Understanding Internal, External, and Relational Attributions for Abusive Supervision

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Abstract

Despite abundant research on the consequences of perceived abusive supervision, less is known about how employees *develop* perceptions of supervisory abuse. Across two studies, we integrate classic and recent theoretical work on attributions to understand the causal explanations underlying employee perceptions of and reactions to abusive supervision. In the first study, we develop measures of internal, external, and relational attributions for perceived supervisor abuse. In the second study, we demonstrate that internal and external attributions are indirectly related to aggressive and citizenship behaviors through employees' perceptions of interactional justice. Theoretical and practical implications are also discussed.

Keywords: Attributions, Abusive Supervision, Justice, Citizenship, Aggression

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Over the past 20 years, there has been an increasing interest in the "dark side" of leadership (Martinko, Harvey, Brees, & Mackey, 2013; Tepper, 2007). Within this domain, a growing body of research has explored abusive supervision, "subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000, p. 178). Examples of such behavior include lying, public ridicule, and invasion of privacy. Nielsen, Matthiesen, and Einarsen (2010) estimate that perhaps as many as 1 in 5 employees world-wide have experienced abuse in the workplace. In the United States, supervisory abuse is believed to cost organizations billions of dollars each year (see Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006).

Given the prevalence and costs of abusive supervision, it is not surprising that a number of studies have examined its effects on employees and organizations. To date, the majority of research has focused on the outcomes of abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007), demonstrating its relationships with poor work performance (Harris, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2007), workplace aggression (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), and lower self-esteem (Burton & Hoobler, 2006). Despite this progress, less is known about the fundamental cognitive processes with which employees develop perceptions of supervisory abuse and how these attributions are associated with psychological and behavioral reactions. Understanding how employees come to believe they have been abused is important not only in light of the substantial social and financial costs of abuse, but also because employees can vary considerably in how they perceive supervisors' actions (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Martinko, Harvey, Sikora, & Douglas, 2011). Whereas one employee may perceive a supervisor's actions (e.g., expressing anger, recalling the employee's past mistakes, making negative comments because the employee incorrectly formatted an

important report) as justified, another may feel such actions are undeserved because this employee attributes their cause to the supervisor's vindictiveness. Consequently, although both employees are experiencing the same behavior, their judgments and behavioral responses are likely to differ.

To this end, we investigate employees' attributions for perceived abusive supervision and how these causal explanations are related to their psychological and behavioral reactions. Given that attribution theory has a long history of explaining how individuals determine the causes of negative events and respond to them (e.g., Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967; Weiner, 1985a), viewing perceptions of abusive supervision through the lens of attribution theory could inform research, theory, and practice by helping to explain how employees perceive and react to abusive supervision. Moreover, understanding multiple attributional processes is theoretically and practically important because employees are likely to make multiple attributions for negative outcomes, such as perceived supervisor abuse; hence, these attributions should be simultaneously investigated (Martinko, 2004).

Eberly, Holley, Johnson, and Mitchell (2011) recently suggested that individuals not only make external and internal attributions for the outcomes they receive—as long held by classical attribution theorists (e.g., Kelley, 1967)—but that they can also make relational attributions. Within the context of abusive supervision, Eberly et al.'s (2011) framework suggests that when making attributions for the abuse they perceive from their supervisor, employees may blame themselves, blame the supervisor, or blame the relationship they have with their supervisor. We expand on these recent theoretical advances in employee attributions and aim to more fully understand how they shape perceptions of abusive supervision and reactions to them. Specifically, our study investigates the full spectrum of locus attributions by examining the

internal (i.e., *"something about me"*), external (i.e., *"something about my supervisor"*), and relational (i.e., *"something about us"*) forces that contribute to perceived supervisor abuse. In addition, we investigate the relationships these attributions have with employees' fairness perceptions and work behaviors.

The present study fills gaps surrounding our understanding of the nature and consequences of attributions for perceived abusive supervision, and it extends prior theory and research using two studies. We bridge traditional perspectives on attribution theory with recent advances (cf. Eberly et al., 2011; Kelley, 1967; Martinko & Thomson, 1998) and apply them to better understand the causal explanations underlying employee perceptions of and reactions to abusive supervision. In doing so, we build on the small body of research exploring attributions for perceived supervisor abuse to develop predictions concerning the psychological and behavioral outcomes of these attributions. In the first study, we develop and assess measures of internal, external, and relational attributions for perceived abusive supervision. The second, two-wave study empirically tests hypotheses constituting the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1. In the sections that follow, we provide background on attribution theory, explore its potential role in shaping perceptions of and reactions to supervisor abuse and injustice, and present two studies that use new measures designed to capture the full spectrum of locus attributions proposed by Eberly et al. (2011) with respect to perceptions of abusive supervision.

Please insert Figure 1 about here

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Attribution theory focuses on how individuals attempt to determine the cause of a specific behavior or event (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967) and on their responses to these causal ascriptions (Weiner, 1985a). Attributional processes can be viewed from interpersonal (i.e., social) or intrapersonal perspectives (Martinko & Thomson, 1998). Whereas social attribution processes focus on explaining the cause of another person's behavior, intrapersonal attribution processes focus on determining the cause of a particular outcome a person receives. In the present study, we focus on the latter process. Because abusive supervision explicitly refers to *employee perceptions* (Tepper, 2000; see also Martinko et al., 2013), our primary interest lies in understanding how employees form attributions for their negative outcomes—i.e., perceptions that they have been abused.

Kelley (1967) argued that individuals make internal (i.e., something about oneself) or external (i.e., something about the other person or context) attributions based on the informational cues of consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness of the particular observed behavior or outcome. From an intrapersonal attribution perspective, consensus refers to the degree to which an individual believes a particular outcome is common to other employees. Consensus is high when other employees experience the same type of outcome and low if only the employee experiences this outcome. Consistency indicates the degree to which a particular outcome occurs regularly over time, and whether individuals believe they are likely to experience the same types of outcomes in the future. Consistency is high when an employee routinely experiences this outcome and expects to continue to experience these types of outcomes in the future. Conversely, consistency is low when the outcome is not routinely experienced by the employee. Distinctiveness refers to the unique interaction of the individual with the situation. Distinctiveness is low when the outcome is common to a wide variety of

situations for the individual. On the other hand, distinctiveness is high when the outcome for the individual is unique to a particular situation (see Martinko & Thomson, 1998).

Building on these ideas, Eberly et al. (2011) argued that considering only potential internal or external causes may miss important elements of the event. They proposed that when examining the causality for some event, one must also consider the context of one's dyadic relationships. Therefore, a third set of locus attributions was proposed: relational attributions. Eberly et al. (2011) define relational attributions as "those explanations made by a focal individual that locate the cause of an event within the relationship the individual has with another person" (p. 732).

Whereas Kelley (1967) explored the "front end" of the attribution process, Weiner (1985a) examined how different attributional dimensions impact individuals' subsequent expectancies and behavior (see Martinko, Harvey, & Douglas, 2007). Weiner's model holds that the motivation to respond to some event is a function of three dimensions: locus of causality, stability, and globality (initially proposed by Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). As noted, locus of causality refers to individuals' judgments as to whether the outcome was caused by their own actions (i.e., internally) or those of another person or the context (i.e., externally). The stability dimension addresses whether the cause of some event changes over time. For example, if individuals attribute success or failure to their ability, this attribution is stable because ability is unlikely to change over time. However, if they attribute success or failure to luck, this attribution would be unstable because luck could be perceived to change based on the situation at hand (Ashkanasy, 1989). Finally, the globality dimension refers to whether the cause of an outcome is generalizable across situations (i.e., global) or more specific. For example, an individual who attributes failure on a test to a lack of intelligence is making a global attribution, whereas a

person who attributes that failure to being bad at the particular subject is making a more specific attribution.

Martinko and Thomson (1998) integrated Kelley's (1967) and Weiner's (1985a) frameworks into one comprehensive and parsimonious model. Key in synthesizing these two perspectives was their observation that consensus information is related to locus of causality, consistency information is associated with stability, and distinctiveness information maps onto the globality dimension. Thus, Martinko and Thomson's model allows for an examination of the attributional formation process *and* of the motivational and behavioral consequences of attributions. Likewise, given our dual interests in understanding attributions in connection with individuals' perceptions of abusive supervision and their reactions to them, we apply Martinko and Thomson's (1998) model to guide our theoretical arguments. In doing so, we incorporate Eberly et al.'s (2011) concept of relational attributions in an attempt to more fully understand the nature and consequences of attributions for perceived abusive supervision. Although, as Martinko and Thomson (1998) indicate, only consensus information relates to locus of causality, we also consider the other informational cues (consistency, distinctiveness) and dimensions (stability, globality) to help more precisely identify the nature of the cause of perceived supervisory abuse (i.e., internal, external, or relational).

Attributions for Abusive Supervision

When considering the role of attributions in perceptions of abusive supervision, Martinko and colleagues (2011) suggest these are exactly the types of workplace events for which individuals try to determine the root cause, largely because perceptions of abusive supervision are negatively valent and salient to employees (Tepper, 2000; Weiner, 1985a). This is not to say, however, that the reasons employees give for such perceived abuse will be the same. Past

research supports the idea that people can make multiple, simultaneous attributions for negative events at work (Martinko, 2004). As prior studies (Bowling & Michel, 2011; Breaux, Tepper, Carr, & Folger, 2010) have examined various types of external attributions (i.e., supervisor- or organization-based), we first direct our attention to external attributions for supervisor abuse perceptions.

External attributions for abusive supervision reflect employees' beliefs that the supervisor is chiefly responsible for the abuse they perceive. Within Kelley's (1967) and Eberly et al.'s (2011) frameworks, determining the cause of the perceived abuse begins with employees analyzing whether they receive the same type of treatment from the supervisor as other employees. Employees are likely to make an external attribution for this perceived abuse when they perceive the supervisor treats other employees in the same negative manner (i.e., high consensus). Once the general locus attribution is determined by consensus information (i.e., external in this case, because consensus is high), consistency and distinctiveness information can be used to more precisely identify the nature of the external cause. For example, Martinko and Thomson (1998) argue external attributions could be a function of the entity, physical laws or constraints, chance, or luck, and that the precise nature of the external attribution can be clarified by examining the consistency (stability) and distinctiveness (globality) of the outcome.

Within the context of perceived abusive supervision, consistency reflects employees' perceptions that they routinely experience this type of negative treatment from the supervisor and expect to continue to receive this outcome in the future. Distinctiveness refers to employees' perceptions that they have experienced abuse from other supervisors in the past. When employees perceive the supervisor routinely abuses them and expect this type of treatment to continue in the future (i.e., high consistency), and believe that they have not typically received

this type of treatment from past supervisors (i.e., high distinctiveness), these employees are likely to blame the supervisor for the abuse they perceive. Consistent with this view, Martinko and Thomson's (1998) model of attributions demonstrates that external (high consensus), stable (high consistency), and specific (high distinctiveness) attributions likely result in the entity—in this case, the supervisor—being perceived as the cause of the negative outcome.

Internal attributions for perceptions of abusive supervision occur when individuals believe their personal characteristics or behaviors influence their perceived supervisory abuse. Internal attributions result when an employee perceives that the other employees of the supervisor are treated differently. With respect to abusive supervision, employees likely make internal attributions when they perceive low consensus—that is, when they, but not other employees, perceive abuse from the supervisor. In other words, employees may think they are largely responsible for the (perceived) abuse they experience from their supervisors if they conclude the mistreatment is exclusive to them. This attribution can be further clarified by determining whether employees perceive they are treated poorly by the supervisor routinely (i.e., high consistency) and whether they have perceived abuse from supervisors in past situations (i.e., low distinctiveness). Blaming oneself for perceived supervisory abuse is also in keeping with Martinko and Thomson's (1998) model where they argue instances of low consensus, high consistency, and low distinctiveness (i.e., internal, stable, global attributions) can lead individuals to attribute the outcome to something about themselves (e.g., personality, ability).

Relational attributions for abusive supervision perceptions are likely made when employees believe that no one else is treated abusively by the supervisor, when they perceive to be routinely treated poorly by the supervisor, and when they have not typically perceived this type of outcome with past supervisors. Eberly et al. (2011) suggest this pattern of low

consensus, high consistency, and high distinctiveness can lead to the formation of relational attributions. Thus, in the context of perceived abusive supervision, individuals look at the relationship they have with their supervisor to determine what is causing this supervisor to act so differently toward them, at least compared to everyone else. Citing the relationship one has with the supervisor as the cause of perceived abuse is also consistent with Martinko and Thomson's (1998) model, wherein this particular combination of informational cues contributes to the formation of internal, stable, and specific attributions. As such, the perceived cause of the outcome is likely specific to that situation. In this case, the situation is the unique relationship the employee has with the supervisor.

Attributions for Abusive Supervision and Interactional Justice

Past research has shown that perceptions of abusive supervision diminish employees' perceptions of justice (e.g., Burton & Hoobler, 2011; Tepper, 2000), in that it violates expectations of fair treatment (e.g., treatment with respect and sensitivity; Bies & Moag, 1986). In fact, Martinko et al. (2004) contend that the attributions made for some event are key to understanding how individuals form perceptions of justice. Thus, it is likely that the internal, external, or relational attributions individuals make regarding perceived abusive supervision prime justice perceptions. Although such perceptions of fairness can refer to either organizational or supervisory sources (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002), we focus on interactional justice because employee perceptions of abusive supervision are largely driven by the actions of supervisors.

External attributions for perceived abuse are likely the primary driver of injustice perceptions because these attributions lead individuals to conclude that the supervisor is directly responsible for the negative behavior they perceive. Therefore, it is probable that when

individuals make external attributions for perceived abusive supervision, they may also perceive that they have been treated unfairly. Consistent with this view, Breaux et al. (2010) found that external attributions for perceived abuse were negatively related to interactional justice perceptions. However, no empirical studies have simultaneously examined internal, external, and relational attributions. This is an important shortcoming in that individuals are likely to make multiple attributions for negative events and outcomes.

Though no research to date has examined whether the full spectrum of locus attributions are variously associated with justice perceptions, there is sufficient theory to suggest that internal and relational attributions may not affect interactional justice perceptions to the same extent or in the same way external attributions do. For example, if employees perceive abusive supervision was due to their own behavior, they may be less apt to fault the supervisor. Indeed, there is support for the idea that individuals can blame themselves for the negative events they experience (e.g., Aquino & Thau, 2009; Bowling & Michel, 2011). Moreover, individuals who attribute their perceived abuse to internal causes may view the supervisor's actions as justified (e.g., Bowling & Beehr, 2006). In such cases, these employees are unlikely to see their supervisor's behavior as violating expectations regarding fair and appropriate workplace conduct, but perhaps as upholding them (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). We therefore expect a positive relationship between internal attributions and interactional justice perceptions.

For relational attributions, employees perceive their relationship with the supervisor as the cause of their perceived abuse. Eberly and her colleagues (2011) maintain that not all negative feedback on the part of the supervisor will be seen as caused by the supervisor (i.e., external attribution) or entirely by the employee's own actions (i.e., internal attribution). In such instances, although employees may view the supervisor's behavior as violating norms for

appropriate workplace treatment (and therefore feel the associated injustice), blame is directly

attributed neither to the employee nor to the supervisor (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Rather, as

Eberly et al. (2011) suggest, blame is shared between them. As such, employees may reason that

their role in the relationship difficulties justifies to some extent how they are treated by a

supervisor, given they feel partially responsible for the supervisor's (perceived) abusive

behavior. Therefore, we expect relational attributions to be negatively related to justice

perceptions, although not as strongly as external attributions. This is expected because, even

though the perceived supervisor abuse is viewed as a violation of interpersonal norms,

employees' feelings of partial responsibility may offset some of this negative effect. Stated

formally, we hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 1a: Controlling for internal and relational attributions, external attributions*
> *for abusive supervision will be negatively related to perceptions of*
> *interactional justice.*

> *Hypothesis 1b: Controlling for external and relational attributions, internal attributions*
> *for abusive supervision will be positively related to perceptions of*
> *interactional justice.*

> *Hypothesis 1c: Controlling for internal and external attributions, relational attributions*
> *for abusive supervision will be negatively related to perceptions of*
> *interactional justice.*

> *Hypothesis 1d: External attributions will be more strongly related to perceptions of*
> *interactional justice than will internal or relational attributions.*

The Mediating Role of Interactional Justice

Research in attributions has demonstrated their relationship to a variety of positive and negative work behaviors (e.g., Rudolph, Roesch, Greitemeyer, & Weiner, 2004). Here, we explore their relationships with aggression and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Whereas workplace aggression is broadly defined as "any negative act, which may be committed toward an individual within the workplace, or the workplace itself, in ways the target is motivated to avoid" (Hershcovis & Barling, 2007, p. 271), citizenship refers to discretionary behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness by developing and maintaining its social climate (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Although perceptions of abusive supervision have been shown to influence both employee outcomes (e.g., see Tepper, 2007), little work has explored how the attributions employees make for this perceived abuse are associated with their work-related attitudes and behavior. In a study of restaurant, hospital, and federal law enforcement employees, Breaux et al. (2010) found that attributions made to the supervisor for abusive behavior were indirectly related to lower job satisfaction and higher intentions to leave, psychological distress, and deviance. Building on this and other related work (e.g., Bowling & Michel, 2011), we contend that the three locus attributions—internal, external, and relational— could be variously related to employees' perceptions of fairness and their associated behavior.

Although initial attempts have been made to understand the reasons employees give for perceptions of abusive supervision and their associated reactions, to date only Bowling and Michel (2011) have examined multiple sources for these causal explanations (viz., those for which the employee feels responsible). Their investigation, while it provided an important step forward in understanding attributions for abusive supervision, was limited in one notable respect: it failed to consider the role of perceived fairness in explaining the effects of these attributions. Including perceptions of fairness as an explanatory mechanism is important because negative

reactions to perceived abusive supervision are likely to the extent it is perceived as interpersonally unfair (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007; Burton & Hoobler, 2011; Tepper, 2000). Consistent with this idea, previous research suggests employees' perceptions of justice transmit the effects of perceived abusive supervision on individual behaviors (see Tepper, 2007). Further supporting this view is Martinko and colleagues' (Martinko, Douglas, Ford, & Gundlach, 2004; Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002) argument that justice perceptions mediate the relationship between attributions made for some event and the subsequent behavior. We likewise expect interactional justice perceptions to serve as a mechanism through which attributions for perceived abusive supervision might be associated with employee aggression and citizenship behavior.

External and relational attributions for perceived abuse are likely to trigger feelings of injustice and unfair treatment to the extent that the supervisor is seen as personally responsible (completely or partially) for this mistreatment. As a consequence of the injustice prompted by these attributions, employees may act aggressively and reduce their citizenship. Supporting this notion, Zellars, Tepper, and Duffy (2002) suggested that employees who attribute the responsibility for perceived abuse to their supervisor (e.g., bad temper, incompetence) tend to experience greater injustice and withhold citizenship behaviors. With respect to aggression, Martinko and Zellars (1998) theorized that external attributions are likely to generate such negative responses because external attributions involve the assignment of blame. Blaming others for abuse is thought to be one of the primary motivating factors for aggressive behavior in the workplace (Martinko et al., 2002).

Internal attributions for perceived abusive supervision are also likely to be related to perceptions of justice, as well as aggression and citizenship. According to Eberly et al. (2011),

internal attributions for perceived abusive supervision may be associated with behaviors intended

to improve employee-supervisor relations, suggesting subordinates who hold these attributions

may engage in less aggression and more supervisor-directed citizenship behavior. As individuals

who possess internal attributions tend to blame themselves for the abuse they perceive, they

should be more likely to perceive the supervisor has upheld justice expectations (Folger &

Cropanzano, 2001) and, thus, should increase their citizenship and reduce their aggression. Thus,

consistent with our expectations expressed in Hypothesis 1, we anticipate that external and

relational attributions will be negatively related and internal attributions positively related to

interactional justice perceptions, which in turn will be negatively associated with aggression and

positively associated with citizenship. These expectations are also in line with past research

which has shown that violations of individuals' sense of fair treatment can prompt employees to

engage in aggression and to display fewer acts of citizenship (for reviews, see Colquitt et al.,

2001, 2013). Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 2: Interactional injustice will mediate the relationships between internal, external, and relational attributions for abusive supervision and employee aggression.*

> *Hypothesis 3: Interactional injustice will mediate the relationships between internal, external, and relational attributions for abusive supervision and employee citizenship behavior.*

Overview of Studies

We conducted two studies to test our hypotheses. In Study 1 we developed and assessed

measures of internal, external, and relational attributions for perceived abusive supervision. In

Study 2, we further examined the psychometric soundness of the attribution measures. In this

latter study we also tested our hypotheses by investigating the extent to which attributions for perceived abuse are related to justice perceptions, as well as employees' aggressive and non-aggressive (i.e., OCB) behavioral responses indirectly through interactional justice. Below, we provide information regarding the methods and results for both studies.

Study 1 Method

To develop items for our measures, we relied on the long history of attributions research, previous item generation attempts (e.g., Fincham & Bradbury, 1992; Jackson & LePine, 2003; Russell, 1982), and theoretical advances by Eberly and colleagues (2011). Care was taken to adequately cover and clearly demarcate the content domain and avoid overlap with related constructs by explicitly defining each attribution dimension. Following recommended item-generation procedures (e.g., Clark & Watson, 1995; Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003), we endeavored to represent the full range of the content domain by writing items that encompassed larger portions of each construct (i.e., items referred to individuals' perceptions of "supervisor behavior" broadly), rather than narrower facets that focused on specific supervisor behaviors (e.g., regarding the use of power, making decisions, etc.).

Fourteen items were developed and then independently assessed by the authors for clarity and meaningfulness. Any disagreements were further discussed and only those items for which consensus agreement was reached were retained. We then rephrased or eliminated items we judged to be redundant, ambiguous, or poorly worded. Eleven items were retained because they were thought to best reflect the content domain by all three researchers. Five items measured internal attributions for abuse, three items assessed external attributions for abuse, and three items measured relational attributions for abuse. All were scored on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*).

Study 1 Results

The surviving items were pilot tested with a sample of undergraduate students from a large university in the Midwest and working professionals who had registered with Amazon's Mechanical Turk, a viable method of collecting data from a diverse sample of working employees for scale development purposes (e.g., Wallace & Chen, 2005; see also Behrend, Sharek, Meade, & Wiebe, 2011; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). Participants were told that the researchers were interested in developing a measure designed to understand how individuals interpret abusive behavior from their supervisor. They were asked to think of a time when they had experienced a supervisor (their current boss or a past one) acting abusively toward them and then to answer the questions indicating their perceived reasons (i.e., attributions) for that abusive behavior. The participants in this sample completed an on-line survey that measured their attributions for abuse, as well as various demographic variables. One hundred seventy participants volunteered to participate.

Several steps were taken to ensure the quality of the responses. To identify participants who might have responded carelessly to our survey items, we included one instructed response item ("When you get to this question, please answer 'Disagree'") and examined the time it took participants to complete the survey (Mason & Suri, 2012; Meade & Craig, 2012). We removed from our sample all individuals who answered the instructed response item incorrectly or took very little time (< 1 min) to complete the survey (Huang, Curran, Keeney, Poposki, & DeShon, 2012). Our final sample consisted of 104 individuals. It has been suggested that samples comprised of 100 to 200 respondents are adequate to assess pools with fewer than 20 items (Clark & Watson, 1995). In our sample, 57.7% of the respondents were female and the participants averaged 33.06 years of age ($SD = 11.44$). Comparing all of the initial participants to

our final sample, we found that the individuals dropped from the study for quality purposes did not differ in terms of gender ($t = -1.70$, *n.s.*) but tended to be younger ($M = 27.53$, $SD = 10.44$) than our final sample ($t = 3.23$, $p < .001$).

Because multiple attributions can occur together, they are likely correlated. Therefore, a principal-axis factor analysis with oblique (direct oblimin) rotation was conducted to assess the underlying structure of the 11 items. Principal-axis factoring is preferred over principal components analyses when survey developers aim to identify the number of latent factors underlying a construct and reduce the number of items in a measure (Netemeyer et al., 2003). The former factoring approach is also superior to the latter in that it yields solutions that more closely correspond to those produced by subsequent confirmatory factor analyses (Floyd & Widaman, 1995). Factor loadings, means, and standard deviations for the 11 items are presented in Table 1. Consistent with Eberly et al.'s (2011) conceptualization, we found support for a three-factor structure for internal, external, and relational attributions. The original solution yielded three factors that accounted for over 69 percent of the item variance. A three-factor solution fit the data well, in that all items significantly loaded on their assigned factor and did not significantly cross load (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Psychometric soundness was also demonstrated by values that exceed accepted statistical benchmarks in terms of item-to-total correlations (Bearden, Hardesty, & Rose, 2001) and reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Finally, inspection of the item standard deviations revealed that restriction of range was not a concern.

We averaged the items to form our measures of internal ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.23$, $\alpha = .84$), external ($M = 5.85$, $SD = .94$, $\alpha = .70$), and relational ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.52$, $\alpha = .90$) attributions. Only internal and relational attributions were significantly correlated ($r = .64$, $p < .001$), but the

strength of the relationship supported construct distinctiveness. Overall, these results suggest that (a) there is a three-factor attribution structure, (b) relational and internal attribution factors are correlated, and (c) external attributions for perceived abusive supervision are endorsed most strongly, followed by relational and internal attributions (as indicated by their means). In Study 2, we attempt to replicate the factor structure and examine relationships between attributions for perceived abuse and interactional justice, expressions of aggression, and citizenship behaviors.

Please insert Table 1 about here

Study 2 Method

Participants and Procedures

The Study 2 sample came from two sources: professional employees enrolled in an evening MBA program and individuals registered with Amazon's MTurk. We combined the samples as both were comprised of working adults and there were no significant differences between the samples in terms of work experience or ethnic background. We administered two on-line surveys separated by three weeks. Participants were told that the researchers were interested in factors that may cause a supervisor to become abusive. At this point, the participants were provided with a definition of abuse (as per Tepper, 2000) and responded to a "yes or no" question asking them if they currently work for a supervisor who they consider abusive (even if just a little bit). We then removed any participants who indicated they did not currently have an abusive supervisor or were unemployed. The first survey measured attributions for perceived abusive supervision and various demographic variables. The second survey assessed the outcome measures (i.e., interactional justice, aggression, citizenship). MBA participants earned extra credit for their participation and the participation of five people they asked to join

the study. MTurk participants were paid $.10 to complete the first survey, and those who did

were then offered $.50 to complete the second survey.

We received 377 responses to our first survey. Of these, 210 individuals (86.2% MTurk;

13.8% MBA) did not complete the second survey and therefore were used as a "holdout" sample

to replicate the factor structure of our measures of attributions for perceived abusive supervision.

Responses from the remaining 167 employees (56.9% MTurk; 43.1% MBA) who completed

both surveys were used for hypothesis testing. We utilized the four tests described by Goodman

and Blum (1996) to test for the presence of non-random sampling due to attrition and found that

attrition does not appear to affect the relationships among our study variables.

Holdout Sample

In the holdout sample, employees averaged 31.70 (SD = 10.49) years of age, 12.91 (SD =

10.32) years of work experience, and 4.79 (SD = 5.24) years with their current organization. In

addition, 50.7% of the respondents were female, 46.1% had an undergraduate degree or higher,

33.5% worked in the business or science industries, 14.6% worked in sales, and 4.4% worked in

healthcare. Approximately 66% of the respondents indicated they were Caucasian, while 13.2%

indicated they were African-American, 13.2% Asian, and 7.3% Latino/Hispanic.

To further test the factor structure of our attributions measures, we subjected the items to

a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results of the CFA demonstrated that one of the items

for internal attributions for perceived abuse (i.e., "The cause of my supervisor's behavior has to

do with something about me") did not load with the other internal attribution items, but rather

was attempting to load with the relational attribution items (NFI = .91, CFI = .93, SRMR = .08,

RMSEA = .11). Removing this item from the CFA improved model fit (NFI = .96, CFI = .98,

SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .07), and all items loaded on the appropriate factor (all loadings > .69).

We then compared a one-factor and various two-factor models to the expected three-factor solution. Neither the one-factor model (NFI = .57, CFI = .59, SRMR = .18, RMSEA = .28) nor the various two-factor models fit the data well, and all alternative models provided a significantly worse fit ($p < .05$) than the three-factor solution (see top half of Table 2).

Accordingly, we formed our three composite measures by averaging the items for internal ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.60$, $\alpha = .91$), external ($M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.26$, $\alpha = .79$), and relational ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.70$, $\alpha = .92$) attributions. As in Study 1, internal and relational attributions were positively correlated ($r = .54$, $p < .001$). In addition, external attributions were significantly correlated with internal attributions ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$). Relational and external attributions for abuse were not related ($r = .10$, $n.s.$). Consistent with Study 1, external attributions for abusive supervision were endorsed most strongly, followed by relational and then internal attributions. Together these results help establish the discriminant and convergent validity of our measures (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), and they replicate the findings from Study 1 that individuals can make distinct internal, external, and relational attributions for perceived abusive supervision.

Please insert Table 2 about here

Final Sample

As stated, 167 full-time employed individuals completed both of our surveys. Of these, 55.4% were female, they averaged 34.63 ($SD = 10.71$) years of age, 15.99 ($SD = 10.62$) years of work experience, and 4.69 ($SD = 4.66$) years with their current organization. Approximately 61% of the sample had an undergraduate degree or higher, while approximately 34% worked in the

business or science fields. Eighty-three percent of the final sample indicated they were Caucasian, while 9% indicated they were African-American, 6% Asian, and 1.8% Latino/Hispanic.

Measures

      Attributions for perceived abuse. Based on Study 1 results and the CFA results from the holdout sample, we formed our attributions measures with four items designed to measure internal, three items designed to measure external, and three items designed to measure relational attributions. The items for each subscale were averaged to form composite measures of internal ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.26$, $\alpha = .87$), external ($M = 5.28$, $SD = 1.61$, $\alpha = .86$), and relational ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.67$, $\alpha = .93$) attributions for perceived abusive supervision.

      Interactional justice. We examined participants' perceptions of interactional justice with six items (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) from Moorman (1991) designed to measure the interpersonal aspect of interactional justice. Sample items include "Your supervisor treats you with kindness and consideration" and "Your supervisor shows concern for your rights as an employee." The six items were averaged to form our composite measure so that high scores indicate high levels of interactional justice ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.66$, $\alpha = .94$).

      Aggression. Participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which they engaged in a list of nine behaviors at work (1 = *never*; 7 = *quite frequently*) during the past six months. These items were designed to measure both direct and indirect aggression at one's supervisor (Jawahar, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Sample items include "I act in a condescending way toward my supervisor" (direct aggression; 4 items) and "I belittle my supervisor's opinion to others" (indirect aggression; 5 items). Items were averaged so that high scores reflect higher levels of direct ($M = 1.58$, $SD = .76$, $\alpha = .71$) and indirect ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.11$, $\alpha = .79$) aggression.

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Participants indicated the degree to which they engaged in OCBs directed at their supervisor over the past six months with eight items (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*) modified from Moorman and Blakely (1995). Sample items include "Taken time to listen to my supervisor's problems and worries" and "Shown concern and courtesy toward my supervisor, even under the most trying business situations." The items for the scale were averaged to form our composite measure of supervisor-directed citizenship ($M = 4.84$, $SD = 1.24$, $\alpha = .91$).

Control variables. We controlled for employees' level of negative affectivity (NA), gender, and tenure with their supervisor to help rule out alternative explanations for our findings. Because NA can influence a person's perceptions of abusive supervision (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Bowling & Beehr, 2006) and aggressive behavior in the workplace (Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluk, 1999), employees were asked to respond to ten items (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) designed to measure their general level of negative affectivity. We created a composite measure by averaging the items ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.06$, $\alpha = .91$). We also controlled for gender because past research has demonstrated that men and women have different propensities for aggression (Bettencourt & Miller, 1996) and different preferences for the type of aggression they engage in at work (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Lagerspetz, 1994). Finally, we controlled for employee-supervisor relationship tenure because previous research has shown it to be associated with citizenship and aggressive behavior (e.g., Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998).

Study 2 Results

All means, standard deviations, and correlations for the Study 2 variables are reported in Table 3. To assess the fit of the overall measurement model, we conducted CFA. Given the ratio of estimated parameters to our sample size, we used parceling to produce more stable estimates

of the proposed measurement-level parameters (Landis, Beal, & Tesluk, 2000; Little, Cunningham,

Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). Parcels were created for any construct with more than four items by

averaging the highest and lowest loading items across the parcel (i.e., the single-factor method;

Landis et al., 2000). Results indicated the seven-factor measurement model (3 attributions,

justice, OCB, direct and indirect aggression) fit the data (NFI = .89, CFI = .96, SRMR = .06,

RMSEA = .06).

Please insert Table 3 about here

To confirm the factor structure of the three attributions variables demonstrated in Study 1

and the Study 2 holdout sample, we again estimated a measurement model containing these

items in the final sample. Further supporting their distinctiveness, CFA results indicated a three-

factor solution fit the data (NFI = .94, CFI = .96, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .09) and demonstrated

a superior fit ($p < .05$) than alternative models where internal, external, and relational attributions

were variously combined (see bottom half of Table 2).

Our hypotheses concerned the relationships of internal, external, and relational

attributions for perceived supervisor abuse with perceptions of justice, workplace aggression,

and OCB. Because individuals can make multiple attributions for abuse (Martinko, 2004), we

tested our mediation hypotheses with an SPSS macro (Hayes & Preacher, 2011) that allows for

the effects of multiple independent variables to be estimated simultaneously. Whereas testing

each attribution independently may provide an inaccurate or incomplete depiction of individuals'

attributional responses to perceived abusive supervision, in the analyses that follow, the effects

of each attribution can be interpreted as unique contributions when controlling for the others.

The macro also estimates the indirect (i.e., mediated) effects of each attribution on the dependent variables as transmitted through perceptions of interactional justice. It does so by creating bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals derived from 1,000 bootstrapped samples. This bootstrapping approach has been shown to be superior to other forms of mediation testing (e.g., Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Hypothesis 1 proposed that the internal, external, and relational attributions individuals make for perceived abusive supervision would be related to their perceptions of interactional justice. Controlling for gender, tenure with supervisor, and negative affectivity, our results provide partial support for Hypothesis 1. As seen in Table 4 and Figure 2, both internal (b = .23, t = 2.04, p < .05) and external (b = -.39, t = -4.99, p < .001) attributions were significantly related to perceptions of interactional justice (when controlling for the other respective attributions). Relational attributions were not significantly related to interactional justice perceptions (b = -.03, t = -.37, $n.s.$). These results support Hypotheses 1a and 1b but not 1c.

To further assess the relationships between abuse attributions and interactional justice, we also conducted relative weight analysis (Tonidandel, LeBreton, & Johnson, 2009) to compare the relative strengths of internal, external, and relational attributions in predicting interactional justice perceptions. This analysis indicates "the contribution each predictor makes to the total predicted criterion variance when a predictor is considered by itself and in combination with other predictors" (LeBreton & Tonidandel, 2008, p. 330). It also determines whether one type of attribution (e.g., external) contributes more to the prediction of interactional justice perceptions than another type (e.g., internal or relational). We deemed this test important in the present study for theoretical and empirical reasons—namely, because attributions can co-occur (Martinko,

2004) and because data from both of our studies show that the three attribution types are variously correlated. Moreover, this technique allows us to test Hypothesis 1d.

The epsilon statistic (denoted ε) was calculated by transforming the original (correlated) predictors into uncorrelated principal components and subsequently regressing the outcome on these orthogonal components. The resulting statistic provides an index of the proportionate contribution each predictor makes to total variance explained, providing a metric analogous to relative effect size. Extensive research by LeBreton and colleagues (e.g., LeBreton, Ployhart, & Ladd, 2004; LeBreton & Tonidandel, 2008) suggests relative weights analysis is a superior technique for evaluating the relative importance of correlated predictors. We computed epsilon statistics with an SPSS macro developed by Johnson (2000).

Results revealed that of the 19% of variance in interactional justice explained by the three attributions, a majority (87.7%, $\varepsilon = .16$) was accounted for by external attributions, whereas relatively less was explained by internal (9.3%, $\varepsilon = .02$) and relational (3.0%, $\varepsilon = .01$) attributions. Although the latter two attributions explained significantly less variance in interactional justice than did external attributions, all three values were nontrivial (95% bias-corrected confidence intervals around the relative weights excluded zero for all three attributions). Overall, however, these analyses indicated that, when considered relative to one another, only external attributions contribute substantially to the explanation of interactional justice perceptions. These results support Hypothesis 1d.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 posited, respectively, that interactional justice would mediate the relationship between employees' attributions for perceived abusive supervision and their aggressive and citizenship behaviors. In partial support of Hypotheses 2 and 3, both internal and external attributions exhibited indirect relationships with indirect aggression and supervisor-

directed OCB. External attributions were also indirectly related to direct aggression through perceptions of interactional justice. These results, reported at the bottom of Figure 2, indicate that external attributions for perceived abusive supervision were negatively related to perceptions of justice; in turn, lower levels of justice were associated with greater levels of direct and indirect aggression against the supervisor and lower levels of OCBs directed at the supervisor. On the other hand, internal attributions for perceived abusive supervision were positively related to perceptions of justice, which in turn were associated with fewer acts of indirect aggression and more acts of supervisor-directed OCB.

Please insert Table 4 and Figure 2 about here

General Discussion

Consistent with recent theorizing on attributional processes, we anticipated and found that subordinates can develop internal, external, and relational attributions in connection with their perceptions of abusive supervision. Beyond establishing three distinct attributions for perceived abusive supervision, we tested whether these attributions are indirectly associated with employee acts of aggression and citizenship through their relationship with perceptions of interactional justice. Results demonstrated that internal attributions were positively and external attributions were negatively related to interactional justice perceptions, which in turn were positively associated with citizenship behaviors and negatively associated with direct and indirect expressions of aggression. Although relational attributions represent a distinct locus of causality, contrary to our expectations, they were not related to justice perceptions, aggression, or

citizenship. Among the three attributions, external attributions had the largest relative influence on employees' fairness judgments and behaviors.

Our study makes a number of specific contributions. First, whereas research has suggested that external attributions can produce strong reactions to perceived supervisor abuse (e.g., Bowling & Michel, 2011; Breaux et al., 2010), our study is the first to show that internal attributions are also associated with justice perceptions, as well as aggressive and non-aggressive (i.e., OCB) behavioral responses to perceived abusive supervision. Second, we extend prior theory and research by demonstrating that attributions for perceived abusive supervision can be diverse and differentially related to employee behavior. Our study shows that both internal and external attributions for abusive supervision perceptions are associated with different behavioral responses. Specifically, we found that internal attributions for perceived abusive supervision positively related to justice perceptions, which, in turn, were related to less aggressive responses and increased OCB. This finding suggests the more likely employees are to view a supervisor's perceived abusive behavior as being caused or brought on by their own actions, the more likely those employees may consider (perceived) abusive supervision fair. In contrast, our results demonstrated that external attributions for perceived abuse were negatively related to justice perceptions which, in turn, were related to increased aggression and decreased OCB. These results are consistent with the theoretical notions advanced by Eberly and colleagues (2011) and others (e.g., Martinko & Zellars, 1998), suggesting that aggression is more likely when individuals make external attributions. A third contribution of our study stems from the development and validation of new measures of internal, external, and relational attributions for perceived abusive supervision, as both Eberly et al. (2011) and Martinko, Douglas, and Harvey (2006) have indicated a need for validated measures of attribution processes.

Practical Implications and Future Research Directions

Our findings have important practical implications for managers and organizations. In this study, we offered evidence that individuals can make internal, external, and relational attributions for perceived abusive supervision and that these attributions are associated with individuals' psychological and behavioral responses to abuse perceptions. Regardless of what attributions employees make regarding their perceptions of abusive supervision, responsibility for shielding employees from abuse ultimately lies with the employing organization. Given the central role perceptions of interactional justice play in transmitting the effects of employee attributions, one way organizations might foster positive subordinate-supervisor relations is through justice training (Greenberg, 2006). Training supervisors to treat subordinates with respect and to be candid in their communications with them can enhance employees' perceptions of interactional justice. Enhanced fairness perceptions, in turn, may facilitate increases in citizenship behavior and reductions in aggression. Our results suggest that such training efforts might be further improved by discussing the role employees' cognitions (viz., attributions) play in shaping their interactional justice perceptions. Along these lines, Breaux et al. (2010) suggest "managers should be informed as to how their employees come to believe that they have been treated unfairly" (p. 89).

Of course, a leader's attributions are a relevant consideration as well (Martinko, Moss, Douglas, & Borkowski, 2007). For example, relationship coaching may be especially important when the supervisor's and subordinate's attributions are at odds. To illustrate, consider a subordinate experiencing performance problems. Recent research indicates this employee may perceive supervisory abuse due to the poor performance (Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011). Suppose the subordinate attributes perceived abuse to the supervisor's poor instruction and

antagonistic disposition, while the supervisor considers the behavior was prompted (and perhaps justified) by the subordinate's lack of effort. Such discrepancies about the underlying cause for perceived abusive supervision could aggravate or add further tension to an already strained relationship. Interpersonal trust is another critical feature of dyadic relationships, and so future studies might build on research examining the trust repair process and assess trust as an alternative mechanism through which causal attributions for perceived supervisory abuse relate to employees' aggressive and citizenship behaviors (e.g., Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009).

In addition, future research might examine individual difference variables that could affect the relationships proposed in this study. For example, research has found that hostile attribution bias (e.g., Aquino, Douglas, & Martinko, 2004; Douglas & Martinko, 2001; Martinko et al., 2011) influences perceptions of victimization, anger, and aggression. Employees with high levels of hostile attribution bias may, for instance, be more likely than those with lower hostile attribution bias levels to perceive external attributions for abuse and to react more strongly to them. In this sense, hostile attribution bias may be a relevant antecedent to or moderator of the relationships examined here. Employees' attributional styles (i.e., tendencies to make similar attributions across situations; Martinko et al., 2007) could also interact to influence the relationships discussed in our studies. For instance, Martinko et al. (2011) found that a tendency toward stable attributions exacerbates the relationship between externally based attribution styles and perceptions of abusive supervision. Thus, future research exploring differences among individuals with more optimistic or pessimistic attribution styles could provide a more nuanced view into employees' perceptions of and reactions to attributions for abusive supervision.

Finally, contrary to our theory-based expectations, our results indicated that relational attributions were unrelated to justice perceptions and behaviors. Relational attributions

accounted for a small proportion of variance in justice perceptions and behaviors, perhaps

because apportioning responsibility for perceived abuse (between oneself, the supervisor, and the

relationship) is too cognitively taxing or otherwise muddled with ambiguity. Nevertheless, there

are several reasons why relational attributions deserve further attention in future research.

Although our results showed that relational attributions were unrelated to the employee

behaviors measured in this study, additional research investigating a wider range of proposed

consequences may yield more promising results. As suggested by an anonymous reviewer, future

studies might explore more thoroughly conditions under which employees' attributions for

perceived abuse give rise to direct, indirect, and other forms of aggression (Hershcovis &

Barling, 2010). Researchers interested in leader-follower dynamics might also explore relational

attributions in connection with more positive leadership styles, such as charismatic, authentic, or

ethical leadership (see, e.g., Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Martinko et al., 2007). Prior to

these efforts, it would be useful to establish something of a "baseline" for relational attributions,

perhaps by examining their overall frequency and strength compared to or combined with

internal and external attributions (as suggested by Eberly et al., 2011). As our study is among the

few to explore relational attributions empirically, we encourage other researchers to further

investigate relational attributions for perceived abuse and their potential antecedents and

consequences.

Study Limitations

A few study limitations merit further discussion. First, our cross-sectional data preclude

inferences of causality and can give rise to common method variance (CMV; Podsakoff,

MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). To reduce the likelihood of CMV, we employed several

recommended strategies. We sampled a broad and diverse group of employees across a range of

industries and occupations, and we temporally separated the measurement of independent and dependent variables. Because measurement of the predictor and outcome variables was separated by only a few weeks, however, future researchers might examine these relationships with a longer time lag to give more confidence in their causal nature. We also took several precautions to preserve the validity of our data. Specifically, we adopted suggested techniques to identify potentially careless responders (Meade & Craig, 2012). We also used methodological separation (through the use of different response scales) to minimize the potential for bias in the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Moreover, recent meta-analytic evidence (Berry, Carpenter, & Barratt, 2012; Ilies, Fulmer, Spitzmuller, & Johnson, 2009) shows self-report measures of OCB and aggression are viable alternatives to other-reported measures of these constructs. Nonetheless, a multisource approach might capture more incidents of citizenship and aggression and reduce concerns about common source variance.

Another concern is that the methods we used may have cued respondents to make (viz., relational) attributions they might not have otherwise considered. After all, survey instruments not only elicit information from respondents but provide it to them (Schwarz, 1999). Although this limitation is common to nearly all self-reported measures (see Spector, 2006), Weiner (1985b) urged attribution researchers to consider the reactivity of their procedures before inferring that participants' attributional thinking occurs spontaneously. In reality, it may be that relational attributions are quite uncommon. Thus, we echo Edwards's (2008) recommendation to improve understanding of respondents' thought processes (i.e., comprehension, retrieval, judgment, response; Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988) when generating responses to our relational attributions measure. Employing a specific-incident approach (see, e.g., Glomb, 2002) or alternative methodologies (e.g., indirect measurement; Weiner, 1985b) may better determine

whether and under what conditions relational attributions spontaneously emerge. We suggest future researchers undertake such efforts to further validate the theoretical and practical importance of relational attributions.

An issue that may provide rich opportunities for future research concerns other types of attributions individuals could make for perceptions of abusive supervision. Although we noted at the outset that our focus was based on Eberly et al.'s (2011) tripartite conceptualization of internal, external, and relational attributions, it is possible that employees attribute causes for supervisor abuse perceptions to parties other than those considered here. For example, to the extent that individuals hold an organization responsible for allowing abusive supervision to occur, individuals may deem the organization responsible for the misconduct of its members (Eisenberger et al., 2010). Given Breaux et al.'s (2010) findings that organization-based attributions can be linked to important employee outcomes, additional explorations of other loci of causality appear worthwhile.

According to Martinko and Thomson's (1998) and Kelley's (1967) models, only consensus information affects whether an attribution is internal or external; the other dimensions and forms of information help to identify the nature of the cause. Because our measures relate only to the locus of causality dimension, they do not incorporate these other aspects. As such, our study examines internal, external, and relational attributions in a more general sense. As locus of causality has been the dominant subject of prior research on abuse attributions (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010), future researchers might consider assessing the stability and globality dimensions (as suggested more broadly by Martinko et al., 2007). Exploring their role in connection with attributions for perceived supervisory abuse may expand our understanding of these attributions and their associated consequences.

Conclusion

Despite potential limitations, the current study extends theory and research by offering evidence to suggest that individuals may make distinct internal, external, and relational attributions for perceived abusive supervisory behaviors; that internal and external attributions are related to perceptions of justice; and that these justice perceptions, in turn, are associated with positive and negative employee behaviors. With a better understanding of how employees develop multiple abuse attributions and react to them, we hope the present research aids future efforts in this promising line of inquiry.

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Table 1: Factor Structure of Attributions for Abuse (Study 1)[a]

	Internal Attributions	External Attributions	Relational Attributions	Item Mean	Item SD
1. *The cause of my supervisor's behavior has to do with something about me.**	.66			3.42	1.63
2. The source of my supervisor's behavior reflects something about me.	.79			3.13	1.75
3. I need to look in the mirror to examine why my supervisor treats me the way he/she does.	.70			2.93	1.61
4. I probably provoked my supervisor to act the way he/she does.	.65			2.63	1.63
5. I am at fault for the way my supervisor treats me at work.	.68			2.27	1.23
6. My supervisor chooses to act the way he/she does.		.59		5.87	1.14
7. My supervisor's behavior is due to something about him/her (e.g., the type of person he/she is).		.82		5.85	1.24
8. The cause of the supervisor's behavior is something controllable by the supervisor.		.56		5.83	1.20
9. The cause of my supervisor's behavior is a result of the relationship we have.			.63	3.13	1.69
10. The relationship I have with my supervisor is one of the reason he/she acts the way he/she does toward me.			.80	3.30	1.65
11. My supervisor's behavior toward me is due, in part, to the relationship we have.			.95	3.46	1.67

[a] Principal axis factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation
*Dropped from final measure based on Study 2 CFA results.

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analyses (Study 2)

Model	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	df	NFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Holdout Sample							
1. 3-factor expected model	60.93	--	32	.96	.98	.07	.05
2. 2-factor model: IA and EA combined	253.30	192.37*	34	.82	.84	.18	.15
3. 2-factor model: IA and RA combined	427.07	366.14*	34	.70	.72	.24	.13
4. 2-factor model: EA and RA combined	260.12	199.19*	34	.82	.84	.18	.16
5. 1-factor model: IA, EA, and RA combined	610.51	549.58*	35	.57	.59	.28	.18
Final Sample							
1. 3-factor expected model	72.34	--	32	.94	.96	.09	.06
2. 2-factor model: IA and EA combined	311.44	239.10*	34	.73	.75	.22	.18
3. 2-factor model: IA and RA combined	299.48	227.14*	34	.74	.76	.22	.13
4. 2-factor model: EA and RA combined	288.05	215.71*	34	.75	.77	.21	.15
5. 1-factor model: IA, EA, and RA combined	514.33	441.99*	35	.55	.57	.29	.19

Note. In both samples, model 1 includes internal attributions (IA), external attributions (EA), and relational attributions (RA). * $p < .05$

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations (Study 2 – Final Sample)[a, b]

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Internal Attributions	2.32	1.26	(.87)								
2. External Attributions	5.28	1.61	.11	(.86)							
3. Relational Attributions	3.13	1.67	.56***	.27***	(.93)						
4. Indirect Aggression	2.37	1.11	-.05	.11	.08	(.79)					
5. Direct Aggression	1.58	.76	.14	.06	.13	.56***	(.71)				
6. OCBs – Supervisor	4.84	1.24	.01	-.18*	-.11	-.26***	-.25***	(.91)			
7. Interactional Justice	4.06	1.66	.11	-.40***	-.05	-.33***	-.20**	.48***	(.94)		
8. Negative Affectivity	2.34	1.06	.04	.11	.09	.08	.15	-.11	-.12	(.91)	
9. Tenure with Supervisor	3.01	3.54	-.12	-.13	-.06	.05	.01	.09	.08	-.02	
10. Gender	- -	- -	.08	-.17*	.08	-.08	.08	.05	.17*	-.14	-.09

[a] *p < .05, **p < .01, *** p < .001 (two-tailed)
[b] Numbers in parentheses are coefficient alpha.

Table 4: Direct Effects of Attributions for Abuse[a]

	Interactional Justice	Indirect Aggression	Direct Aggression	OCB-Supervisor
Gender	.32	-.06	.18	-.06
Tenure with supervisor	.02	.02	.01	.02
Negative affectivity	-.08	.03	.09	-.06
Internal attributions	.23*	-.06	.08	.03
External attributions	-.39***	-.04	-.02	.04
Relational attributions	-.03	.08	.01	-.08
Interactional justice	--	-.23***	-.11**	.35***
Total R^2	.20***	.13**	.09*	.23***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

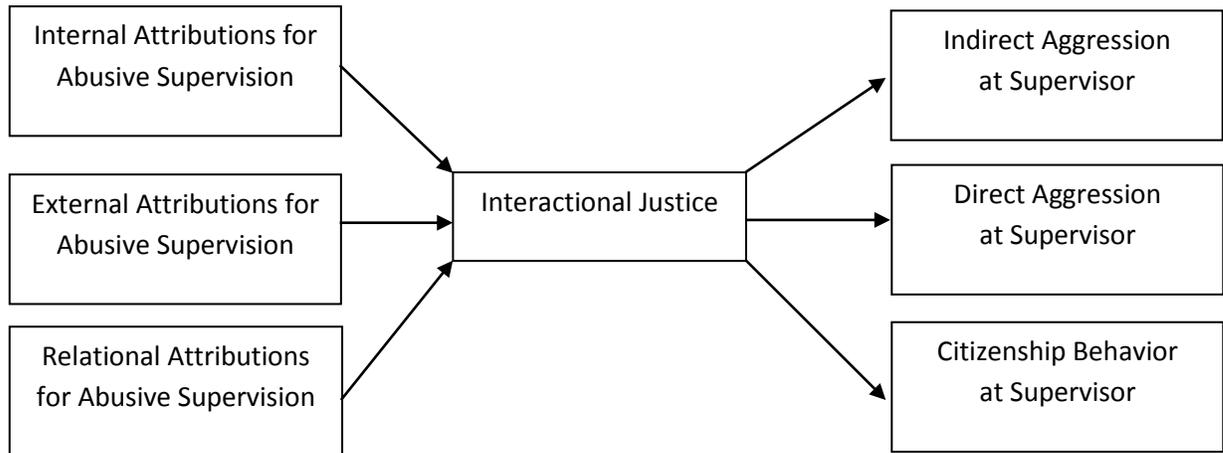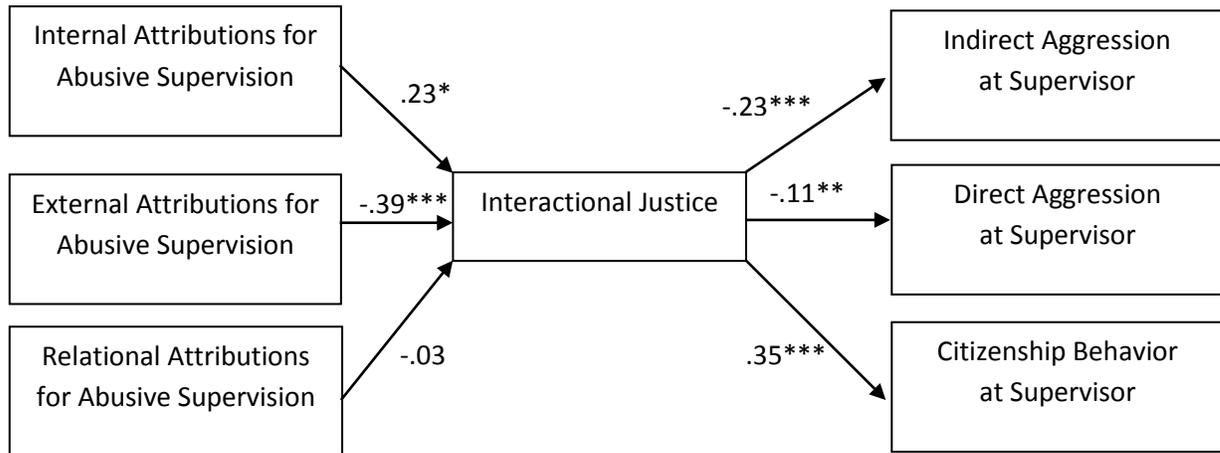[a] Direct effects are unstandardized coefficient estimates from the final regression equations.

Figure 1: Hypothesized Model

Figure 2: Mediation Test (Study 2 – Final Sample)[a]

	Indirect Effects of Attributions through Interactional Justice		
	Internal Attributions	External Attributions	Relational Attributions
Indirect Aggression	-.05*	.09*	.01
Direct Aggression	-.03	.04*	.00
OCBs – Supervisor	.08*	-.14*	-.01

[a] Indirect effects were tested for significance using 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals from 1,000 bootstrap estimates.