OULU BUSINESS SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY OF OULU

Teemu Tyni

THE IMPACT OF ABUSIVE SUPERVISION ON WORKPLACE DEVIANCE FROM AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Bachelor's Thesis

Bachelor of Science in Economics and Business Administration

April 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

1   INTRODUCTION

This thesis will focus on the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance. The purpose of this thesis is to study the issue from an organizational point of view.

1.1   Introduction to the topic & motivation

Since the beginning of times, the concept of hierarchy has been a part of the human society, and it still remains strongly intact to this day, even if the key defining elements of the concept have gone through changes. Nowadays, the concept lies deeply integrated into organizations rather than the society. One thing that has not changed however, is the natural thirst of power that affects some of us more than the others. As the society is increasingly more civilized, the misuse of power is often better hidden from the public, but it very much still exists. In fact, actions from supervisors leading to damaging workplace behavior in the subordinates are increasing at a dangerous pace (Peterson, 2002).

The relationship between the two given subjects is ever so relevant nowadays, as while leadership and management techniques are constantly evolving, key negative factors for organizations' performance still linger to this day, relatively unchanged. As the people are growing to be more self-aware, and though politics and technology have evolved, abusive supervision still persists. The reason, why I think researching this topic is very important for our society, is that the relationship between the said two factors hinders organizations' productivity and performance, which, in turn, leads to financial and reputational losses for the organization, and through those terms, it impacts the society as a whole (Malik & Goel, 2021). Thefts alone cost businesses based in the United States 50 billion USD every year and cyberattacks influenced possibly by subordinates impacted by abusive supervision cost 200,000 USD on average, with 60% of organizations filing for bankruptcy within half a year of being victimized (Elaine, 2017; Steinberg, 2019).

The inspiration for this topic came purely from personal interests as the researcher considered interpersonal communication to be a vital part of organizations'

functionality. The topic blends well the field of psychology into the field of management, both of which were found to be interesting. The concept of abusive supervision is a relevant topic as it is spread widely across organizations, and it has a feasible amount of scientific research material available for further analysis. Researching this topic is also beneficial, if one is to utilize the knowledge learned from this study for possible future career opportunities.

1.2   Research method

The purpose of this thesis is to carry out a qualitative literature review in the form of a narrative overview on how the misuse of power and leadership in an organization can lead to the spread of maliciousness towards the said organization among the subordinates. The reason for choosing the narrative literature review for this thesis' research method, is because with the usage of this method, past research on the subject can be utilized to find answers to the research questions defined and to form an overview of the subject (Salminen, 2011). Data-driven analysis is often talked about in qualitative research, which means constructing a theory from empirical data from the bottom up and limiting the said data so that it can be analyzed in a significant way (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998).

The overview features peer-reviewed scientific articles from various databases, such as Oula-Finna, ProQuest and EBSCO, in an attempt to portray a clear image of the issue. Research data previously published will also be utilized and scientific articles are reviewed using Julkaisufoorumi to determine the JUFO-rating of the issues the articles are published from, to ensure validity and credibility in this thesis. As the source material has not been systematically limited or formed as per the research method in question, it is important for the credibility of this thesis, that a more in-depth look of the information acquisition process is given in the third chapter (Salminen, 2011).

1.3   Research questions

The aim of this thesis is to shed more light on this topic and to organize a solid basis from relevant information from various sources and data. This basis could then be used

to research the topic further and to find new perspectives. To help form the purpose of this thesis, a main research question will be formed:

How does abusive supervision cause workplace deviance?

Two supporting research questions are also formed. The aim for the supporting research questions is to view the issue from an organizational perspective, as both of the essential terms this thesis is carried out by relate to organizations, making it feasible to view this topic from a slightly different angle. The supporting research questions are as follows:

1. What are the effects of abusive supervision and workplace deviance for organizations?

2. How can a supervisor-subordinate relationship be improved?

1.4   Structure of the thesis

The purpose of the first chapter is to introduce the topic and the research question(s) and walk the reader through the structure of the thesis. In the second chapter, main theoretical elements and key concepts of this thesis are presented, on which this thesis' analysis will be based on. The third chapter features an overview of the research material, where the scientific importance of the source literature is reviewed. In the fourth chapter, a deeper analysis based on the findings of the second chapter will be presented. Lastly, the theoretical contribution of this thesis is evaluated and answers to the research questions are brought out along with the limitations of this thesis and further research suggestions.

2 THEORETICAL CONTEMPLATIONS

In this chapter, essential theoretical elements for this thesis are defined along with the theoretical frameworks this thesis is based on. Each theoretical element introduced in this chapter will provide a different perspective on the subject. The aim is to study the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance from multiple angles to paint a clear image of the issue.

2.1 Key Concepts

As this thesis' main objective is to study the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance, it is feasible to first introduce the two factors separately before diving deeper into the research.

2.1.1 Abusive supervision

Abusive supervision can be characterized as a sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors excluding physical contact by supervisors aimed at their subordinates—a supervisor takes his frustration out on their subordinates by exploding at them, this would not be considered as abusive behavior, unless such behavior became a consisting act of the supervisor (Tepper, 2000, p. 178; Tepper, 2007). The abuse endured by the subordinates is a subjective assessment made from the basis of their experiences of their supervisors' behavior that can be altered by personality traits from both parties and of the context in which the assessment is made (Tepper, 2007). Trait activation theory, as proposed by Tett and Guterman (2000), suggests that subordinates' individual personality traits may affect their reactions to perceived abusive supervision. In order to activate a certain personality trait, situations have to provide cues that are trait-relevant (Tett & Guterman, 2000). Trait-relevant cues can come from various sources or levels: social, task and organizational (Tett & Burnett, 2003).

Using Tepper's (2000) 5-point likert-like scale, abusive supervision can be measured. Respondents in the study answer with frequency to 15 behavioral questions using a response scale that is as follows: 1, "I cannot remember him/her ever using this

behavior with me"; 2, "He/she has used this behavior very rarely with me"; 3, "He/she has used this behavior with me occasionally"; 4, "He/she has used this behavior somewhat often with me"; 5, "He/she has used this behavior repeatedly with me" (Tepper, 2000, p. 182). Some of the sample items used in the study are "My supervisor belittles my thoughts and feelings" and "My supervisor makes me look ridiculous" (Pradhan & Jena, 2019).
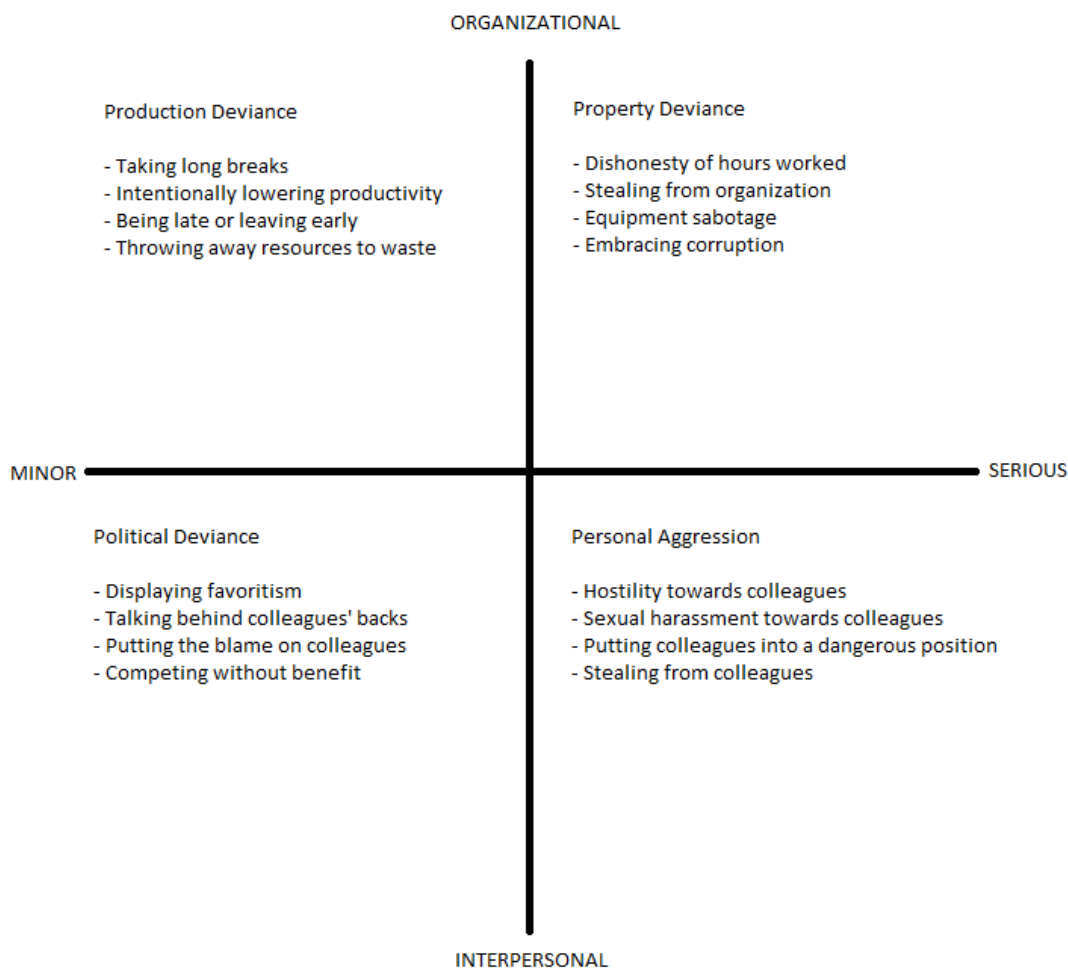
Abusive supervision can be seen as problematic for organizations both financially and socially, as it is linked to various indicators of psychological distress, such as reduced performance, absenteeism, and turnover (Tepper, 2000). For clarification, turnover in this case means the rate at which employees are replaced by new people after leaving a company. Abusive supervisory behavior is not only linked to harming the target of the abuse, but also the collateral damage to organizations, that comes along with it (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). The information gathered from the sources cited above implicate that abusive supervision is largely determined by a set of pre-existing criteria, such as consistency of the abuse and specific conditions that are often work-related. The subjectivity (Tepper, 2007) of abusive supervision helps to explain the ambiguity of the term, as every person is subject to experience abuse in a different way.

Spector (2011) sees abusive supervision being one form of counter-productive work behavior and presents a model in which traits such as anger, narcissism and negative affectivity impact the outset of counter-productive work behavior. Tepper (2007) hypothesizes that a history of aggressive behaviors and narcissism companied by low agreeableness could be linked with abusive supervision; a claim confirmed by O'Boyle & al., (2012), as research found out that all aforementioned behavioral traits are associated with counter-productive work behavior. Adding to this, Mathieu and Babiak (2016) suggest, that an individual with psychopathic personality traits is an antecedent of abusive supervision, and behaviors of abusive supervision could be expressions of hidden aggression in the workplace.

2.1.2   Workplace deviance

Robinson and Bennett (1995) define workplace deviance as acts of choice to undermine the organization's interests that are a threat for the organization's well-being. There are various examples of these acts, such as equipment theft, taking long breaks, verbal abuse, and gossip as shown in Figure 1.

ORGANIZATIONAL

Production Deviance

- Taking long breaks
- Intentionally lowering productivity
- Being late or leaving early
- Throwing away resources to waste

Property Deviance

- Dishonesty of hours worked
- Stealing from organization
- Equipment sabotage
- Embracing corruption

MINOR ————————————————————————————— SERIOUS

Political Deviance

- Displaying favoritism
- Talking behind colleagues' backs
- Putting the blame on colleagues
- Competing without benefit

Personal Aggression

- Hostility towards colleagues
- Sexual harassment towards colleagues
- Putting colleagues into a dangerous position
- Stealing from colleagues

INTERPERSONAL

Figure 1. Typology of Deviant Workplace Behavior (adapted from Robinson & Bennett, 1995:565).

Therefore, minor breakings of social norms, such as wearing a wrongly styled suit to the office, are excluded from the definition of the term, as they are not deemed to be harmful towards most organizations (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

This deviant behavior stems from experiences of interpersonal injustice and how the employees evaluate themselves (Ferris & al., 2012). The subjective self-esteem of the employees can have a crucial role in the forming of workplace deviance, especially when an employee has experienced interpersonal injustice, such as abuse or demeaning of their work in their organization.

Deviant organizational behaviors can be often categorized into two sub-groups: organizational deviance, where the deviance is directed towards supervisors and the corresponding organization, and interpersonal deviance, where the deviance is aimed towards other members of the organization, such as co-workers (Pradhan & Jena, 2019). These organizational deviant behaviors can be in the form of stealing, being late on purpose and unethically clocking in a false amount of hours, and interpersonal deviance can be seen as harassment, sexual abuse, or verbal abuse intented to be towards individuals, such as co-workers (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007).

2.2   Theoretical framework

This thesis' theoretical framework will be constructed of three main elements: Self-determination theory and basic need satisfaction, the distance of power in supervisor – subordinate relationships and status-linked social identities. The theoretical framework's purpose is to give this thesis clear boundaries and a solid foundation of which to build upon.

The three elements have been chosen, as each of them have a strong relation to the subject of this thesis. By combining results found using the said elements later on, a sufficiently broad answer to the main research question and the supporting research questions can be given.

2.3   Self-determination theory and basic need satisfaction

Self-determination theory, as defined by Deci & Ryan (2017) bases its analysis on different types of motivation ranging from controlled to autonomous, and one of its main concerns is how social constructs thwart or support people's success through the satisfaction of their basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and

competence. According to the theory, only those elements whose absence negatively impacts one's well-being and psychological functioning should be considered basic psychological needs (Ryan, 1995). From this point of view, there should be no variance in basic psychological needs as they should be innate and universally satisfied for all individuals to succeed, much like how plants and vegetation need key nutrients to grow healthy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Based on a perspective of self-determination theory, the negative effects of abusive supervision on workplace deviance lie in the supervisor's ability to threaten the fundamental psychological needs of the subordinate, as an individual's sense of competence can be negatively affected by being belittled, doubted of their abilities, or undermining their achievements (Lian & al., 2012).

There are a lot of intertwining similarities between abusive supervision and workplace deviance, as the aggression is often directed to the other party in the supervisor-subordinate relationship. In a way, they create a rolling snowball effect when both sides antagonize each other. It is a never-ending cycle, as the root of workplace deviance stems from the abuse a subordinate has suffered, and the malicious intent of the supervisor may be originated from poorly behaving subordinates. In other words, work-related negative matters mediate the relationship of abusive supervision and workplace deviance as suggested by Michel, Newness & Duniewicz (2016). As an example, subordinates who are more aggressive by nature or maintain higher aggressive organizational norms should direct more aggression to the source of abuse (Bowling & Michel, 2011), compared to subordinates who are less aggressive, who may direct their negative emotions caused by abuse toward other personnel, who may or may not be a part of the organization, such as family (Restubog & al., 2011). If the subordinates are wary of further retaliation by the abusive supervisor, it is possible subordinates act deviantly toward their organization instead (Lian & al., 2012). Even more so, as supervisors are essentially agents of the organization, subordinates may put the blame on the organization for supervisors' behaviors that thwart subordinates' needs and target the organization in an attempt to retaliate against the supervisor (Ambrose, Seabright, & Schminke, 2002). Although deviant behavior can satisfy an individual's desire to retaliate against an abusive supervisor, it can also cause serious damage to subordinates' basic psychological needs, as being late to work can make coworkers in the workplace feel resentment towards the individual, as they may need to do more work to make up for the deviant individual (Lian & al., 2012). Such

behavior may also cause supervisors to think negatively of the individual's work ethic, leading to closer supervision, being handed lower priority assignments or negative feedback and backlash which ends up thwarting the needs for autonomy and competence for the individual (Lian & al., 2012).

Basic need satisfaction has an important role in organizational deviance, as suggested by Lian & al., (2012). Organizations seeking to reduce subordinate deviance could focus on increasing subordinate basic psychological need satisfaction through different channels, for example, by giving increased feedback to subordinates, maintaining a friendly working environment, as well as working to increase subordinates' interactions with co-workers and customers (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Grant, 2007). When working to minimize organizational deviance by reducing abusive supervision, it should be taken into account, that reducing abusive supervision should be prioritized over encouraging supportive supervision, as supportive supervisors who maintain abusive aspects of their supervisory style are still comparable to supervisors who provide less support (Lian & al., 2012). Furthermore, the negative implications of abusive supervision should be taken into account when working to create healthy organizational environments. This can be done by keeping an eye on the quality of supervisor-subordinate relationships, and by developing training procedures for personnel that are designed to prevent the forming of abusive supervision (Park & al., 2019).

2.4   Power distance orientation & the five-factor model of personality

Power distance can be characterized as a reflective cultural value of employees' attitudes toward uneven distributions of power (Hofstede & al., 2010). The term has not seen any particular interest being attached into it until recently, as it has been discovered to be an important factor in understanding subordinates' reactions to abusive supervision (Park & al., 2019).

Park & al., (2019) state in their study, that abusive supervision was more strongly present in organization cultures which have less distance in power compared to cultures at which the distance is higher. This implies that there is more tendency for abusive behavior when the supervisor and subordinates are closer to each other in the

hierarchy. The study findings further support the theory of the causal relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance, as previously suggested by Michel & al. (2016). If the distance of power between the subordinate and the supervisor is higher, it is more common for subordinates to cause deviance elsewhere in the organization to not cause further harm to themselves, as supervisors richer in power are capable of further abuse (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Lian & al., 2012). In higher power distance organizations, large displays of power from supervisors are more often viewed as a legitimate assertions of power rather than an form of abusive behavior (Kernan & al., 2011). In comparison, in lower power distance oriented organizations, subordinates may interpret supervisors' attempts to display power as a infringement of rules, and by that, perceiving abusive supervision and injustice (Park & al., 2019).

2.4.1   The Five-Factor Model of personality

To build on findings mentioned above, Wang & al., (2015) argue that it is important to also examine the subordinates' personality traits as a possible moderating effect of the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance as an additional analysis other than power distance orientation. This analysis can be conducted by utilizing the five-factor model (FFM), in which people differ from each other in five personality traits which are neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Extraversion and agreeableness determine the amount of social stimulation an individual prefers and also the quality of social interaction, whereas openness, neuroticism and conscientiousness are not naturally interpersonal, meaning that an individual can feel unhappy or accomplish a task without feeling the presence or absence of other people (McCrae & Costa, 1989, p. 586).

As trait activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000) proposes, subordinates who are different in regard to their interpersonal traits may have differing reactions to perceived abusive supervision, Wang & al., (2015) suggest that out of the five personality traits listed above, extraversion and agreeableness are the most relevant to the understanding of negative social interactions and their effects on abusive supervision and workplace deviance. In a study (2015), Wang & al. found that subordinates' agreeableness and

extraversion helped to moderate the effects of perceived abusive supervision on their interpersonal deviant behavior. Supervisory behaviors deemed as abusive, such as public ridicule or screaming break social interaction guidelines in many different work environments (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). The negative work environment in question can activate disagreeableness and introversion among subordinates, of which disagreeable subordinates can be described as hostile, self-centered, antagonistic with a strong sense of vengeance (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Wang & al., 2015). It should also be noted, that out of the traits disclosed in the five-factor model, agreeableness had the strongest negative relationship with workplace deviance (Berry & al., 2007).

2.4.2 Status-linked social identities

According to a study conducted by Bowles and Gelfand (2010), social identities that are linked to status, such as gender, influence the evaluation of workplace deviance. This evaluation process is biased, reinforcing the social hierarchy by allowing individuals of higher status more lenience (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010). It is important to note, however that the status of the evaluator moderates this effect, meaning that evaluators of higher status were more susceptible to biased evaluation of misbehavior than those of lower status (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010).

A study conducted by Pradhan and Jena (2019) shows, that an subordinates' intention to quit is related to workplace deviance, when the said subordinate has endured abusive supervision. If the subordinate has a high intention of quitting, the relationship will be stronger, rather than when a subordinate has a low intention of quitting (Pradhan & Jena, 2019; Tepper & al., 2007). Also, investing money and time on training abusive leaders to change their behavior towards their subordinates may be better spent on narrowing selection and succession processes to prevent individuals with psychopathic traits from rising to higher leadership positions in the first place (Mathieu & Babiak, 2016).

3   OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH MATERIAL

In this chapter, the research process for this thesis is presented. The research process for which the overview is provided consists of gathering the necessary scientific material for the thesis, an assessment of the said material and keywords used for material gathering.

3.1   The information acquisition process

The process started after deciding on the subject of the thesis. Relevant keywords for searching databases were found after pondering on them during the information acquisition course by Oulu Business School. The database that was mostly used was Google Scholar by searching for relevant scientific articles and later using Oula-Finna-database to gain access into them. Other databases that were used were ProQuest and EBSCO.

When searching from the databases, Boolean operators "AND" and "OR" were used to limit or to expand the amount of search results when needed. The usage of *- symbol was for cutting the keyword from a feasible place to include the various inflected forms of the used keywords. The searching process was made more interesting and gripping this way.

During the information acquisition process, these keywords were used as single items or combined in the different databases: Abusive supervision, Abusive supervis*, Workplace deviance, Workplace devia*, Abusive supervis* OR workplace deviance, Abusive supervis* AND workplace deviance, Self-determination theory, Basic need satisfaction, Intentio* to quit AND abusive supervision, Organi*ational deviance, Interpersonal deviance, Five-factor model of personality AND abusive supervision.

3.2   Assessment of information

There was an abundance of information available for this topic directly by searching the databases with the keywords "Abusive supervis* AND workplace deviance". However, with these keywords the variety of the information was a bit narrow. This

meant that it was feasible to limit the keywords so that the search results had more variety. As the research method of this thesis was a qualitative narrative overview, the importance of reviewing the source material's relevancy and validity cannot be overlooked (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). However, as certain authors' findings were considered as pioneering, it was difficult not to cite one author perhaps too many times, as the same citation was used by multiple different authors conducting their research on the topic. The author in question was Bennett J. Tepper, who has done significant research on the topic of abusive supervision. His work, even if a few decades old, has maintained its status as a pillar for further research. The same principle can be applied to another pair of authors that were often cited by other authors were Sandra L. Robinson and Rebecca J. Bennett, whose definition of workplace deviance seemed to be cited often based on scientific articles that were found when acquiring information. For this reason, it was difficult to find an alternative definition by a different author for the main terms of the thesis.

The scientific information's relevance was checked by using Julkaisufoorumi, after finding suitable articles or studies. Most of the information was classified as tier 1 or 2 in the JUFO-scale, which is a Finnish classification system for scientific information, but there were some articles that had been classified as tier 3. There were times when a potentially resourceful source of information was dropped because of the lack of recognition or because of a poor JUFO-rating determined by Tieteellisten seurain valtuuskunta (TSV). Because of utilizing this classification system for information, it was decided that the search results were not to be narrowed down based on the geographic location of the author, or by any specific field of science. As a result of this, this thesis features information articles published in scientific journals across the world.

4   DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the information presented in the second chapter will be given a deeper analysis. The results found will be discussed with the source literature utilized in this thesis. The point of this chapter is to find possible overlaps and links between the different perspectives defined earlier. This way, fresh perceptions of the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance can be created.

As mentioned previously, abusive supervision is a continuous form of hostile behavior directed towards subordinates (Tepper, 2000, p. 178), that may cause subordinates to retaliate and pursue behavior types that are deemed as harmful for organizations (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). The definition of abusive supervision puts an emphasis on the adjective "continuous", as individual situations that occur rarely are not considered to be abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007). However, these individual occurrences can still cause a subordinate to develop and hold a grudge towards the supervisor, whose one-time burst of anger may have started a chain-reaction of subordinate deviance, even if the outburst was not officially deemed abusive supervision. If said subordinate has considered quitting in the organization, the subordinate may have a higher probability of engaging in workplace deviance (Pradhan & Jena, 2019). The intentions to quit may stem from a structural difference in personality traits between the subordinate and the supervisor. The personal traits of each side of the conflict play a key role in the perception of abusive supervision by subordinates (Tett & Guterman, 2000). This implies that interpersonal chemistry lies in the very center of this subject, as individual personality traits are a key component to understanding, why different kinds of interpersonal relationships exist. These findings can be applied to the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance, as supervisor – subordinate relationships are essentially interpersonal relationships, and by that definition, the concept of interpersonal chemistry can be applied to it.

To better understand the role of individual personality traits in the forming of abusive supervision and subsequently, workplace deviance, the previously determined five-factor model of personality (FFM) can be applied (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Out of the five personality traits (McCrae & Costa, 1989, p. 586), extraversion, which determines

the amount of social interaction preferred and agreeableness, which indicates the cooperation skills of an individual, seem to be the most relevant when viewing abusive supervision and workplace deviance from a personality trait – oriented lens (Wang & al., 2015). To add to the subject, the differences in extraversion between a supervisor and a subordinate may be a catalyst for a hostile relationship, as even in a low-intensity daily social exchange between the two said individuals, in the event of one party perceiving the other as irritating, for example, it can serve as a foundation for any future conflict, thus potentially furthering the development of abusive supervision.

To add more insight to the researcher's implications, the results show, that power distance orientation in organizations may prove to be an important aspect from which to study the initial stages of abusive supervision, and the way subordinates perceive it, as organizations of a lower power distance have a higher probability of abusive supervision being present, when compared to organizations of a higher power distance (Park & al., 2019). In lower power distance – oriented organizations the supervisor and the subordinate are much closer to each other in hierarchy, making them have more social exchange, thus having an increased probability of their interpersonal relationship to developing hostile characteristics. When the findings of Park & al. (2019) are compared to the discoveries of Bowles and Gelfand (2010), there seems to be some indication of a link between status-linked social identities and the development of abusive supervision in lower power distance oriented organizations, as supervisors with a lower status were more likely to be ignored when compared to supervisors of higher status. Furthermore, in organizations of lower power distance, the subordinate can be more aware of the limited capabilities the supervisor has in terms of power, at the event of perceived abusive supervision, the deviant subordinate may also attempt to retaliate against the supervisor by shifting the blame directly to the organization, as supervisors can be equated to be agents of the organization, therefore by sabotaging the organization, the subordinate also sabotages the interests of the supervisor (Ambrose, Seabright & Schminke, 2002; Lian & al., 2012).

The differences in agreeableness (1989) between individuals can be hypothesized to relate to abusive supervision and workplace deviance, as they may cause a subordinate to defy orders given by the supervisor, causing the supervisor to perceive a negative image of the subordinate, leading to closer supervision (Lian & al., 2012). The findings

of Berry & al. (2007) support this hypothesis, as they found out, that agreeableness had the strongest negative relationship out of the traits disclosed in the FFM (1992). The power distance orientation (2019) can be linked to this hypothesis as well, as the distance of hierarchy between the supervisor and the subordinate may dictate whether the subordinate directs their deviance directly to the supervisor, or the deviance may be displaced instead, which has increased probability of happening if the power distance orientation is higher, as the subordinate fears further retaliation of the supervisor, as the subordinate knows the capabilities of the supervisor as per their higher power distance (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Lian & al., 2012). The displaced deviance in this context means deviance directed to the organization itself or other personnel in the organization as determined by Pradhan and Jena (2019). To take the topic of power and hierarchy further, Bowles and Gelfand (2010) suggest, that the evaluation process of workplace deviance is biased, strengthening the hierarchy of the organization, and by that pushing the subordinates to displace their deviance by further increasing the distance of power in said organization.

As a lot of the focus in this thesis has been directed towards researching how a certain phenomenon affects another phenomenon, it is feasible to study the moderating effects certain items can have on abusive supervision and workplace deviance. In this chapter, the personality traits of agreeableness and extraversion (McCrae & Costa, 1989), were discussed with their negative impacts on mind. However, as previously stated by Wang & al. (2015), the personality traits in question moderated the effects of abusive supervision endured by subordinates on their interpersonal deviant behavior. As interpersonal deviance takes place between two or more colleagues, it can be seen as social behavior. The personality traits extraversion, which as previously mentioned, determines the amount of social interaction preferred, and agreeableness, which measures the cooperation skills of an individual, both affect interpersonal behavior, as the traits determine an individual's conversational competence and how it matches the other person's conversational competence, respectively (McCrae & Costa, 1989). To add to the previous statement, in the event of interpersonal deviance, when both parties share similar characteristics in their extraversion and agreeableness traits, a moderating effect can take place, hindering the growth of interpersonal deviant behavior in organizations. Even though the main focus was organizational deviance in this thesis, interpersonal deviance is also important to be addressed, because it affects

the organization as a whole, as interpersonal deviance can cause the work environment to become toxic, decreasing subordinates' motivation and productivity. From the researcher's perspective, with this discovery, it can be stated, that the categorization of workplace deviance into two sub-groups has been beneficial for this research, as the two said personality traits had a worsening impact on organizational deviance, along with other factors, such as power distance orientation, but a moderating effect on interpersonal deviance. Another moderating effect was found by Bowles and Gelfand (2010), concerning the evaluation of workplace deviance and its relation to status and hierarchy, where evaluators of higher status were more likely to be the targets of biased evaluation of misbehavior, such as abusive supervision, than those of lower status, moderating the effect to be slightly more directed towards supervisors of lower status, meaning, that lower statured supervisors' abuse towards their subordinates would be more likely to be ignored, as they are less susceptible to biased evaluation of their behaviors. While the moderating effect is not directly related to abusive supervision or workplace deviance, it is still relevant, as it affects the subject of this thesis through an intermediary, which is the power dynamic of the organization in question. One moderating effect that affects the subject of this thesis directly, is the effect of work-related negative matters, as previously suggested by Michel & al. (2016). The work-related negativity means the amount of innate aggression a subordinate has, and also one's negative perceptions of the organization, and the moderating effect in question is the aggressiveness of a subordinate, which determines, which way the subordinate directs their aggression to (Michel & al., 2016). If a subordinate is highly aggressive, it is more common for the subordinate to react directly to the source of mistreatment, whereas subordinates of lower aggression tend to displace their aggression towards other targets, that are exempt of the organization itself (Bowling & Michel, 2011; Restubog & al., 2011). This finding incorporates innate aggression to the mix of personality traits utilized in this thesis in light of abusive supervision and workplace deviance.
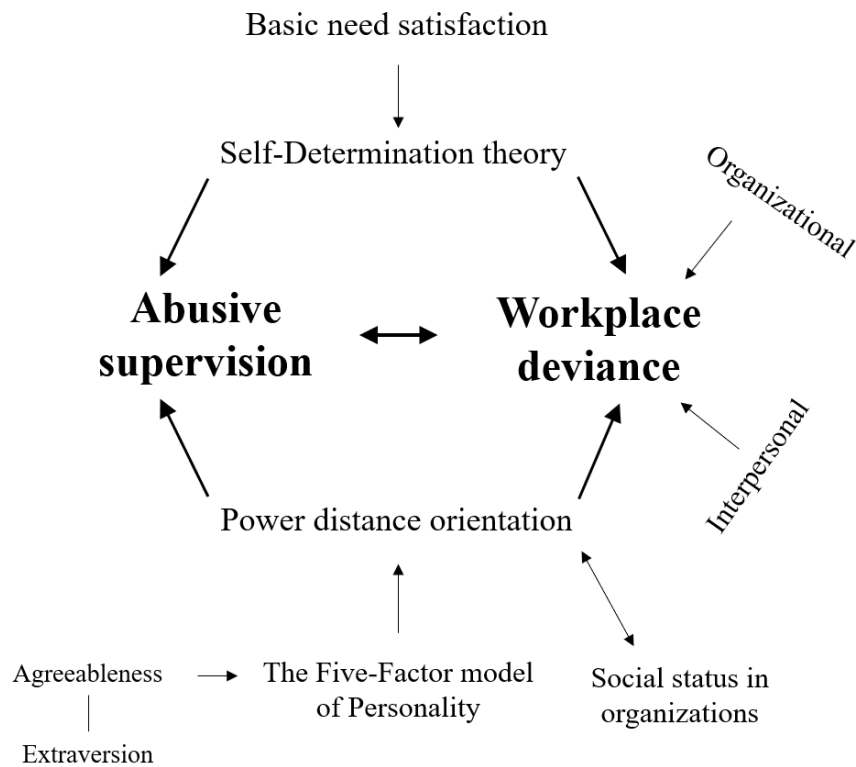
When analyzing these results found by this literature review, it is implied, that individual personality traits are important when studying the roots of abusive supervision. The integration of the theory of organizations' power distance orientation supports the findings of the relationship between personality traits and abusive supervision. It should be noted that the more determinative term in this discussion has

been abusive supervision, and the reason for this is that workplace deviance is more often a cause for subordinates' individual perceptions of injustice by the supervisor, (Tepper, 2007). In other words, within the scope of this work, workplace deviance cannot exist without the existence of abusive supervision. It can, however, start a cycle of back-and forth abusive behaviors between both parties. As a confirming example of this situation mentioned earlier in this thesis: a supervisor has behaved abusively towards the subordinate and as a countermeasure, the subordinate has been neglecting their duties in the organization, making the supervisor pay more close attention to the subordinate, resulting in increased negative backlash and handing of lesser priority assignments, ultimately resulting in ruining the subordinate's self-esteem and competence (Lian & al., 2012). Based on the example presented, abusive supervision can be seen acting as a root for any deviant behaviors executed by subordinates.

The findings explained in this chapter indicate, that abusive supervision is an ambiguous term that stems from many different aspects that are personality-, power-, and socially oriented. The purpose for including the social aspect into this thesis was to integrate a perspective based on personnel that was in the middle of the psychological and organizational aspects of this thesis. The results also indicate that workplace deviance is influenced by power distance orientation, as subordinates behave differently in organizations of different power distances (Ambrose, Seabright & Schminke, 2002; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Lian & al., 2012). The personality traits extraversion and agreeableness of the FFM (1992) were key items for the research, as they proved to have quite a strong relation to the power distance orientation presented also in this thesis. Along with direct causes to abusive supervision and workplace deviance, there were moderating effects, that directly or indirectly helped to moderate some of the factors that further increased abusive supervision and the deviant behavior that follows it.

To conclude this chapter, Figure 2 visualizes the concepts introduced in this thesis and their relations to abusive supervision and workplace deviance.

Figure 2. Visualization of the theoretical framework.

Basic need satisfaction

Self-Determination theory

Organizational

Abusive supervision ⟷ **Workplace deviance**

Interpersonal

Power distance orientation

Agreeableness ⟶ The Five-Factor model of Personality

Social status in organizations

Extraversion

The arrows presented depict the relationship between the terms. The main elements of this thesis: abusive supervision and workplace deviance, are shown to both affect each other. This is because workplace deviance can cause further abuse from supervisors (Lian & al., 2012). It is important to note, that this thesis considers abusive supervision to be the catalyst for workplace deviance, but not the other way around. The visualization also depicts a dual-sided relationship between power distance orientation and social status because social status can further increase the distance of power or moderate it, as previously mentioned (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010). The Five-factor model's two essential personality traits, agreeableness, and extraversion (1989) are presented as a singular unit, because they influence the power distance orientation in a similar manner with each other. Finally, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2017), accompanied by basic need satisfaction, are shown to impact both abusive supervision and workplace deviance, based on the supervisor's ability to threaten the fundamental psychological needs of the subordinate (Lian & al., 2012).

5   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the theoretical contribution to the overall research of this thesis will be assessed along with findings based on the research questions, limitations and further research suggestions.

5.1   Answers to research questions and theoretical implications

This thesis was based on the relationship between abusive supervision and workplace deviance. As such, the aim was to form a solid basis of relevant information, from which to build upon. This was done by first defining a main research question:

How does abusive supervision cause workplace deviance?

The question can be answered by applying the knowledge from the three main theoretical elements defined in the second chapter of this thesis. Based on a perspective of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2017), abusive supervision's negative effects on workplace deviance are determined by the supervisor's ability to threaten the fundamental psychological needs of the subordinate by affecting subordinates' sense of competence by belittling them, undermining their achievements, or questioning their capabilities (Lian & al., 2012).

The distance of power between the supervisor and the subordinate also affects the effects of abusive supervision on workplace deviance. Lesser distance of power in organizations was found to be more related to abusive supervision when compared to organizations at which the distance is higher (Park & al., 2019). However, in organizations of a higher power distance, when a subordinate perceives abusive supervision, it is more common for the subordinate to direct the deviance elsewhere in the organization rather than the supervisor in fear of retaliation and further abuse by the supervisor (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Lian & al., 2012). The perceptions of abusive supervision are subjective, as each subordinate may react differently to abuse based on their individual interpersonal traits (Tett & Guterman, 2000).

Status-linked social identities can be seen influencing the evaluation of workplace deviance, as determined by Bowles and Gelfand (2010). If the evaluator is a supervisor, the evaluation process may be biased towards their subordinates, leading to abuse of their respective status.

When adding the definitive way abusive supervision causes workplace deviance, a sufficient answer to the main research question is complete. Abusive supervision can be determined as a sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors by supervisors directed towards their subordinates, which is met negatively by subordinates, as their perceptions of normative justice rules have been violated (Tepper, 2000), resulting in deviant behavior towards the organization or the supervisor.

The main research question would work as a centerpiece for information, on which additional key information would be gathered around. To help gather the information, two supporting research questions were formed:

1. What are the effects of abusive supervision and workplace deviance for organizations?

The main concepts in question affect the general health of organizations in ways that are financially and socially significant (Tepper, 2000). The fall of subordinate-related productivity means, that organizations receive less for the amount of hours an employee has put in, affecting organizations' financial resources, as the employees are still being paid the same sum they had before the fall. Organizations may find themselves undermanned, if the presence of abusive supervision has gotten to the point of making the employees wanting to quit working in said organization (Pradhan & Jena, 2019). Other essential harmful effects of workplace deviance created by abusive supervision can be stealing belongings of organizations, being late on purpose and various socially negative effects caused by interpersonal deviance, such as sexual harassment, bullying, and verbal abuse (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Being late to work may make colleagues feel resentment towards the employee in question, as they have to do additional work to make up for the employee's deviance, polluting the overall environment of the said organization (Lian & al., 2012).

2. How can a supervisor-subordinate relationship be improved?

The relationship could be improved by focusing on employees' sustained basic psychological need satisfaction in ways detrimental to the issue, such as increasing the amount of feedback an employee receives, maintaining an overall friendly work-environment, as well as emphasizing co-worker specific interaction (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Grant, 2007). Developing anti-abusive training procedures for supervisors may also prove beneficial and the process' success could be evaluated by monitoring the quality of supervisor-subordinate relationships (Park & al., 2019), however, the resources might be better spent on narrowing the selection and succession procedures for supervisors, to prevent individuals with psychopathic traits from gaining a substantial amount of ground in an organization (Mathieu & Babiak, 2016). When working to improve the supervisor-subordinate relationship using the methods mentioned above, it should be taken into consideration, that the reduction of abusive supervision should take priority over the encouragement of supportive supervision, as supportive supervisors, who have abusive aspects in their supervisory style are comparable to supervisors that are less supportive but maintain the same abusive aspects (Lian & al., 2019).

5.2   Managerial implications

This thesis brings together theories that help understand the issue of abusive supervision in organizations and stresses the importance of psychology. Understanding the roots of abusive supervision are essential for reducing it. The roots of abusive supervision lie in psychology, of which a sizeable sum of this thesis' content is based on. The second supporting research question, as answered above, covers one of the most important practical implications this thesis makes, which is reducing abusive supervision. One theoretical element organizations could also utilize in practicality, is to integrate Tepper's (2000) 5-point scale into their staff quality control, in which the subject answers 15 questions related to abusive behavior by the supervisor in question. This thesis' implications for practice are to reduce abusive supervision,

and by that, workplace deviance, but also to better understand the issue behind abusive supervision and to further promote psychology in the field of management.

5.3   Theoretical contribution

The main theoretical contribution of this thesis is that it combines various theoretical aspects that differ from each other to find a fresh perspective on a subject that has had a lot of research put into already. As a literature review (Salminen, 2011), this thesis summarizes past research and attempts to create an alternative perspective by researching abusive supervision and workplace deviance from different angles and then comparing the findings to understand if there is any intertwinement between the theories. As abusive supervision and workplace deviance are factors that are linked with behavior, this thesis integrates a psychological aspect into business by usage of the five-factor model (Costa & McCrae, 1992), which is important when studying leadership and management in organizations. The managerial implications presented in this thesis provide relevant and realistic ways based on theoretical findings for organizations seeking to eliminate abusive supervision and workplace deviance. The findings of the connection between the social status (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010) and power distance orientation in organizations (Park & al., 2019; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Lian & al., 2012), provide an interesting insight to the subject and lays a foundation, on which an empirical study could be based upon.

5.4   Limitations

This thesis is by no means comprehensive as a whole as the thesis' chosen research method was a narrative literature review and the amount of research available on this subject was plentiful. Because of this, relevant theories of this subject were picked by the researcher of this thesis with the idea of presenting the subject with an optimal level of diversity within the boundaries of the bachelor's thesis. A thorough review of this subject would require more time and length for it to present a comprehensive overview on the subject. Also, the findings made by the researcher could be confirmed by studying them empirically, to ensure their validity. It should be important to note, that within the scope of this work, the researcher has limited the boundaries of the research and as such, workplace deviance cannot exist without the existence of abusive

supervision, which limits the possible theoretical viewing angles by some margin. However, this thesis still proves its significance with its emphasis on psychological importance in managemental studies and with a vast base of source literature, all of which has been reviewed and checked for its scientific competence.

5.5   Further research suggestions

To take the research of this topic further, it could be directed towards digitalization and its possible effects on the topic, as digitalization offers new methods for supervisors to oversee their subordinates. The 2020 pandemic, which forced employees to work from home as digitalization had now made it possible, could have an interesting connection to the subject of this thesis. While remote working has been relevant for quite some time, the pandemic made it mandatory for subordinates and supervisors alike and for that reason the possible amount of research potential for this subject could have risen, making it worthwhile to study further. The psychological effects of the pandemic could be analyzed and integrated into the field of management and business via a form of an empirical study.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Ambrose, M. L., Seabright, M. A., & Schminke, M. (2002). Sabotage in the workplace: The role of organizational injustice. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 89, 947–965.

Berry, C. M., Ones, D. S., & Sackett, P. R. (2007). Interpersonal deviance, organizational deviance, and their common correlates: A review and meta-analysis. Journal of Applied Psychology, 92, 410–424.

Bowles, H. R., & Gelfand, M. (2010). Status and the Evaluation of Workplace Deviance. Psychological science, 21(1), 49-54. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797609356509

Bowling, N. A., & Michel, J. S. (2011). Why do you treat me badly? The effects of target attributions on responses to abusive supervision. Work & Stress, 25, 309–320.

Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). NEO PI-R professional manual: Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI). Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The ''what'' and ''why'' of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. Psychological Inquiry, 4, 227–268.

Elaine, P. (2017). CNBC Report: This crime in the workplace is costing US businesses $50 billion a year. https://www.cnbc.com/2017/09/12/workplace-crime-costs-us-businesses-50-billion-a-year.html

Eskola, J., & Suoranta, J. (1998). *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen*. Vastapaino.

Ferris, D. L., Spence, J. R., Brown, D. J., & Heller, D. (2012). Interpersonal Injustice and Workplace Deviance: The Role of Esteem Threat. Journal of management, 38(6), 1788-1811. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310372259

Gagné, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 26, 331–362.

Grant, A. M. (2007). Relational job design and the motivation to make a prosocial difference. Academy of Management Review, 32, 393–417.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Culture and organizations–Software of the Mind (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill Professional.

Kernan, M. C., Watson, S., Chen, F. F., & Kim, T. G. (2011). How cultural values afect the impact of abusive supervision on worker attitudes. Cross Cultural Management, 18, 464–484

Lian, H., Lance Ferris, D., & Brown, D. J. (2012). Does taking the good with the bad make things worse? How abusive supervision and leader–member exchange interact to impact need satisfaction and organizational deviance. Organizational behavior and human decision processes, 117(1), 41-52. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2011.10.003

Malik, A., Sinha, S., & Goel, S. (2021). A Qualitative Review of 18 Years of Research on Workplace Deviance: New Vectors and Future Research Directions. *Human performance, 34*(4), 271-297. https://doi.org/10.1080/08959285.2021.1948548

Mathieu, C., & Babiak, P. (2016). Corporate psychopathy and abusive supervision: Their influence on employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions. *Personality and individual differences, 91*, 102-106. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.12.002

McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T, Jr. (1989). The structure of interpersonal traits: Wiggins's circumplex and the five-factor model. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56, 586– 595.

Michel, J. S., Newness, K., & Duniewicz, K. (2016). How Abusive Supervision Affects Workplace Deviance: A Moderated-Mediation Examination of

Aggressiveness and Work-Related Negative Affect. Journal of business and psychology, 31(1), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-015-9400-2

Mitchell, M. S., & Ambrose, M. L. (2007). Abusive Supervision and Workplace Deviance and the Moderating Effects of Negative Reciprocity Beliefs. Journal of applied psychology, 92(4), 1159-1168. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.4.1159

O'Boyle, E. H., Jr., Forsyth, D. R., Banks, G. C., & McDaniel, M. A. (2012). A meta-analysis of the dark triad and work behavior: a social exchange perspective. Journal of Applied Psychology, 97(3), 557–579. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0025679

Park, H., Hoobler, J. M., Wu, J., Liden, R. C., Hu, J., & Wilson, M. S. (2019). Abusive Supervision and Employee Deviance: A Multifoci Justice Perspective. Journal of business ethics, 158(4), 1113-1131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3749-2

Peterson, D. K. (2002). Deviant workplace behavior and the organization's ethical climate. Journal of Business and Psychology, 17(1), 47–61. doi:10.1023/A:1016296116093.

Pradhan, S., & Jena, L. K. (2019). Getting even: A study of abusive supervision, workplace deviance and intention to quit in Indian entrepreneurial organizations. South Asian Journal of Business Studies, 8(3), 332-347. https://doi.org/10.1108/SAJBS-06-2018-0072

Restubog, S. L. D., Scott, K. L., & Zagenczyk, T. J. (2011). When distress hits home: The role of contextual factors and psychological distress in predicting employees' responses to abusive supervision. Journal of Applied Psychology, 96, 713–729.

Robinson, S. L., & Bennett, R. J. (1995). A Typology of Deviant Workplace Behaviors: A Multidimensional Scaling Study. Academy of Management journal, 38(2), 555-572. https://doi.org/10.2307/256693

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness. https://doi.org/10.1521/978.14625/28806

Ryan, R. M. (1995). Psychological needs and the facilitation of integrative processes. Journal of Personality, 63, 297–427.

Salminen, A. (2011). *Mikä kirjallisuuskatsaus?: Johdatus kirjallisuuskatsauksen tyyppeihin ja hallintotieteellisiin sovelluksiin*. Vaasan yliopisto.

Spector, P. E. (2011). The relationship of personality to counterproductive work behavior (CWB): an integration of perspectives. Human Resource Management Review, 21(4), 342–352. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2010.10.002.

Steinberg, S. (2019). CNBC Report: Cyberattacks now cost companies $200,000 on average, putting many out of business. https://www.cnbc.com/2019/10/13/cyberattacks-cost-small-companies-200k-putting-many-out-ofbusiness.html

Tepper, B. J., Simon, L., & Park, H. M. (2017). Abusive Supervision. Annual review of organizational psychology and organizational behavior, 4(1), 123-152. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-041015-062539

Tepper, B. J. (2007). Abusive Supervision in Work Organizations: Review, Synthesis, and Research Agenda. *Journal of management, 33*(3), 261-289. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206307300812

Tepper, B.J., Moss, S.E., Lockhart, D.E. and Carr, J.C. (2007), "Abusive supervision, upward maintenance communication, and subordinates' psychological distress", Academy of Management Journal, Vol. 50 No. 5, pp. 1169-1180.

Tepper, B. J. (2000). Consequences of Abusive Supervision. Academy of Management journal, 43(2), 178-190. https://doi.org/10.2307/1556375

Tett, R. P., & Burnett, D. D. (2003). A personality trait-based interactionist model of job performance. Journal of Applied Psychology, 88, 500–517.

Tett, R. P., & Guterman, H. A. (2000). Situation trait relevance, trait expression, and cross-situational consistency: Testing a principle of trait activation. Journal of Research in Personality, 34, 397– 423.

Tuomi, J., & Sarajärvi, A. (2018). *Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi* (Uudistettu laitos.). Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi.

Wang, G., Harms, P. D., & Mackey, J. D. (2015). Does it take two to Tangle? Subordinates' Perceptions of and Reactions to Abusive Supervision. *Journal of business ethics, 131*(2), 487-503. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2292-7