predict the desire for revenge (McCullough et al., 2001), which has been shown to mediate the association between abusive supervision and retaliation (Liu et al., 2010).

Traits associated with positive emotions are thought to play a complementary role, but there is less evidence of their impact on deviant behavior (Spector & Fox, 2005). Presumably, the endorsement of traits such as positive affective disposition (PA) and extraversion should reduce negative reactions to stressors and buffer against deviance.

Lending support to this proposition, research on positive emotions has demonstrated that positive experiences help individuals to maintain psychological resilience in the face of stressful events (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004; Tugade, Fredrickson, & Feldman-Barret, 2004; Tugade & Fredickson, 2007). Moreover, a study in the abusive supervision literature found that PA weakens the association between abusive supervision and various measure of job strain (Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007).

Theory Integration

Predominant accounts of retaliatory behavior both in the lab (Denson et al., 2012) and within organizations (Thau & Mitchell, 2012; Lian et al., 2013) evoke the strength model of self-control (Baumeister et al., 2007). Nonetheless, self-control processes do not necessarily play a role in negative emotional reactions, or in the development of a desire for revenge (Hofmann et al. 2009; Hofmann & Van Dillen, 2012; Carver, 2005), factors that impel retaliation in their own right (Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluck, 1999; Spector & Fox, 2005; Liu et al., 2012). Yet, in the case of abusive supervision, researchers argue that retaliating against organizational power-holders is generally seen as a bad idea (Tepper et al., 2009; Aquino et al., 2001; 2006). Hence, ego depletion makes for a parsimonious account of supervisor-directed retaliation in this context. Although the threat of power may generally serve as a deterrent to retaliation, studies have shown that the desire for revenge does predict retaliation against abusive supervisors (Liu et al., 2010; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Given that negative emotions feed the desire for revenge (McCullough, et al., 2001, Bradfield & Aquino, 1999), it is tenable that highly negative reactions to abusive supervision will motivate revenge-based retaliation.

However, it is noteworthy that negative emotions and the desire for revenge are associated with angry rumination (Denson, Pederson, & Miller, 2006). Denson, Pedersen, Friese, and colleagues (2011), have demonstrated that angry rumination, which involves “reliving anger-inducing events, focusing on angry thoughts and feeling, and planning revenge”, is an ego depleting cognitive process. This idea suggests that while abusive supervision may impel negative emotions and the desire for revenge, subordinates may be more inclined to ruminate on these feelings, than to act on them. Such rumination may then give rise to retaliatory behavior, but this behavior would be the result of ego depletion. Thus, if negative emotions only incite retaliation by fomenting rumination, this raises the possibility that negative emotions do not constitute a unique path to retaliation. Rather, self-control processes would encompass their influence.

In order to test these competing ideas, the following study will investigate the interactive effects of self-control capacity, and emotion-related traits, on the association between abusive supervision and supervisor-directed deviance. Given that self-control capacity has previously been found to buffer against the effects of abusive supervision (Lian, et al. 2012), if emotion-related traits are distinct antecedents of retaliation, they should serve to further moderate this interaction. A significant three-way interaction would imply that emotion-related traits account for unique variability in the prediction of supervisor-directed deviance, above and beyond the effect of self-control capacity. However, a non-significant interaction would imply that self-control processes supersede the effects of emotion-related traits.

Because self-control capacity is a measure of the chronic ability to regulate one's behavior across time and place, any association between emotion-related traits and self-control failure should be reflected in this measure. For example, self-control has been found to have a significant, negative correlation with neuroticism ($r = -.42, p < .01$; Tangney et al., 2004). Given this association, if emotion-related traits were to cause retaliation by inducing self-control failure, then these traits should not predict retaliation above and beyond the measurement of self-control capacity. Alternatively, an incremental effect of emotion-related traits on the prediction of retaliation should be attributed to processes that do not implicate self-control.

Related to the proposed analyses, Bowling and Eschleman (2010) found that both conscientiousness, a trait related to self-control capacity (Carver, 2005), and NA individually moderate the effect of work stressors on deviance. This effect was buffered by conscientiousness and strengthened by NA. However, the authors did not further test the three-way interaction between these variables, therefore it cannot be concluded that NA predicts deviance over and above conscientiousness.

Research question 1: The following study will examine the three-way interaction between abusive supervision, self-control capacity, and negative emotion-related traits predicting supervisor-directed deviance. If negative emotion-related traits moderate the interaction between abusive supervision and self-control capacity, this would suggest that emotions yield a path to retaliation that does not implicate self-control processes.

Research question 2: The three-way interaction between abusive supervision, self-control capacity, and positive emotion-related traits predicting supervisor-directed deviance will also be examined. If positive emotion-related traits moderate the interaction

between abusive supervision and self-control capacity, this would provide further support for a unique emotion-based path.

Measuring Emotion-Related Traits

Since the predictions of the stressor-emotion model generalize across various emotion-related traits, it is palpable that the effects of these traits should be attributed to a common underlying construct. The approach and avoidance temperaments (Elliot & Thrash, 2002; 2010) appear to fulfill this role. Elliot and Thrash (2002) derived two factors that underlie established measures of affective disposition (Watson, & Clark, 1993), the Big Five personality traits (McCrae & Costa, 1987), and general motivational systems (Carver & White, 1994; Gray, 1990). They labeled these factors the approach and avoidance temperaments. Approach temperament is defined as a neurobiological sensitivity to positive stimuli. It is a latent factor of the extraversion, PA, and the behavioral activation system (BAS). Likewise, avoidance temperament is defined as a neurobiological sensitivity to negative stimuli and is a latent factor of neuroticism, NA, and the behavioral inhibition system (BIS) (Elliot & Thrash, 2002; 2010). The temperaments therefore encompass the key emotion-related traits relevant to the predictions of the stressor-emotion model.

METHODS

Procedure

Participants were recruited online via The Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is a crowdsourcing tool that allows interested individuals to search for Human-Intelligence Tasks (HITs) to be completed for pay, outsourcing businesses and social scientists primarily use this resource (Chandler, Mueller, & Paolacci, working paper). Online data collection over MTurk has been established to have equivalent reliability to traditional methods of data collection, while being fast and inexpensive (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011).

In conducting the present research, MTurk was accessed via Crowdfunder, a Canadian intermediary for the U.S. based service (Chandler, et al., working paper). The recruitment advertisement informed potential participants that this HIT would involve a survey where consenting participants would be asked to complete questionnaires concerning their work environment, personality, and behavior at work. The advertisement further indicated that the HIT was estimated to take 15 to 20 minutes to complete, and that participants would receive \$0.75 for completion of the HIT. The HIT was advertised and open for completion on two separate weekdays, spaced one week apart from each other. Prior to being given access to the HIT, participants were pre-screened to ensure their status as full-time workers.

Participants

Participants whose IP address indicated that they had completed a pilot study containing similar measures were removed, as were those whose IP address indicated that they had completed the HIT on both days it was offered (in this case their second set of

responses were removed). This procedure of tracking the IP addresses of participants is one established, though imperfect, method of eliminating duplicate respondents (Burhmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). 572 unique individuals participated in this study. The results of participants who completed the survey in less than six minutes (less than three seconds per item) were filtered out from further analyses. The final sample consisted of 407 individuals (71.15% of unique HIT completers).

Participants were 50.5% female, with an average age of 30.81 years ($SD = 10.78$). They had been employed at their current organization for an average of 40.06 months ($SD = 50.96$) and worked with their current supervisor for an average of 23.85 months ($SD = 28.98$). (**Appendix A**). All participants were required to complete a brief (3-item) English comprehension task before beginning the study (**Appendix B**).

Measures

Abusive Supervision. To assess abusive supervision a condensed, 5-item version, of Tepper's (2000) 15-item abusive supervision scale was used. Participants were asked to indicate, on a 5-point scale, how often their supervisor engages in particular behaviors. Items include; "my supervisor puts me down in front of others" and "my supervisor tells me I'm incompetent" (1 = I can't remember him/her ever using this behavior with me, 5 = He/She uses this behavior very often with me). (**Appendix C**).

Approach and Avoidance Temperaments. Approach-Avoidance Temperament Questionnaire (ATQ, Elliot & Thrash, 2010) has a two-factor structure with 12 items in total, the approach and avoidance factors are each assessed with 6 items. Participants were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with approach items, such as "I'm always on the lookout for positive opportunities and experiences", and avoidance items,

such as “I react very strongly to bad experiences” (1 = Strongly Agree, 7 = Strongly Disagree). (**Appendix D**).

Self-Control Capacity. To assess self-control capacity the Brief Self-Control Scale (BSCS, Tangney, et al., 2004) was used. The BCSC consists of 13 items from the 36-item Self-Control Scale, and has been found to correlate strongly with the total scale ($r = .92, .93$; Tangney et al., 2004). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which items reflect how they typically are (1 = not at all, 5 = very much). Items include; “I am good at resisting temptation” and “I have a hard time breaking bad habits (reverse-scored).”

(**Appendix E**).

Power. Because retaliation is influenced by the contextual factor of relative power (Lian et al., 2012; Tepper, Carr, & Breaux et al., 2009; Aquino et al., 2001; 2006), this study will control for perceptions of power in participant’s relationship with their supervisor. Participants’ sense of power in their relationship with their supervisor was measured using the 8-item Sense of Power Scale (Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2012). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with items referring to the nature of their interactions with their supervisor (1 = disagree strongly, 7 = agree strongly). All items began with the prompt; “In my interactions with my supervisor...” and were completed with statements such as “I can get him/her to listen to what I say” or “I can get him/her to do what I want.” (**Appendix F**).

Supervisor-Directed Deviance. Supervisor-directed deviance was assessed using a 10-item scale (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Participants were asked to indicate how often they engaged in behaviors directed toward their supervisor in the past five months, such

as “made fun of my supervisor” or “acted rudely toward my supervisor” on a 7-point scale (1 = never, 4 = several times, 7 = daily). (**Appendix G**).

Analytic Strategy

The research questions were tested using hierarchical multiple regression in SPSS 17, followed by analyses of simple slopes. All independent variables were centered in order to reduce multicollinearity. Control variables, including gender, age, tenure with supervisor, tenure with organization, and power were entered in the first step of the regression. Abusive supervision, self-control capacity and approach/avoidance temperament were entered in the second step. Two and three-way interaction terms were then created using the centered lower order terms and entered in the third and fourth steps respectively.

RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), conducted in AMOS 19.0, was used to ascertain the construct distinctiveness of the psychometrically measured variables. A 6-factor model, treating all of the proposed variables as independent factors, was tested and found to acceptably fit the data ($\chi^2 = 2845.45$ [1065], $p < .01$, RMSEA = .06). Although the fit index CFI was substandard (CFI = .83), Kenny (2012) recommends that the CFI should not be considered if the RMSEA null model is below 0.158, which was found to be the case (RMSEA null model = 0.147). Moreover, in line with the analyses of Elliot and Thrash (2010) demonstrating that the approach and avoidance temperaments constitute distinct factors, and their expectation that these factors would both, be distinct from a third factor related to self-control, the 6-factor model allowed for a significant improvement in fit over a 4-factor model with self-control capacity, approach temperament and avoidance temperament items loaded on to a single factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 383.69$ [3], $p < .01$). The 6-factor model was also found to be a significant improvement over relevant 5-factor models with self-control capacity and approach temperament items loaded on to one factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 172.65$ [1], $p < .01$), self-control capacity and avoidance temperament items loaded together ($\Delta\chi^2 = 318.32$ [1], $p < .01$), and approach and avoidance temperament items loaded together ($\Delta\chi^2 = 129.63$ [1], $p < .01$).

In addition, following the methods described by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003), a comparison of the 6-factor model with an equivalent model that controlled for the effects of an unmeasured latent methods variable, indicated that there were no substantial differences in the item loadings between the models. This demonstration suggests that the data at hand is not biased by common methods variance.

Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients, and zero-order correlations can be found in **Table 1**. The correlation between abusive supervision and supervisor-directed deviance ($r = .61, p < .01$) resembled that of previous studies (e.g. Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Thau & Mitchell, 2010, Lian et al. 2012). The hierarchical multiple regression analysis testing the interactive effects of abusive supervision, self-control capacity, and avoidance/approach temperaments on supervisor-directed deviance can be found in **Table 2**. In line with earlier findings (Lian et al., 2012) a significant two-way interactive effect of abusive supervision and self-control capacity was revealed ($b = .11, p < .05$). The three-way interaction terms, added in the final step, incrementally explained 8% of the variance of supervisor-directed deviance ($\Delta R^2 = .08, p < .01$).

The three-way interaction term of abusive supervision, self-control capacity, and avoidance temperament was found to be significant ($b = .26, p < .01$). Analyses of simple slopes (**Figure 1**) were conducted following the methods of Aiken & West (1991). The association between abusive supervision and supervisor-directed deviance was found to be non-significant for the simple slope where self-control capacity was high and avoidance temperament was low ($t = .63, ns$), this association was significant for all other cases ($t = 7.90, 23.49, 8.93$, for all $p < .01$). Tests of simple slope differences were subsequently conducted according to the methods of Dawson & Richter (2006). The simple slope for high self-control capacity and low avoidance temperament was found to be significantly different from all other cases ($t = 5.74, 5.40, 7.12$, for all $p < .01$). These results imply that avoidance temperament moderates the interactive effect of abusive supervision and self-control capacity on supervisor-directed deviance. Furthermore, the

buffering effects of self-control capacity only emerge when avoidance temperament is low.

The three-way interaction term of abusive supervision, self-control capacity, and approach temperament was significant ($b = -.13, p < .05$). Analyses of simple slopes (**Figure 2**) demonstrated that the association between abusive supervision and supervisor-directed deviance was significant for all simple slopes ($t = 2.38, 13.93, 7.23, 7.38$, for all $p < .01$). However, tests of simple slope differences revealed that the t-statistic for the simple slope where approach temperament was high and self-control capacity was low was significantly smaller than that of all other cases ($t = 4.25, 2.50, 5.03$, for all $p < .01$). These results imply that approach temperament moderates the interactive effect of abusive supervision and self-control capacity on supervisor-directed deviance, and that self-control capacity buffers the effects of abusive supervision most pronouncedly when approach temperament is high.

DISCUSSION

The intent of the current study was to further investigate the individual differences that moderate the association between experiences of abusive supervision and enactment of supervisor-directed deviance. In doing so, this study serves to expand existing knowledge on the interpersonal antecedents of retaliation in the context of the supervisor-subordinate relationship. In exploring the antecedents of retaliation, predictions offered by the strength model of self-control (Baumeister et al., 2007; Thau & Mitchell, 2010; Lian et al., 2012), were integrated with predictions from the stressor-emotion model (Spector & Fox, 2005).

Theory in line with the strength model of self-control suggests that the experience of abusive supervision induces ego depletion, giving way to retaliatory behavior (Thau & Mitchell, 2010). Yet, it was proposed that this account overlooks the potential role played by individual differences in emotion-related traits. From the perspective of the stressor-emotion model (Spector & Fox, 2005), abusive supervision leads to retaliation by arousing negative emotional reactions, which are contingent on individual differences in emotion-related traits. In order to resolve this discrepancy, it was suggested that self-control and emotional processes might constitute distinct psychological pathways to supervisor-directed deviance. In addition, because negative emotions kindle the desire for revenge (McCullough et al., 2001; Bradfield & Aquino, 1999), it was argued that any unique effects of emotion-related traits on retaliation could be the result of vengeance seeking (e.g. Liu et al., 2010)

The results of this study support the idea that emotions and self-control processes constitute distinct paths to retaliation. The three-way interaction between abusive

supervision, self-control capacity, and avoidance temperament significantly predicted supervisor-directed deviance, as did the three-way interaction of abusive supervision, self-control capacity, and approach temperament. Moreover, simple slopes analyses of these interactions indicated that high levels of self-control capacity only serve to buffer against the effects of abusive supervision on supervisor-directed deviance in the cases where either avoidance temperament is low, or approach temperament is high. These findings corroborate with the stressor-emotion model, which suggests that retaliation should be less likely to occur for individuals who have low levels of negative emotion-related traits or high levels of positive emotion-related traits. Additionally, these effects were found to be significant despite controlling for participants' sense of power in their relationship with their supervisor.

Theoretical Implications

The present study extends research on self-control and supervisor-directed retaliation by integrating this perspective with the stressor-emotion model. It appears that retaliation, on the one hand, may arise when individuals are unable to maintain self-controlled behavior (Thau & Mitchell, 2010; Lian et al., 2012). While on the other hand, it may arise when abusive supervision is experienced to be highly distressing (Spector & Fox, 2005).

Further, since the effects of emotion-related traits were not contingent on self-control processes, it is conceivable that, despite motivations to refrain from retaliation (Aquino et al., 2001; 2006; Tepper et al., 2009; Lian et al., 2012), some individuals may be sufficiently affected by experiences of abusive supervision to deliberately act on desires for revenge. Although, this claim must be verified by future research, it resonates

with existing findings in the abusive supervision literature that concern vengeance seeking (Liu et al., 2010; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007).

Practical Implications

The present study suggests that in predicting an employee's ability to cope with abusive supervision, and possibly other workplace stressors, self-control capacity, as well as positive and negative emotion-related traits should be considered. Interestingly, these three variables are analogous to those identified by the tradition of three-factor personality models (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985; Tellegen, 1985; Clark & Watson, 1993; Rothbart, 2007; Carver, 2005; Elliot & Thrash, 2010). So although the self-control related variable of conscientiousness (Carver, 2005) is generally considered to be the most effective non-cognitive predictor of job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991), the present findings begin to suggest that a more holistic consideration of personality may be efficacious for hiring or placement decisions in high-stress work environments.

Furthermore, the identification of these antecedents to retaliation allows for the recommendation of various organizational practices that could be targeted to employees in the unenviable position of working under an abusive supervisor. First, as suggested elsewhere, self-control training could serve to be a useful intervention for reducing retaliation in the workplace (Lian et al., 2012; Thau & Mitchell, 2010). Research shows that individuals can indeed be trained to develop an enhanced capacity for self-control (Baumeister, DeWall, Galliot, & Oaten, 2006) and that such training can reduce aggressive responses to provocation (Denson, Capper, & Oaten et al., 2011).

Second, emotion research has identified several strategies for coping with exposure to stressors. Stemming from these findings, training programs could be

developed to help employees learn to find positive meaning in stressful situations (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), and to think about emotional experiences with specificity and precision (emotion granularity; Tugade et al., 2004; Pond, Kashdan, DeWall, & Savostyanova et al., 2012). Additionally, there is an emerging perspective that mindfulness training could be used to help people enhance their self-control capacity (Denson et al., 2012) and develop the proclivity to engage in the positive reappraisals of distressing events (Garland, Gaylord, & Fredrickson, 2011).

Limitations and Future Directions

The research presented here has several important limitations. First, because participant data was obtained from a single self-report source, at a single point in time, the results are exposed to procedural sources of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Despite this risk, the key interactive effects found in this study cannot be attributed to method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012; Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010; Evans, 1985). Moreover, controlling for an unmeasured latent method factor was not found to affect item loadings for the various constructs measured (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

A related second limitation is that, because all individual data was obtained at a single point in time, potential causal relations between employee individual differences and abusive supervision cannot be inferred. Research on the antecedents of abusive supervision show that abusive supervisors are prone to target subordinates who are high in NA (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006; Tepper, 2007) and those who are perceived to be low performers (Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011). Accordingly, in the present data set, abusive supervision was found to have a significant positive correlation

with avoidance temperament ($r = .17, p < .01$), and a significant negative correlation with self-control ($r = -.18, p < .01$). Given that the causality of these associations cannot be inferred, future research involving abusive supervision and personality traits should use longitudinal methods to control for this issue.

Third and most critically, the potential mediating effects of vengeance seeking were not examined in this study. Although the current research suggests that negative emotions predict retaliation by instilling a desire for revenge, this claim has yet to be substantiated. A follow-up study should be conducted to determine whether the desire for revenge mediates emotion-related traits in the prediction of supervisor-directed deviance.

Future research should also consider within-person variability in emotional responses to abusive supervision. Such an investigation could provide more robust support for the present application of stressor-emotion model. Specifically, examining the moderating effects of emotion-related traits on within-person emotional variability would be a direct test of the model's validity. In a related direction, experience-sampling research has already demonstrated that within-person emotional variability predicts deviant behavior (Dalal, Lam, & Weiss et al., 2009).

As a final direction for future direction, chronic regulatory focus is expected to mediate the effects of emotion-related traits on retaliation. The formulation of Ferris, Johnson, Rosen, and Djurdjevic et al. (2013) as well as meta-analytic work by Lanaj, Johnson, and Chang (2012) endorse a hierarchical relationship between the temperaments and regulatory focus. Since regulatory focus influences goal framing, and goals are closer in the in the causal chain leading to overt behavior than the temperaments (Ferris et al.,

2013; Elliot, 2006), regulatory focus should encompass the effects of temperament on behavioral outcomes such as retaliation.

CONCLUSION

Using an online sample of working adults, the present research found that both self-control capacity and emotion-related traits interact with experiences of abusive supervision to predict supervisor-directed deviance. These findings serve to integrate two well-researched psychological antecedents of retaliation. In doing so, this research provides evidence that the effects of emotion-related traits on supervisor-directed retaliation are not accounted for by self-control processes. Further research is needed to investigate the potential mediating role of the desire for revenge on these effects. Knowledge of the interpersonal antecedents to retaliation can be used to develop organizational interventions that serve to lessen the destructive impact of abusive supervision.

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Figure 1

Interaction Between Abusive Supervision, Self-Control Capacity, and Avoidance Temperament on Supervisor-Directed Deviance

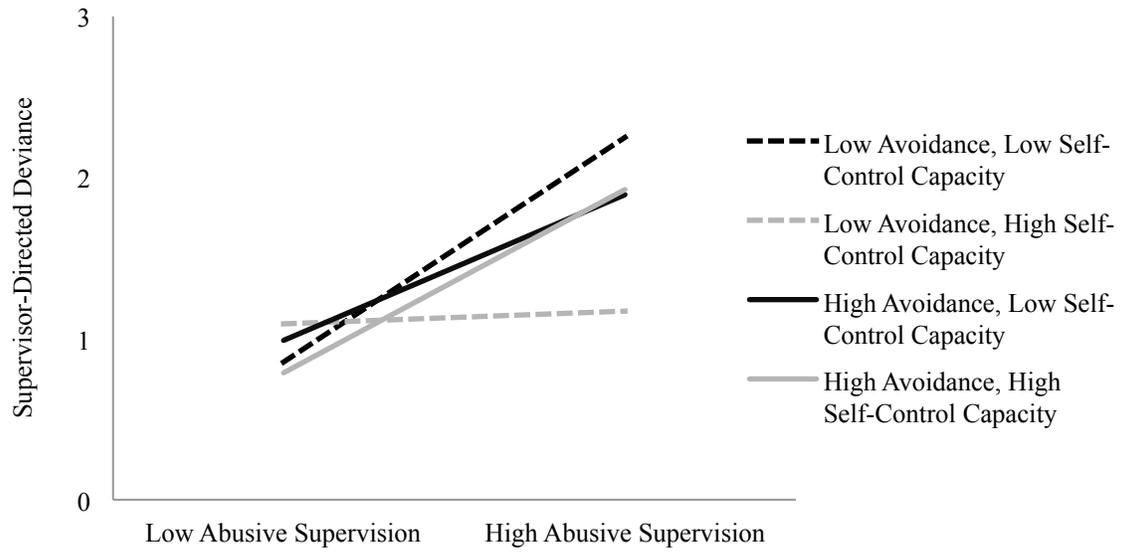


Figure 2

Interaction Between Abusive Supervision, Self-Control Capacity, and Approach Temperament on Supervisor-Directed Deviance

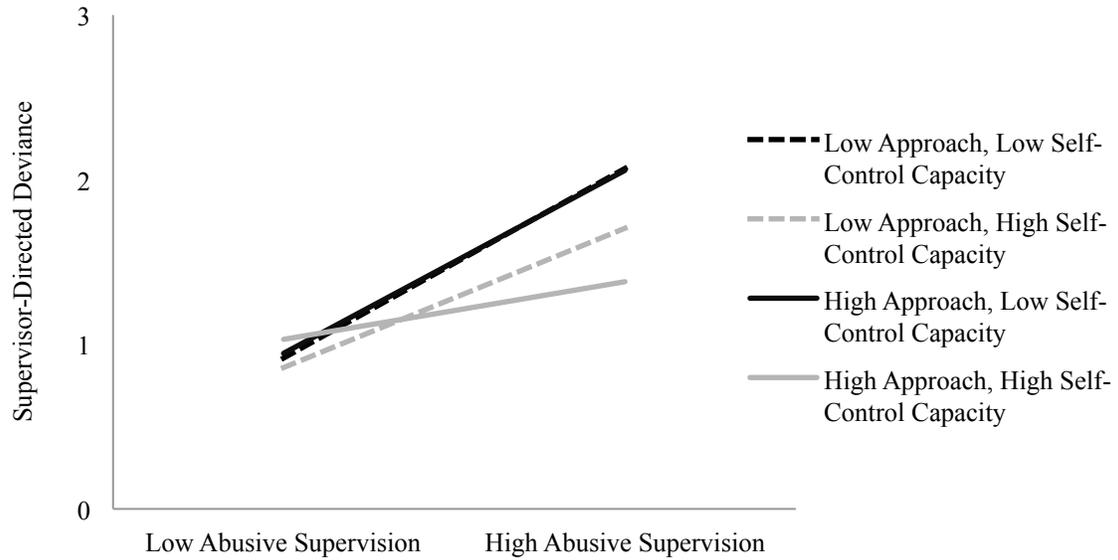


Table 1*Descriptive Statistics, Zero-Order Correlations, and Alphas*

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Power	3.52	.68	.89		.			
2. AS	1.28	.81	.34**	.91				.
3. SCC	3.45	.84	-.29**	-.18**	.93	.		-. .
4. Approach	5.04	.85	.11*	-.07	-.01	.82		
5. Avoidance	3.74	1.43	-.34**	.17**	-.42**	.20**	.88	
6. SDD	1.37	.65	-.17**	.61**	-.24**	-.07	.13**	.87

Note. $N = 407$. AS = abusive supervision, SCC = Self-Control Capacity, SDD = supervisor-directed deviance. Alphas are bolded. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 2

Three-way interactions between abusive supervision, self-control capacity and approach/avoidance temperament predicting supervisor-directed deviance

Step	1	2	3	4
Intercept	1.37** (.03)	1.36** (.03)	1.37** (.03)	1.37** (.03)
Gender	-.16** (.07)	-.10 (.06)	-.12* (.06)	-.08 (.05)
Age	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)
Tenure w/Sup	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Tenure w/Org	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Power	-.09** (.03)	.05 (.03)	.04 (.02)	.03 (.02)
AS		.62** (.05)	.57** (.05)	.71** (.05)
SCC		-.12** (.04)	-.11** (.04)	-.16** (.03)
Approach		-.02 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.02 (.03)
Avoidance		.01 (.02)	.10 (.02)	.02 (.02)
AS x SCC			-.11* (.05)	-.26** (.06)
AS x Approach			-.12* (.06)	-.13* (.06)
AS x Avoidance			.00 (.05)	0.08 (.05)
SCC x Approach			-.03 (.04)	-0.03 (.04)
SCC x Avoid			.05* (.02)	0.07** (.02)
AS x SCC x Approach				-0.13* (.07)
AS x SCC x Avoidance				0.26** (.04)
ΔR^2	0.05**	0.35**	0.02*	0.08**

Note. $N = 407$. Tenure w/Sup = Tenure with Supervisor, Tenure w/Org = Tenure with Organization, AS = Abusive Supervision, SCC = Self-Control Capacity. Changes in R^2 are bolded. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Demographics Questionnaire

1. Age: years old.

2. Gender: Male Female

3. Considering all the full-time jobs you have ever held in your life, how many years overall have you been employed full-time? years.

4. How many jobs do you currently work at?

If you work at more than one job, please refer to your primary job (i.e., the job at which you work the most hours) when completing the following questions.

5. How many months have you been working at your **current organization**? months.

6. How many months have you been working in your **current position**? months.

7. How many months have you been working with your **current supervisor**? months.

8. What gender is your supervisor? Male Female

9. What is your job title?

10. What best describes the industry do you work in?

• Click here:

11. Do you work in a team? Yes No

If so, how many people (excluding supervisors) are a part of your team?

12. Do you supervise other employees as part of your role at work? Yes No

If so, how many?

13. How often do you interact with other people in your organization (supervisor and work peers) during a typical work day?

Never	Rarely	Somewhat Regularly	Regularly	Often
<input type="radio"/>				

14. On average, how many hours a week do you work at your current job? hours per week, on average.

15. What is your highest level of education?

Less than High School	Some High School	High School	College/ University	Master's Degree	Doctorate
<input type="radio"/>					

Appendix B: English Comprehension Test

In each of the following questions, a related pair of words is followed by five lettered pairs of words. Please select the pair that best expresses a relationship similar to that of the original pair.

1. Cub: bear

- Piano: orchestra
- Fork: utensil
- Kitten: cat
- Dalmatian: dog

2. Doctor: hospital

- Lawyer: client
- Dentist: teeth
- Teacher: school
- Criminal: jail

3. Sedative: drowsiness

- Vaccine: virus
- Doctor: hospital
- Therapy: psychosis
- Anaesthetic: numb

Appendix C: Abusive Supervision Measure (Tepper, 2000)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements based on your typical thoughts and feelings about your supervisor.

1	2	3	4	5
I can't remember him/her ever using this behavior with me	He/she very seldom uses this behavior with me	He/she occasionally uses this behavior with me	He/she uses this behavior moderately often with me	He/she uses this behavior very often with me

My supervisor....

1. Ridicules me.
2. Tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid.
3. Puts me down in front of others.
4. Makes negative comments about me to others.
5. Tells me I'm incompetent.

**Appendix D: Approach and Avoidance Temperament Measure
(Elliot & Thrash, 2010)**

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by choosing a number. Please select numbers according to the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree

1. By nature, I am a very nervous person.
2. Thinking about the thing I want really energizes me.
3. It doesn't take much to make me worry.
4. When I see an opportunity for something I like, I immediately get excited.
5. It doesn't take a lot to get me excited and motivated.
6. I feel anxiety and fear very deeply.
7. I react very strongly to bad experiences.
8. I'm always on the lookout for positive opportunities and experiences.
9. When it looks like something bad could happen, I have a strong urge to escape.
10. When good things happen to me, it affects me very strongly.
11. When I want something, I feel a strong desire to go after it.
12. It is easy for me to imagine bad things might happen to me.

Note. Approach temperament items = 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11; Avoidance temperament items = 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 12.

Appendix F: Relational Sense of Power Measure (Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2012)

INSTRUCTIONS: In rating each of the items below, please use the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree a little	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree a little	Agree	Agree Strongly

In my interactions with my supervisor...

1. I can get him/her/them to listen to what I say.
2. My wishes do not carry much weight.
3. I can get him/her/them to do what I want.
4. Even if I voice them, my views have little sway.
5. I think I have a great deal of power.
6. My ideas and opinions are often ignored.
7. Even when I try, I am not able to get my way.
8. If I want to, I get to make the decisions.

Appendix G: Supervisor-Directed Deviance Measure (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate, using the following scale, how often you have engaged in each of the following behaviors towards your supervisor in the past five months.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Once in the last five months	Twice in the last five months	Several times	Monthly	Weekly	Daily

1. Made fun of my supervisor at work.
2. Played a mean prank on my supervisor
3. Made an obscene comment or gesture toward my supervisor.
4. Gossiped about my supervisor.
5. Acted rudely toward my supervisor.
6. Made an ethnic, religious, or racial remark against my supervisor
7. Publicly embarrassed my supervisor.
8. Swore at my supervisor.
9. Refused to talk to my supervisor.
10. Said something hurtful to my supervisor at work.