

Abusive Supervision: A Systematic Comparison Between Military and Civilian  
Leadership Perceptions

By

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“I wish there was a way to know you’re in the good old days before you’ve actually left them.” -Andy Bernard, *The Office*.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of abusive supervision. Specifically, this study aimed to investigate how perceptions of abusive supervision differ between individuals who have previously been enlisted or are currently enlisted in the military and individuals who have only been employed in civilian workplace settings. Using an experimental design, participants with military and non-military experience were randomly assigned to one of two supervisor conditions (abusive or non-abusive). Data were collected using a survey that was published on Amazon Mechanical Turk and various Facebook groups, which included several questionnaires regarding personal outcomes (intent to leave, satisfaction with supervision style, and affective organizational commitment) and perceptions of supervisor behaviors based on a vignette (behaviors of abuse, consideration, and initiating structure). A sample of 438 participants who were at least 25 years of age, proficient at reading and speaking English, currently working a full-time job in the United States and had at least 5 years of either civilian work experience with no military service experience (civilian only survey), or at least 5 years of military service experience (military survey) were recruited and used for the study. Results showed that the participants were more likely to rate their personal outcomes lower if they rated the supervisor in the scenario as abusive. Other findings, limitations, and future research suggestions are also discussed.

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## **CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Abusive supervision is a subjective assessment a subordinate makes based on observations of their supervisors/managers. It is a type of nonphysical, workplace hostility that is considered willful behavior that does not include intended outcomes (Tepper, 2007). Abusive supervision is to be considered as a type of destructive leadership. Destructive leadership is a growing area of leadership research; however, it is often hard to conceptualize since it is an “oxymoron” of leadership (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Supportive supervision is often positively related to personal accomplishment and positive subordinate/organizational outcomes. However, abusive supervision is often associated with negative outcomes of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, burnout, organizational deviance, lack of OCBs, perceived mobility, and family undermining or displaced aggression (Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2008; Yagil, 2006; Zellars et al., 2002). Research has found that perceptions of abusive leaders may not only be due to the personality characteristics of the supervisor, but characteristics of the subordinate may play a role when perceiving abusive supervisor behaviors, as well as social-contextual factors (Bies et al., 2016). Individuals who are high on a hostile attribution style, negative affectivity, trait anger, and/or feelings of entitlement perceive their supervisors as more abusive when these behaviors are displayed (Brees et al., 2016). Perceptions of abusive supervision may also differ based on who is rating the supervisor on abusive tendencies (managers versus subordinates). Although perceptions of abusive supervision have been weakly associated with demographic variables (Mackey et al.,



2017) there is a need for more cultural variation in abusive supervision studies (Tepper, 2007). Tepper (2007) indicated that a possible future research direction should be to study the relationship between abusive supervision perceptions and how these perceptions differ in United States military environments, due to the small amount of destructive leadership research in military environments. Not only is there a small amount of destructive leadership research in the military, there also seems to be a deficit in the literature regarding work environments and how they may shape perceptions of abusive supervisor behaviors (Tepper, 2007).

The main purpose of the current study is to investigate perceptions of abusive supervision. Specifically, this research will address how individuals who have either been previously enlisted or are currently enlisted in the military perceive behaviors of abusive supervision differently compared to individuals who have been employed only in civilian workplace settings. The current research will also be exploring how personal outcomes are rated by participants depending on the type of supervision style they receive, as well as how this relationship is moderated by the experience or lack of experience in a military working environment. This research will determine if there are significant differences between ratings on personal outcomes when exposed to scenarios that depict either non-abusive or abusive supervisor behaviors, as well as any significant differences in ratings between those who have served in the military and those who have not. The current research will add to the study of abusive supervision, continue to research the growing need of measuring perceptions of abusive supervision and how that can impact personal outcomes, and exploring how workplace cultures can shape perceptions of supervisor behavior.

## **Defining Abusive Supervision**

Recently, leadership research has become more interested in the dark and destructive aspects of leadership behaviors like sexual harassment, physical violence, as well as non-physical hostility (Tepper, 2007). Destructive leadership behaviors include behaviors that violate the legitimate interest of the organization and these behaviors that are continuously repeated by a leader, supervisor, or manager. This could be sabotaging the goals, tasks, resources, or effectiveness of the organization, as well as any motivation, well-being, or satisfaction of the employee (Einarsen et al., 2007). Researchers have been particularly interested in the prevalence of destructive leadership, as well as the costs associated with destructive leaders in organizations. Researchers have also been interested in the consequences that destructive leadership has on the individuals subjected to it (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). There is an increasing need to measure and discover both the negative and positive aspects of destructive leadership for organizations (Brandebo et al., 2016). Destructive leadership can be categorized into the two dimensions of passive destructive leadership and active destructive leadership (Brandebo et al., 2016). Passive destructive leadership styles are considered to have a lack of sufficient and legitimate leader behaviors (Fosse et al., 2019) or a supervisor's avoidance of their responsibilities and duties, such as laissez-faire leadership styles (Brandebo et al., 2016). Active destructive leadership behaviors include the acting out of ineffective and illegitimate leadership behaviors (Fosse et al., 2019) or a supervisor's engagement in deliberate and volitional behaviors, such as tyrannical leadership styles (Brandebo et al., 2016). According to Fosse et al. (2019), negative outcomes related to the performance of

the leader, as well as subordinate attitude, behavior, and health are all possible negative outcomes of both passive and active forms of destructive leadership.

Abusive supervision is an active form of destructive leadership, as it is characterized by behaviors like rudeness, ridicule of subordinates, and displaced anger (Brandebou et al., 2016). It is important to keep in mind that when defining abusive supervision, it is set apart from other constructs of destructive leadership since it is a subjective assessment of behavior by the subordinate, a sustained display of behavior by the perpetrator, and it is willful behavior by the supervisor that is NOT intended to harm or have the intention of harmful outcomes (Tepper, 2007). Many different forms of destructive leadership emerged around the same time and are often used interchangeably (abusive supervision, petty tyranny, toxic leadership, etc). Abusive supervision, unlike other types of leadership, is a form of workplace aggression that does not involve deliberate attempts to cause injury to the subordinate or the organization. This aspect of the definition of abusive supervision is also what differentiates it from other forms of workplace aggression (Tepper, 2007). Although abusive supervision will be defined in greater detail below, it is crucial to keep in mind that the construct is subjective. The implications of this subjectivity will be elaborated upon within the context of the vulnerability of abusive supervision to social influence. Similarly, the subjectivity of abusive supervision has practical importance because it makes it more difficult to accurately determine if the abuse has objectively occurred or if it is just an incorrect subjective assessment by the subordinate (Bies et al., 2016).

When thinking about abusive supervision and what is included in the operationalization of the term, we should first examine the commonalities that the term “abusive supervision” shares with the term “emotional abuse.” Abusive supervision shares the types of behaviors that are also apparent in other types of abusive relationships that are considered non-physical (Raymond & Bruschi, 1989; Shepard & Campbell, 1992; Tepper, 2000; Tolman, 1989). Emotional abuse is any hostile or violent verbal or non-verbal behaviors that are not associated with any type of group membership (race, sexual orientation, etc), and are used to gain compliance from others (Keashly, 1997). One important aspect of the definition of emotional abuse is that the term “emotional abuse” is what distinguishes it from any type of physical abuse based on group membership and using the group membership against an individual (Keashly, 1997). Abusive supervision is a type of dysfunctional workplace behavior that can be defined by the degree to which subordinates perceive their supervisor continuously displaying acts of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors (Tepper, 2000). There are important things to keep in mind when defining abusive supervision. First, abusive supervision excludes any physical hostility or physical contact (Tepper, 2007), which is parallel to the idea of emotional abuse (Keashly, 1997). Second, abusive supervision is a subjective assessment, meaning that the organizational environment and norms can play a role in an employee’s perception of abusive behaviors. This also means that what one employee may see as abuse by their supervisor may be seen by another employee as a supervisor pushing for better performance (Tepper, 2000). The final important part of this definition is that abusive supervisor behaviors are willful behavior, but the supervisors have no intention of harming the employee (Tepper, 2007). Although there is no intent to harm an

employee, a supervisor may try to gain compliance from a subordinate using abuse as leverage, such as the silent treatment or glaring as a way to disapprove of unwanted subordinate mistakes/behaviors in the workplace (Keashly, 1997).

### **Subjectiveness of Abusive Supervision**

Although the subjective nature of abusive supervision is what separates the construct from some other forms of destructive leadership, it is also one of the criticisms of the definition (Tepper et al., 2017). One problem with the subjectiveness of abusive supervision is that a supervisor's abusive behavior could be viewed as abusive in one context but evaluated as normal behavior in another context (Tepper, 2000). Another issue is that two individuals could have very different perceptions or evaluations of the supervisor's behavior (Tepper, 2000), one individual may see it as abusive, while another perceives it as abrasive or "tough love." Abusive behaviors alone may not be a factor when individuals form perceptions of these behaviors (Tepper, 2017). The frequency of abuse, personality characteristics of the target, the status of power in the organization, and social contextual influences can all play a critical role in the perceptions of abusive supervision (Bies et al., 2016; Brees et al., 2016; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2017).

Personality characteristics of the subordinate are a factor that can play a role in how abusive behaviors in the workplace may be perceived (Brees et al., 2016; Tepper et al., 2017). Tepper et al. (2017) suggested in their qualitative review that targets who feel deserving of some type of special treatment or are always feeling that someone is out to get them are more likely to rate supervisor behaviors as abusive (narcissism,

psychological entitlement, low trust, and high paranoia). Suggesting that some individuals are more likely than others to perceive they are being abused by their superior. To help investigate this claim, Brees et al. (2016) examined the relationship with subordinate personality traits of hostile attribution style, negative affectivity, trait anger, and entitlement, and hypothesized that these traits would result in abusive perceptions of supervisor behavior by the subordinate. They predicted that these negative traits would be activated in interactions with supervisors and that these negative personality traits would predispose individuals to perceive behavior more negatively. The findings of this research were supported, as hostile attribution style, subordinate negative affectivity, trait anger, and entitlement were all positively associated with perceptions of abusive supervision (Brees et al., 2016). What position of power an individual holds in the organization can also influence the perceptions of abusive supervision (Ambrose & Ganegoda, 2020). Ambrose and Ganegoda (2020) examined the observations that managers make of abusive supervision. The researchers hypothesized that supervisors would be rated as more abusive by their managers over their subordinates. Results of this research indicated that managers did in fact rate supervisors below them as more abusive than those supervisors' subordinates (Ambrose & Ganegoda, 2020). The results of this study help support the idea that who assesses supervisor behavior can make a difference, and those perceptions of abusive supervision differ from person to person based on personality or status in the organization.

Abusive supervision perceptions are especially prone to be influenced by social and contextual factors (Bies et al., 2016). Some of the social influences that can shape perceptions of abusive supervision are the degree to which a subordinate trusts a

supervisor, the supervisor's success in developing subordinates, peer opinions of the supervisor, and causal accounts that guide the supervisor's behavior (Bies et al., 2016). Subordinates who have higher trust in their supervisors are less likely to view their supervisors as less hostile or sinister. This trust in supervisors can be fostered by three supervisor qualities: the supervisor's degree of competence (knowledge/skills), the supervisor's benevolence (interest in other's well-being), and the supervisor's integrity (committing to values or actions; Mayer & Davis, 1995). The history that the subordinate has with the supervisor plays a major role in the supervisor's success in developing subordinates (Bies et al., 2016). Subordinates view behaviors as more abusive when supervisors lack a history of success in development. However, history can be manipulated through other subjective factors like workplace gossip (Duffy et al., 2002, 2006). Peer opinions can also shape how subordinates see their supervisors and perceive their behavior. If peers view their supervisor more positively and this is expressed to an individual, the subordinate is more likely to view the criticism and abuse behaviors as motivational rather than abusive. Perceptions of what is inequitable treatment or equitable treatment will be influenced by peer opinions (Folger et al., 1979). Finally, explanations that are provided for the aggressive behaviors, or causal accounts, can influence subordinate perceptions of abusive supervision. Insincerity is a component of perceived abusiveness, so explanations for events should be specific and sincere (Bies et al., 2016). Showing concern, sincerity, and providing apologies to employees can increase feelings of trust between subordinates and supervisors. Furthermore, these sincere accounts will lead to greater perceptions of motivation rather than abuse by subordinates (Bies et al., 2016). Perceptions of abusive supervision can also be shaped depending on the type of

job, industry and organizational norms, as well as cultural differences in power. Later, the current manuscript will review how abusive supervisor behaviors can be – and are typically – viewed in military settings.

### **Measuring Abusive Supervision & Common Study Limitations**

Many studies of abusive supervision that have been published use some type of survey method (Tepper et al., 2017). One common feature of these survey studies is that they use a 15-item abusive supervision scale created and first used by Tepper (2000), or some variant of this widely used measure (Tepper et al., 2017). One of the problems with survey designs that use the perspective of one source (employee, coworker, supervisor, or family member) is that they cannot offer the causal inference that experiments can (Tepper et al., 2017). Tepper (2000) created their measure for abusive supervision by pulling elements from other measures that captured nonphysical abuse in other types of relationships. Management literature, at the time, was also used in creating the measure by defining actions that fit into nonphysical, abusive types of supervision. After compiling 20 items, Tepper (2000) then gave the 20-items to M.B.A students to rate the category in which the measurement items best fit (nonphysical abuse, physical abuse, and other). Based on the rating, 15-items were used to create the Abusive Supervision measure (Tepper, 2000). The measure asks participants to rate the frequency of their supervisors engaging in any of the 15 behaviors. Participants rate the frequency of behaviors on a five-point response scale (1: I cannot remember him/her using this behavior with me; 2: He/she very seldom uses this behavior with me; 3: He/she occasionally uses this behavior with me; 4: He/she uses this behavior moderately often



with me; 5: He/she uses this behavior very often with me). Tepper (2000) used this measure and concluded that individuals that reported perceiving their supervisors who engaged in these behaviors more often typically reported lower job satisfaction, life satisfaction, normative commitment, affective commitment, and greater continuance commitment, anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion.

Mackey et al. (2017) indicated that every study included in their meta-analysis used Tepper's (2000) measure – or some variation of that measure – that consisted anywhere of three items to 19 items to measure the perceptions of abusive supervision. It is important to keep in mind that when adaptations of this measure are used or the measure is used across different cultures, the results obtained may be impacted and hard to compare across studies (Mackey et al., 2017). Mackey et al. (2017) suggest that Tepper's (2000) measure items and scale be used to measure perceptions of abusive supervision so that results can be compared more accurately across studies. An example of an adapted version of Tepper's (2000) measure was used in a study conducted by Zellars et al. (2002) This study used eight items from the Abusive Supervision measure, and six items from an existing measure of undermining supervisory behavior. Items were chosen based on their relevance to a military context. The researchers found that when subordinates reported their supervisors as more abusive, they were more likely to define OCBs as in-role behavior, had higher negative affectivity, and reported less favorable justice perceptions (Zellars et al., 2002).

Since many abusive supervision studies use the same measure and similar designs, they often have similar limitations. Meta-analyses of abusive supervision have

identified that most of the currently available research for abusive supervision uses cross-sectional data, which ultimately makes it hard to test causality. (Mackey et al., 2017; Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Zhang & Liao, 2015). Many of these studies also use self-report data where participants (typically employees) are asked to complete surveys by using the Tepper (2000) scale. There are a few studies that have attempted to use experimental methods of measuring perceptions of abusive supervision, but these studies often lack ecological validity (Tepper et al., 2017). By using video vignettes that depicted a supervisor and his sales subordinate engaging in a performance evaluation, Brees et al. (2016) measured the individual differences that may cause differing perceptions of an abusive supervisor's behavior when this behavior is held constant. The video vignettes simulated both positive and negative points of performance feedback, as the goal was to not exhibit any specified level of abuse to trigger the participants' natural response to the behavior. The authors found that some of the variances in perceptions of abusive supervision could be due to a subordinate's negative affectivity, as well as their levels of trait anger. However, they recognized some limitations make it hard for their study to imply causal inference. First, they suggested the generalizability and strength of the findings in their study could be questioned because the video vignettes used only displayed a few abusive supervisor behaviors. Also, as stated above, the authors stated that their use of a modified version of Tepper's (2000) scale was another possible limitation of their study. A suggestion for future research suggests that Tepper's (2000) measure should be used across multiple occupations and industries (Mackey et al., 2017). This is important to keep in mind when designing abusive supervision studies that measure the perceptions of supervisor behavior because some occupations (non-military

vs military) may rate their experience of supervisor abuse differently than other occupations (Mackey et al., 2017).

### **Consequences of Abusive Supervision**

In their review of the literature, Martinko et al. (2013) suggested that much of the research in the abusive supervision area focuses on the outcomes of abusive supervision. They found that most of these studies have found significant relationships between organizational/personal outcomes and abusive supervision. Some of the most common negative outcomes of abusive supervision researched are aggression and deviance, psychological stress and well-being, attitudes, performance, justice perceptions, and family well-being (Martinko et al., 2013).

Tepper et al. (2008) conducted a study that examined how abusive supervision can be related to organizational deviance. These researchers tested a mediated-moderation model where affective commitment mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and organizational deviance, where norms towards organizational deviance moderated the relationship between abusive supervision and organizational deviance, and how the integrated model worked together (Tepper et al., 2008). The researchers found that affective commitment mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and organizational deviance only when subordinates perceived their coworkers as more approving of organizational deviance (Tepper et al., 2008). In a similar study, Zellars et al. (2002) wanted to examine why subordinates may withhold organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) as a response to abusive supervisor behaviors. The researchers hypothesized that subordinates who had supportive leaders

would perform more OCBs and individuals who were under supervisors that exhibited abusive behaviors would withhold OCBs. The theory behind this hypothesis is that subordinates will reciprocate the actions of supportive supervisors by engaging in OCBs. Subordinates who experience abusive behaviors from their supervisors may feel a sense of regained autonomy and freedom when they purposefully withhold OCBs from the organization (Zellars et al., 2002). How individuals defined OCBs (in-role or extra-role behavior) was also taken into consideration. Overall, the authors concluded that subordinates of abusive supervisors performed fewer OCBs than individuals who were not subjected to abusive supervision (Zellars et al., 2002). The results from their study also demonstrate that when supervisors were less abusive, OCBs that were defined as in-role behaviors occurred with greater frequency than OCBs that were defined as extra-role behaviors. Also, when OCBs were defined as extra-role behaviors by individuals, the relationship between abusive supervision and OCBs was stronger. Perceptions of procedural justice were also tested as a mediator in Zellars et al. (2002); abusive supervision and OCBs were mediated by procedural justice when OCBs were defined as extra-role behaviors. Other studies have examined justice perceptions as well as other negative outcomes of abusive supervision in more detail (Tepper, 2000; Zellars et al., 2002). However, it is important to understand that abusive supervision should be a concern for organizations because organizational deviance and OCBs can impact organizations if the abusive behaviors go unchecked (Zellars et al., 2002). In another study, Harris et al. (2007) expanded the abusive supervision literature by examining how subordinate job performance can be impacted by abusive supervision. These researchers also explored to the extent to which the meaning of work (investment in work vs. low

meaning) moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and job performance. The relationship between abusive supervision and subordinate job performance was partially supported (Harris et al., 2007). The results showed that abusive supervision was not significantly related to self-rated job performance. However, abusive supervision was significantly and negatively related to supervisor-related performance appraisals. The results of the study also concluded that when the meaning of work was higher, the negative relationship that was found between abusive supervision and performance was higher, while abusive supervision had no significant effects for individuals who reported lower meaning of work (Harris et al., 2007).

When abusive supervisory behaviors go unaltered, a subordinate's perceptions of organizational justice are impacted (Tepper, 2000). Research conducted by Tepper (2000) observed the effects of abusive supervision on various subordinate outcomes and commitment. In their study, Tepper also examined the moderating effect that perceived job mobility had on the outcomes of abusive supervision. Specifically, they investigated how the consequences of abusive supervision could be more pronounced when subordinates have less job mobility. As predicted, Tepper found that abusive supervision was linked to several dysfunctional personal consequences. Lower job satisfaction, life satisfaction, normative commitment, and affective commitment were reported by subordinates when supervisors were more abusive. When being exposed to abusive supervision, subordinates also reported increased depression, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and greater continuance commitment (staying with the organization based on need). When it comes to the moderating effect of perceived job mobility, individuals who perceived having greater job mobility were more likely to quit their jobs when

supervisors were abusive. Finally, organizational justice both partially and fully mediated the effects of abusive supervision on the various outcome variables of job satisfaction, satisfaction, commitment, work/family conflict, and mental health. These earlier findings suggested by *Tepper (2000)* have important implications. First, the experiences a subordinate has towards organizational injustice may be a contextual factor that could explain their reactions to abusive supervision (*Tepper, 2000*). Also, the negative outcomes of abusive supervisor behavior may impact individuals who have lower perceived job mobility more than individuals with greater perceived job mobility (*Tepper, 2000*). When an individual feels as though they have no other options (low mobility) there are greater effects on their attitudes and psychological distress since there are no other options to escape the abuse (*Tepper, 2000*). These findings also have important implications for organizational outcomes as well. The potential harm caused by the effects of abusive supervision to an individual can ultimately result in poor morale, absenteeism, turnover, and reduced performance of extra-role behaviors, like OCBs discussed above (*Tepper, 2000*). It is not only important to discuss the effects that abusive supervision can have on the organization with decreased OCBs, increased organizational deviance, absenteeism, and turnover (*Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2008; Zellars et al., 2002*), but it is also important to look at some of the impacts that abusive supervision can have on subordinates as well.

In their review, *Martinko et al. (2013)* discussed some of the common individual outcomes of abusive supervision. These outcomes were aggression/deviance, psychological distress/well-being, attitudes, and performance. *Zhang and Liao (2015)* examined some of these outcomes in their meta-analysis. Overall, the researchers found

that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational identification were negatively related to abusive supervision. Anger, anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion of subordinates were all positively related to abusive supervision as well. In their meta-analysis Zhang & Liao provided quantitative support for the claims made by Martinko et al. (2013). Another study by Yagil (2006) also supported emotional exhaustion as an outcome of abusive supervision. But this study also found that depersonalization of subordinates was also an outcome of abusive supervision (Yagil, 2006). Finally, Tepper (2000) found that when supervisors demonstrated abusive behaviors, subordinates were more likely to quit when they had the mobility to choose another career. Based on this previous research and the goals of the current study, I hypothesize that:

*Hypothesis 1a:* There will be a positive relationship between abusive supervisor ratings and ratings of intention to leave. As participants rate supervisors presented in a written scenario as more abusive, their ratings of intention to leave will increase.

*Hypothesis 1b:* There will be a negative relationship between abusive supervisor ratings and ratings of affective commitment. As participants rate supervisors presented in a written scenario as more abusive, their ratings of affective commitment will decrease.

*Hypothesis 1c:* There will be a negative relationship between abusive supervisor ratings and ratings of supervisor style. As participants rate supervisors presented

in a written scenario as more abusive, their ratings of satisfaction with the style of supervision will decrease.

### **Bullying or Master Motivation?**

As discussed earlier, many factors go into the assessment of abusive supervisor behaviors and not all targets of abusive supervisors have the same perceptions (Tepper et al., 2017). Individuals are less likely to label behaviors as abusive in organizations with cultures that view abusive behaviors as more normative, where team performance is exceptional, and under the conditions of stressful workplace crisis (Tepper et al., 2017). Depending on the organization's contextual factors, some may view a supervisor as motivational, while others view them as abusive (Bies et al., 2016). Because abusive supervision leads to a different number of negative outcomes in the workplace, it would make sense that a supervisor would want to avoid abusive behavior and use more constructive techniques of supervision (Tepper et al., 2017). However, not everyone who holds a supervisory position has the individual skills needed for more constructive forms of leadership. Bullying is a term that is similar to abusive supervision in the sense that it is also a construct of destructive leadership and has very similar behavioral characteristics (Ferris et al., 2007). Like abusive supervision, bullying is fostered by both personal characteristics and contextual factors, but instead of producing only negative consequences, bullying can also produce positive outcomes for both the follower and the bully. Bullying is defined as a type of tactic that is used to place subordinates in powerless positions for supervisors to easily take control of subordinates to achieve personal or organizational objectives (Ferris et al., 2007). Both bullying and abusive



supervision are types of dysfunctional workplace behavior that may not be directed at intentionally causing organizational or personal harm, but the actual intentions of bullying/abusive perpetrator behaviors are to reach objective outcomes that are desired by the supervisor (Ferris et al., 2007; Tepper, 2007). Ferris et al. (2007) proposed a model in which workplace bullying can be viewed as organizational politics, which is a way of selecting forms of leadership tactics that are situationally appropriate to influence subordinate behavior. They suggest the following ideas based on their model. First, is important to understand how political skills and abusive supervision/bullying can feed into one another. They suggest supervisors who are high on political skills can act in ways that enhance either personal or organizational objectives, as well as the ability to understand others while they work and use this knowledge to influence (Ferris et al., 2005). They also propose that individuals who embody political skills can appear sincere, supportive, and trustworthy by recognizing and adjusting their behaviors to changing situational workplace demands. According to these authors, politically skilled individuals are not self-centered, but rather focus their actions outward towards others and not inward in a self-absorbed way. Supervisors who lack political skills can still appear sincere and devoted to goals, however, followers will still doubt the supervisor's motives and withdraw from the supervisor.

Having or lacking this political skill could be the difference between what is defined as a "tough love" supervisor versus an abusive supervisor (Tepper, 2000). It is possible that supervisors may think they have the political leadership skills when leading subordinates to objective outcomes. However, the context of the organization can shape a subordinate's perception as to whether behaviors the supervisor engages in are political

or abusive. This will be discussed later as the current study will be examining the perceptions of abusive behaviors from military versus civilian participants.

Although one of the main characteristics of abusive supervision is the subjectiveness and perceptions of followers, there is still a lack of research on the social-contextual factors that shape abusive supervision perceptions (Bies et al., 2016). However, Ferris et al. (2007) suggest that individuals who are hired with low levels of autonomy and low independence help foster an organizational environment that promotes abusive behaviors. Over time, these organizations that hire “victims” then become an environment that breeds bullying/abusive behaviors (Ferris et al., 2007). According to Bies et al. (2016), a victim in the relationship between supervisor and subordinate can be the supervisor. Since abusive supervision is perceptual, a subordinate may characterize a supervisor as abusive for just providing negative performance feedback that did not align with what the subordinate wanted (Bies et al., 2016). Supervisors can have mixed motives in behaving in either abusive supervisory behaviors or have motives for inspirational behaviors, and the perceptions of these behaviors by subordinates at any given time always depend on the social contextual cues. If there are abusive and motivational perceptions occurring simultaneously, motivational perceptions will override any concerns of possible abuse (Bies et al., 2016).

Bies et al. (2016) characterized the amount of abusive versus inspirational motivation into four quadrants. The first quadrant is simply described as Laissez-Faire leadership (neither abusive nor motivating) and the second quadrant is inspirational motivation, which is characterized as low abuse and high motivation. However, the third

quadrant is characterized by qualities that will only be perceived as abusive behaviors (high abuse, low inspirational motivation). Finally, the fourth quadrant carries both high characteristics of abusive and inspirationally motivating behaviors (Bies et al., 2016). This quadrant is used to provide evidence that this leadership style can be guided simultaneously by two conflicting motives, while also capturing the idea that this leadership style is utilized by many leaders. Depending on the social cues of the environment, the perception of behavior is perceived differently and there may be perceived “slippage,” or mixed motives that are guiding behaviors based on the salient social cues, between the quadrants (Bies et al., 2016).

When combined with the very similar idea of “bullying,” it seems that abusive behaviors can lead to possible positive outcomes based on the context of the situation and the characteristics of the subordinate, and what leadership style they require. Bullying workplace behaviors can be characterized as assertive and tactical, or assertive and strategic (Ferris et al., 2007). Assertive behaviors are not used as a reaction to situational demands but rather initiated by the person to establish a certain identity. Strategic behaviors are long-term and used to build reputation, while tactical behaviors are characterized by clear, short-term goals (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). With this in mind, there are two ways in which bullying can be used as a mechanism of influence. Ferris et al. (2007) propose several points that assertive and tactical bullying influences can result in negative outcomes, but assertive and strategic bullying behaviors can lead to positive outcomes. If bullying/abusive behaviors are used for extended amounts of time (assertive-tactical), it can deteriorate motivation and morale. Unit performance may increase when using assertive-strategic bullying behaviors in the short term. By using

their political skill and reading the situation, certain leaders can use assertive-strategic bullying as a reaction to employees who are lower on maturity or to increase their control over their unit to improve performance (Ferris et al., 2007). Assertive-strategic leaders should have the political skill to know which workers require this strategic form of bullying to achieve personal and organizational goals. Having this skill would allow these supervisors to have the foresight to select lower-maturity subordinates that need this type of influence to perform their job. Also, underperformers in the organization may want to comply with the supervisor's demands, which could temporarily increase subordinate performance and compliance. Other employees who are an audience of these supervisor-subordinate interactions may change their behavior to increase their performance, so they are not the next target (Ferris et al., 2007). These underperformers in the job role could also self-select out of the job role, which could then be filled with individuals who have a better fit within the role. Finally, it seems that job attitudes can also be positively influenced by assertive-strategic bullying. Since assertive-strategic bullying can be used to increase the performance of subordinates, this can reinforce subordinates' confidence in their work abilities. Using assertive-strategic bullying on subordinates who need it would not be a source of a long-term stressor (Ferris et al., 2007).

As theorized above, certain behaviors that may seem abusive can be strategic and increase positive employee and organizational outcomes in certain contexts. One study has shown there are other factors in which abusive behaviors can lead to positive outcomes. Based on other previous research, Lee et al. (2013) predicted in their study that abusive supervision would have a curvilinear relationship with employee creativity in a South Korean work sample. Because of the sample used, the researchers also predicted

that high power distance cultures expect more obedience and respect towards supervisors from subordinates. The results of the study supported the hypothesis that abusive supervision has a curvilinear relationship with employee creativity. Employees in the study were most creative when they were exposed to moderate levels of abusive supervision. However, employee creativity was discouraged when abusive supervision was very low or very high.

Another study investigated a possible moderator between abusive supervisor behaviors and the outcomes that occur from abusive supervisor behaviors (Fiset et al., 2019). Fiset et al. looked at a leader's ability to communicate a desirable image of the future to their subordinates as a moderator between abusive supervision and follower performance outcomes. This study theorized that the communication of the leader's inspirational vision to their followers can decrease any negative effects of abusive supervision by increasing commitment, collective motivation, and decreasing group conflict. Inspirational visions of the future may encourage subordinates to tolerate supervisor abusive or rationalize the abuse as the leader's desire to reach their vision (Fiset et al., 2019). They found that an inspirational vision can buffer the negative effect of abusive supervision on performance quantity and creativity. This relationship is even stronger when both abusive supervision and inspirational vision were high. These authors conclude that the level of effort subordinates are willing to exert in their performance quantity can be dependent on the relationship between abusive supervision and inspirational vision. When participants were exposed to high levels of abusive supervision and an inspirational vision, their responses were also rated more creative (Fiset et al., 2019).

In summary, some research suggests that abusive supervision can lead to positive outcomes when they are met with certain moderators like personality characteristics, the work context/environment, culture, and even an inspirational vision. The types of outcomes also depend on what type of leadership supervisors use (assertive-strategic or assertive-tactical) and how this type of leadership influences positive or negative outcomes (Ferris et al., 2007). Political skill also plays a role in abusive supervision. Supervisors who are higher on political skill can read situations and employees to determine who needs more “motivation.” Often, individuals who enter the military are the type of individuals that inherently need more guidance, structure, and professionalism (Fosse et al., 2019).

### **Cultural Differences of Abusive Supervision**

Not only are perceptions of abusive supervision and subordinate-supervisor relationships influenced by social contextual factors, but the judgments on abusive behaviors can also be impacted by cross-cultural differences (Mackey et al., 2017). Unfortunately, cross-cultural differences in abusive supervision have not been extensively studied by researchers (Tepper, 2007). Typically, it has been found that power distance may indirectly impact both the occurrence of abusive supervision and the effects on norms for abusive supervision. Countries with higher power distance (e.g., India, Mexico, Malaysia) may have less intense reactions to abusive supervisor behaviors than countries with lower power distance (e.g., Denmark, New Zealand, Israel) (Tepper, 2007). To try and bridge some of the cultural gaps in abusive supervision studies, Kernan et al. (2011) examined how cultural values may moderate the effects of abusive

supervision, and how this affects the outcomes of job attitudes in South Korea and the United States samples. However, the authors concluded that there was no moderating effect of power (cultural differences) and that power values had a small effect on employees' attitudes (Kernan et al., 2011).

A pair of authors conducted a meta-analysis that tested the relationship between abusive supervision and its consequences while using national culture as a moderator (Zhang & Liao, 2015). They predicted that power distance would moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and subordinate attitudes, well-being, work-related cognitions, workplace deviance, and performance. Overall, the researchers found that abusive supervision in lower power distance samples was positively related to employee turnover and organizational deviance, while high power distance was moderately related to organizational deviance. However, abusive supervision did not share any relationship related to turnover when looking at high power distance (Zhang & Liao, 2015). Finally, Mackey et al. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis and incorporated the few studies that were available regarding the relationship between perceptions of abusive supervisor behaviors and culture. The meta-analysis found that the United States had lower mean perceptions towards abusive supervision compared to other countries in the eastern hemisphere such as China, the Philippines, and Taiwan (Mackey et al., 2017). These results indicate that cultural differences can play a role in perceptions of supervision behaviors. However, the variability in the findings in the studies above indicates that there are some mixed results regarding cultural values and perceptions (i.e., United States vs South Korea vs China). There should be more studies conducted to help create greater generalizability of abusive supervisor behaviors.

## **Abusive Supervision in the Military**

As stated above and in previous research, the main characteristic of abusive supervision (subjectiveness) plays an important role in how individuals view their supervisor's behaviors. A big factor in shaping this perception is the social context or the type of workplace these types of supervisor behaviors occur in (Bies et al., 2016; Tepper, 2000). Subordinates who have trust in their supervisor are also less likely to view their supervisor as abusive. Depending on the social context, supervisors may have learned their behaviors through social learning and their predecessors (Tepper et al., 2017). Supervisors may have learned from their superiors that these behaviors are acceptable and rewarding internally, and the behaviors may have been adopted by these individuals unintentionally if the norms of the organization are to use more aggressive types of supervisor behavior to instill order. Supervisors who engage in aggressive behaviors are prime role models and subordinates are then prime candidates for mimicking and sustaining these behaviors. This would ultimately lead to a more "aggressive" organizational culture (Tepper et al., 2017). There has been a lack of research on how social-contextual factors can shape abusive supervision perceptions (Bies et al., 2016). However, some research studies have suggested that "abusive" behaviors in the military are just part of the normal procedures in the work context. What behaviors civilians see as abusive or malicious may be motivating or described as "tough love" to individuals with military exposure (Tepper et al., 2017).

This raises the question if there are some circumstances or contexts where labeling behaviors as abusive may have little to no relevance. The concept of abusive



supervision may not have any meaning to military leaders (Tepper et al., 2017). The military is a highly hierarchical organization that is built by multiple levels of leadership. This foundation is also built on the ideas of following and giving orders (Fors Brandebo et al., 2019). Regarding social learning and role modeling, it may be expected for drill sergeants to use unconventional ways of verbal motivation or degradation to instill the core values of the military in recruits and new cadets, encouraging them to change the values they held before the military (Tepper, 2000). Abusive supervisor behaviors are less likely to be labeled as abusive when they occur in organizations where an abusive culture is more normative, where there is high team performance, and they are less likely to be labeled as abusive under the conditions of a crisis (Tepper et al., 2017). The military also facilitates a culture of hierarchy, adherence to rules, strict socialization structure, and professionalism, more so than other civilian professions (Fosse et al., 2019). Failure to provide a specific and adequate amount of strict leadership could lead to the loss of lives, war, or damaged equipment (Fosse et al., 2019). For the military, the term leadership carries a positive implication, and leadership is viewed as a solution to problems, as well as a way to influencing organizational effectiveness (Reed & Bullis, 2009). The assertive and aggressive behaviors that military leaders engage in could be due to the high stakes associated with the job, even though these behaviors could be consistent with destructive leader tendencies (Fosse et al., 2019). In the military, leadership has been socially constructed to be a positive aspiration for those members to reach. In their study, Reed and Bullis (2009) surveyed military members (active duty, Reserves, National Guard), as well as civilians to explore the amount of destructive leadership that senior military officers and civilians encounter. Based on their findings, all respondents had some type

of previous exposure to destructive leadership behaviors and 57% indicated they seriously considered discontinuing service with their agency. However, those military respondents reported experiencing less abusive leadership behaviors than the civilians who were measured (Reed & Bullis, 2009). These findings imply that although behaviors may inherently be seen as abusive by civilians, the military processes, justice, and behaviors may be safeguarded from being called abusive by military members because of the nature of the work. Members of the military can expect these behaviors from leadership because of their work context. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

*Hypothesis 2a:* The relationship between perceptions of abusive behavior scenarios and personal outcomes will be moderated by military experience. That is, military experience will reduce the relationship between perceptions of abusive behavior and intention to leave.

*Hypothesis 2b:* Military experience will reduce the relationship between perceptions of abusive behavior and affective commitment.

*Hypothesis 2c:* Military experience will reduce the relationship between perceptions of abusive behavior and satisfaction with supervision style.

## CHAPTER II: METHOD

### Design

The type of design this study used was a 2 X 2 between-subjects design that had two supervision conditions and two service conditions, which are the independent variables. The two supervision conditions included abusive supervision and non-abusive supervision. The two service conditions included non-military (civilian only) or military. There were two separate surveys posted to Amazon's Mechanical Turk. One survey required the participant to have five years of military experience as an inclusion criterion, the second survey required the participant to have no military experience. Having a separate survey that required military experience would ensure that the research would have a sufficient military experience sample. However, MTurk did not yield enough participants with military experience, so there was another effort to posting the military survey to Facebook in various military-oriented groups. If participants were a part of the military survey, they were instructed to indicate what branch of the military they serve or have served in as a part of the demographics questionnaire. By using random assignment, participants were either placed in a non-abusive supervision scenario condition or an abusive supervision scenario condition. The dependent variables of the study were abusive supervision ratings and personal outcome ratings (intention to leave, affective commitment, and satisfaction with supervision style).

### Participants

Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) was utilized to collect data from all civilian participants and for some participants with military experience. MTurk is an online

service that is used to collect data inexpensively and efficiently (Buhrmester et al., 2011). MTurk allows researchers to collect data from diverse users from over 100 countries, which allows for studies to have representative samples of entire populations. Even though it is fast and inexpensive, MTurk still produces the same reliability as other traditional testing methods (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Because of a small representation of military personnel combined with other study qualifications on MTurk, there was an attempt to collect additional military data on social media via Facebook military group postings. More on this issue will be described later on.

A total of 438 participants were recruited for the study. There were 385 participants recruited for the civilian survey and 53 recruited for the military survey. Of the 385 civilian participants, data from 261 participants were ultimately used. Of the 53 participants with military experience, data from only 19 participants met inclusion criteria and other basic data integrity requirements. Those participants whose data were not used were removed from analysis for not providing an MTurk completion code, for not meeting basic study requirements, or for not passing either the quality control questions or manipulation check questions. Participant requirements included being at least 25 years old, having a full-time job in the United States, and MTurk participants were required to understand English by answering open-ended questions. Participants were also required to have at least five years of civilian working experience with no experience in the military or five years of service experience in the military (depending on the survey). Of the 261 participants in the civilian sample, 49.4% identified as male, 50.2% identified as female, and one participant identified as other. The average age of the sample was 43.72 years old ( $SD = 10.69$ ), ages ranged from 25 to 72 years old. Of the

261 participants, 82% identified as White/European American, 8% identified as Black/African American, 2.3% identified as Hispanic, 3.8% identified as Asian, one participant identified as Pacific Islander, and another participant identified as other. There were eight participants (3.1%) who identified with multiple ethnicities. The average organizational tenure of the sample was 9.43 ( $SD = 7.44$ ) years, meaning that the average amount of time participants have spent in the organization they currently work at is 9.43 years. The average of overall work experience of participants was 21.94 years ( $SD = 10.39$ ). Of the 261 participants, 17 participants (6.5%) indicated they have had some type of experience as a supervisor.

Of the 19 participants in the military sample, 63.2% identified as male and 36.8% identified as female. The average age of the military sample was 46.21 years old, with a range of 28 to 71 years old. From the 19 participants, 68.4% identified as White/European American, 10.5% identified as Black/African American, 5.3% identified as Hispanic, and 15.8% identified with multiple ethnicities. There was no Asian representation due to having a very small military sample. The average organizational tenure was 7.11 years ( $SD = 4.21$ ), and the average overall work experience was 27.37 years ( $SD = 11.74$ ). Fifteen (78.9%) of the participants indicated they had some type of experience as a supervisor. In the military sample, 12 participants (63.2%) indicated they have been in the Army, four indicated they have been in the Airforce (21.2%), two participants identified with the Navy (10.5%), and one participant identified with the Marines (5.3%). There was a total of 13 participants (68.4%) who identified their component as active duty and two participants indicated they were reservists (10.5%). The average amount of years served in the military sample was 11.05 years ( $SD = 6.12$ ).

Finally, the distribution of military paygrades for the sample is as follows: E3 made up 10.5% of the sample, there were 21.2% of the sample that indicated E4, paygrades E5, E6, E7, and E8 all made up 15.8% of the sample (E = Enlisted service member), and one individual indicated themselves as an O4 (Commissioned Officer; 5.3%).

## **Measures and Materials**

### ***Core-Self Evaluations***

The current study asked participants to rate themselves on the Core-Self Evaluations measure (Judge et al., 2003). Core-Self Evaluations are comprised of self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control. Individuals who score high on Core-Self Evaluations are individuals who are highly confident in their own abilities, positive, and well-adjusted. The results from this measure would serve as a post-hoc explanation if we did not yield the results we wanted from Hypotheses 1a and 2a. Core-Self Evaluations adds a participant characteristic that could explain possible non-significant relationships (if there is one) between abusive supervisor ratings and intent to leave. The measure had items randomized to control for any order effect during the study. Ratings for the measure were anchored on a five-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The average reliability rating for the testing of this measure was  $\alpha = .84$  (Judge et al., 2003). See Appendix A for the Core-Self Evaluation questions.

### ***Scenarios***

Participants were asked to read a scenario prior to rating their perceptions on the personal outcome and abusive supervision measures. These scenarios provided the participants with instructions of the tasks that follow reading the scenario. Two scenarios total were created, one scenario for the abusive supervisor condition and one scenario for the non-abusive supervisor condition. For both scenarios, participants were asked to imagine they are a new employee in a retail setting. They were instructed to read the scenario. Participants were also informed that they would be asked questions about the scenario, as well as their perceptions regarding the scenario. After giving some background of the scenario, participants continued reading either the abusive or non-abusive scenario. They then rated their personal outcomes and how frequently they believed the supervisor would engage in abusive, consideration, and initiating structure behaviors. Both the consideration and initiating structure items were used to “cover up” the real purpose of the study before debriefing materials. Participants were not permitted to go back and reread the scenario as they rated their personal outcomes. However, the scenario and instructions were presented again after they rated their personal outcomes, and they were permitted to see the scenario as a refresher as they rated the frequency of behaviors on the abusive supervision, consideration, and initiating structure measure. See Appendix B for the scenarios.

### ***Personal Outcomes***

The current study had participants rate specific personal outcomes based on their perception of the scenario they were given. Participants rated how the supervisor scenario

assigned to them impacted their attitudes of the intent to leave (Michaels & Spector, 1982; Appendix C) their satisfaction of supervision style (Hackman & Oldham, 1974; Appendix D), and affective organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Appendix E). Participant ratings on personal outcomes were compared to their ratings of the supervisor scenario. Each personal outcome measure had items randomized to control for any order effects. Originally, the measures used for satisfaction with supervision style ( $\alpha = .79$ ) and affective commitment ( $\alpha = .87$ ) were on a seven-point Likert rating scale. The intent to leave measure was originally a six-point rating scale. However, these scales were changed to a five-point Likert scale to match the scale used for the abusive supervision measure that is listed below.

#### ***Abusive Supervision and Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire***

The current study also measured the perceptions of abusive supervisor behaviors. Perceptions of abusive supervision were rated on a scale created by Tepper (2000). This measure was created to measure abusive supervision and had 15 items. Respondents rated their responses on a five-point scale from 1 = “I cannot remember him/her ever using this behavior with me” to 5 = “He/she uses this behavior very often with me.” Items in this measure were prefaced with the statement, “My boss...” and some items included but not limited to are, “ridicules me,” “invades my privacy,” and “is rude to me” (Tepper, 2000). The current study used Tepper’s (2000) measure, but items were prefaced and reworded differently to fit the purpose of this research. The scale measured how participants perceive the supervisors’ behavior that was portrayed based on the supervisor scenarios. This measure has demonstrated an internal consistency of .90 (Tepper, 2000).



To verify that the individuals who were assigned to read the abusive supervisor scenario perceived the scenario as more abusive than the non-abusive supervisor scenario, there were items added regarding consideration and initiating structure which can be found in the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (Halpin, 1957). Both consideration and initiating structure have strong correlations with some leadership outcomes. Specifically, Judge et al. (2004) found that consideration has been found to strongly relate with follower satisfaction, satisfaction with supervision style, and motivation. Initiating structure relates to group-organization performance, and leaders who are more conscientious and less open are seen as more structuring. (Judge et al., 2004). Participants were presented with 15 items for the consideration portion of the measure and were also presented with 15 initiating structure items. Respondents rated their response on a five-point scale from 1 = “never” and 5 = “always.” For the consideration questions, there were three reverse-scored items such as, “they keep to themselves,” “they refuse to explain their actions,” and “they act without consulting the group” (Halpin, 1957). Please refer to Appendices F, G, and H for an example of the abusive supervision, consideration, and initiating structure measures used in the current study.

### ***Manipulation Check and Quality Checks***

A manipulation check was included in the study to ensure that participants acknowledged and read the scenarios they were given. Participants were asked to choose the correct answer to the statements “In the scenario, who were you being trained by” and “In the scenario, what was the work environment that was described?” Participants’ data

was discarded if the manipulation check questions were answered incorrectly.

Participants also responded to three open-ended demographics questions as a quality check. Finally, six quality check questions were added randomly throughout the different measures. These contained a statement such as, “rate this item with strongly agree.” Data was discarded if any of the quality check items are answered incorrectly. See Appendix I for the manipulation check.

### ***Demographics***

The demographics survey consisted of questions that asked about the participants’ age, gender, and ethnicity. Some questions asked about the participants’ employment status, what country they are employed in, the amount of time they have spent working at their current organization (organizational tenure), and whether they have current or previous service with the United States military. If individuals answered that they have working experience with the military, they were asked to indicate what branch they have experience with, as well as sub-branch (National Guard, Reserves, or Active Duty). Questions about age, years of full-time work experience, and total years of work experience were open-ended to ensure participants understood English. These open-ended questions will serve as an additional quality check. See Appendix J for the demographics questionnaire.

### **Pilot Testing**

For piloting testing, eight graduate students from a post-graduate Industrial/Organizational Psychology program participated in the survey and provided the researcher with feedback regarding the survey flow and content within the survey. Minor

corrections and survey flow issues were corrected upon the participants' feedback. The pilot study also served as a reference to determine the amount of time the survey took pilot participants to complete so the researcher could adequately compensate MTurk participants later. Piloting the survey also tested the hypothesized scenarios for the study and ensured that the abusive scenario was rated as more abusive than the non-abusive scenario.

## **Procedure**

All civilian participants and some of the participants with military experience were presented with a survey link hosted by Amazon's Mechanical Turk. There was also an attempt to collect more military-personnel data via social media (i.e., Facebook). This posting briefly described the survey and provided a survey link. They were informed on the amount of compensation they would receive (if any), details of the task, the estimated survey completion time, and requirements of them as participants. All participants were required to be at least 25 years of age, have a full-time job in the United States, have at least 5 years of work experience (with no military experience) for the civilian sample or 5 years of military service experience for the military sample, and being proficient in English. Participants gave informed consent and agreed to a statement that explained their rights as a participant and their requirements to be participants in the study before proceeding. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty to them. Participants were then given instructions that explained their part in the study. Before presenting the supervisor scenario, participants were asked to respond to the questions regarding core-self evaluations. This data would be used as a

post-hoc analysis in the event we did not receive the hypothesized results we wanted. Participants then read the scenario instructions and were asked to assume a career position as a retail service worker, and to objectively rate the supervisor behaviors presented to them in the scenario. After reading the instructions, participants were then randomly assigned to either an abusive supervisor scenario or a non-abusive supervisor scenario and were asked to carefully read the scenario. Participants were asked to rate how the supervisor behaviors described in the scenario impacted their intent to leave, commitment, and their overall rating of the supervision style. Participants then rated the scenario on Tepper's (2000) Abusive Supervision scale, as well as rating the consideration and initiating Structure items (Halpin, 1957). The assigned scenario was presented to participants again before questions about abusive supervision, consideration, and initiating structure as a refresher. Individual questionnaire items were presented in random order. Once participants had completed their ratings, they were then be presented with the manipulation check and demographics questionnaire. These were presented to participants last so participants were less likely to be aware of the focus of the study. Finally, MTurk participants were thanked for their participation in the study and were compensated with a \$1.25 payment through MTurk. Social media military participants did not receive any compensation. Including participants' data in the study was contingent on if they correctly answered manipulation and quality control checks, and correctly met all participants requirements which was confirmed by participant answers in the demographics section. For the civilian MTurk survey, there were a total of 100 items in the survey. The MTurk and social media military survey consisted of 106 items.

The average survey completion time for the civilian survey was 20.2 minutes and 15.25 minutes for the military survey.

## CHAPTER III: RESULTS

### **Quality Control**

Participants were removed from data analysis if they did not pass initial screening questions, did not provide informed consent, if participants failed any of the quality check questions in the measures throughout the study, if any manipulation check questions were answered incorrectly, if there were demographic questions that were not consistent with screening requirements, or if participants left any of the “required” demographic questions blank.

### ***Civilian Only Sample***

In the civilian-only sample, data were removed for reasons stated above. Specifically, 77 participants were removed for not meeting screening requirements. There were 12 participants removed for not providing their informed consent. Twenty-two participants were removed for failing quality checks throughout the study. There was a total of four participants who did not pass the manipulation check questions. Finally, eight participants were removed from the analysis for inconsistent demographic questions with study qualifications or leaving those demographic questions blank. One participant was removed for having a typo of “112 years” of organizational tenure. A total of 124 responses were removed from civilian data analysis.

### ***Military Sample***

Despite researchers’ best efforts, not enough data was collected from the military population to accurately analyze and compare data against the entire civilian sample. The

final total of participants with military experience was 53 responses gathered from MTurk and zero participants with military experience were gathered from social media efforts. Seventeen participants were excluded for not meeting screening requirements, one response was removed for not providing informed consent agreement. Four participants were removed due to not accurately answering manipulation check questions and two participants were removed for not passing quality checks throughout the study. Ten participants were not included for inconsistent demographic question answers against study qualification or leaving those demographic questions blank. A total of 34 responses were removed from military data analysis, leaving only 19 responses total to analyze.

### **Propensity Score Matching**

Since there was such a vast difference between the civilian sample size ( $n = 261$ ) and the military sample size ( $n = 19$ ), the researchers used propensity score matching using as many study demographics as possible that would match. The demographics used for this matching process were age, gender, ethnicity, and total years of work experience. The first three differences in participants are important because there are generational differences associated with age, mindset differences associated with gender, and cultural variations associated with ethnicity. Total years of work experience were used over organizational tenure or supervisory experience because the latter two characteristics were so varied between individuals, and it often made the civilian responses too difficult to try and match to military responses. There was a total of 18 participants in the non-abusive condition and 20 participants in the abusive condition ( $n = 38$ ). Overall, there were 24 men (63.2%) and 14 (36.8%) women in the sample, ages ranging from 28 to 71

years old ( $M = 45.89$ ,  $SD = 11.26$ ), current organizational tenure ranging from one year to 31 years ( $M = 10.16$ ,  $SD = 7.41$ ). Total years of work experience ranged from seven years to 52 years ( $SD = 11.67$ ), and 30 out of 38 (78.9%) individuals have had some type of previous supervisory experience. Of the 38 participants, 30 identified as White/European American (78.9%), three identified as Black/African American, one identified as Hispanic (2.6%), and four identified as multiple ethnicities (10.5%).

### **Correlation of Supervisor Behavior Ratings and Personal Outcomes**

Correlation analyses were conducted to test if the study supports H1a, H1b, and H1c. The variables included in these analyses were scores calculated for the Abusive Supervision scale and scores calculated on each of the personal outcomes.

#### ***Civilian Only Sample***

To partially test Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c in the civilian-only sample, correlation analyses were conducted. According to correlation analyses, results indicated that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between civilian ratings on perceptions of abusive supervision and their intent to leave score ( $r = 0.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results of this relationship indicate that for the civilian sample, as their ratings of abusive supervision increase, participants' intention to leave also increases. Results of the correlation analyses also indicated that there was a statistically significant negative relationship between perceptions of abusive supervision and participants' satisfaction with supervision style scores ( $r = -0.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This indicates that abusive supervision scores increase, participants' satisfaction with supervision style decreases. Finally, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between abusive supervision scores



and affective commitment scores of the participants ( $r = -0.86, p < .001$ ). Results of this relationship indicate that as their ratings of abusive supervision perceptions increase, a participant's level of affective commitment decreases. The correlation results of the civilian-only sample partially support Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c. Correlation results and additional correlation results not hypothesized can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Civilian Intercorrelations for Personal Outcomes and Abusive Supervisor Ratings*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Intent to Leave <sup>a</sup>	14.71	7.17	(.97)			
2. Satisfaction with Supervision <sup>b</sup>	2.87	1.66	-.92**	(.99)		
3. Affective Commitment <sup>c</sup>	2.70	1.04	-.86**	.88**	(.87)	
4. Abusive Supervisor Rating <sup>d</sup>	3.07	1.59	.89**	-.94**	-.86**	(.99)

*Note.* Civilian;  $n = 261$ ; Each subscale's Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in parentheses. <sup>a</sup> Participant Intent to Leave score, <sup>b</sup> Participant Satisfaction of Supervision Style score, <sup>c</sup> Participant Affective Organizational Commitment score; <sup>d</sup> Abusive Supervisor score.

Bonferroni Correction: \* $p < .013$ . \*\*  $p < .003$ .

***Military Sample***

Correlation analyses were also conducted on the military sample to partially examine Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c. Like the civilian-only sample, results of the military sample indicated that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between ratings on perceptions of abusive supervision and intent to leave scores for participants with military experience ( $r = 0.90, p < .001$ ). As their ratings of abusive supervision

increase, participants with military experience intentions to leave also increases. Results of the correlation analyses also indicated that there was a statistically significant negative relationship between perceptions of abusive supervision and participants' satisfaction with supervision style scores ( $r = -0.98, p < .001$ ). This indicates that participants' with military experience satisfaction with supervision style decreases as the ratings of abusive supervision increase. Finally, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between abusive supervision scores and affective commitment scores of the participants with military experience ( $r = -0.90, p < .001$ ). Results of this relationship indicate that as their ratings of abusive supervision perceptions increase, military personnel's level of affective commitment decreases. Similar to the civilian-only sample, the correlation results partially support Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c. Correlation results and relationships for the military sample can be found in Table 2.

**Table 2***Military Intercorrelations for Personal Outcomes and Abusive Supervisor Ratings*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Intent to Leave <sup>a</sup>	13.37	7.74	(.97)			
2. Satisfaction with Supervision <sup>b</sup>	3.03	1.64	-.91**	(.98)		
3. Affective Commitment <sup>c</sup>	2.79	1.08	-.85**	.93**	(.87)	
4. Abusive Supervisor Rating <sup>d</sup>	2.91	1.67	.90**	-.98**	-.90**	(.99)

*Note.* Military;  $n = 19$ ; Each subscale's Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in parentheses. <sup>a</sup> Participant Intent to Leave score, <sup>b</sup> Participant Satisfaction of Supervision Style score, <sup>c</sup> Participant Affective Organizational Commitment score; <sup>d</sup> Abusive Supervisor score.

Bonferroni Correction: \* $p < .013$ . \*\*  $p < .003$ .

***Civilian and Military Sample***

To partially investigate Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c, correlation analyses were conducted with the 19 original participants with military experience and the 19 matched civilian participants. Results indicated that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between ratings on perceptions of abusive supervision and intent to leave scores ( $r = 0.93$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results of this relationship indicate that for both military and civilian personnel, as ratings of abusive supervision increase, participants' intention to leave also increases. The analyses also indicated that there was a statistically significant negative relationship between abusive supervision scores and affective commitment scores of the participants ( $r = -0.91$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Results of this relationship indicate that as their ratings of abusive supervision perceptions increase, a participant's

level of affective commitment decreases. Finally, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between perceptions of abusive supervision and participants' satisfaction with supervision style scores ( $r = -0.98, p < .001$ ). As abusive supervision scores rise, satisfaction with supervision style decreases. These correlation results partially support Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c. Correlation results for the combined military and civilian sample can be found in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Combined Intercorrelations for Personal Outcomes and Abusive Supervisor Ratings*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Intent to Leave <sup>a</sup>	14.34	8.01	(.98)			
2. Satisfaction with Supervision <sup>b</sup>	2.91	1.72	-.93**	(.99)		
3. Affective Commitment <sup>c</sup>	2.78	1.09	-.87**	.92**	(.87)	
4. Abusive Supervisor Rating <sup>d</sup>	3.06	1.69	.93**	-.98**	-.91**	(.99)

*Note.* Military and Civilian  $n = 38$ ; Each subscale's Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in parentheses. <sup>a</sup>

Participant Intent to Leave score, <sup>b</sup> Participant Satisfaction of Supervision Style score, <sup>c</sup>

Participant Affective Organizational Commitment score; <sup>d</sup> Abusive Supervisor score.

Bonferroni Correction: \* $p < .013$ . \*\*  $p < .003$ .

**ANOVA of Service, Scenario Type, and Personal Outcomes**

Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c suggested that the relationship between perceptions of abusive behavior scenarios and personal outcomes (intent to leave, satisfaction with supervision style, and affective commitment) would be moderated by military experience,

reducing the relationship between perceptions of abusive behavior and individual personal outcomes. A 2 X 2 Factorial ANOVA was conducted to test these relationships.

### *Civilian and Military Sample*

Hypotheses 2a predicted that having military experience would moderate the relationship between perceptions of abusive scenarios and intention to leave, assuming that military experience would reduce this relationship. Results indicated that there was no statistically significant interaction between service type (civilian vs military), scenario type (abusive vs non-abusive), and intention to leave ratings,  $F_{(1, 34)} = 0.77, p = 3.91$ . These results show that individuals with military experience in the abusive supervision condition ( $M = 19.80, SD = 4.44$ ) did not rate their intention to leave statistically significantly lower than civilians who were in the abusive condition ( $M = 22.60, SD = 3.34$ ). Thus, there is no support for Hypothesis 2a.

Hypothesis 2b predicted that military experience would reduce the relationship between perceptions of abusive behavior and affective commitment. The results of the ANOVA indicated that there was no statistically significant interaction between service type, scenario type, and affective commitment ratings,  $F_{(1, 34)} = 0.51, p = .48$ . Individuals with military experience in the abusive supervisor condition ( $M = 1.95, SD = 0.72$ ) did not rate their affective commitment significantly lower than civilians in the abusive scenario condition ( $M = 1.81, SD = 0.49$ ). Therefore, the results did not support Hypothesis 2b.

Hypothesis 2c predicted that military experience would reduce the relationship between perceptions of abusive behavior and an individual's satisfaction with supervision

style. Results showed that there was no statistically significant interaction between service type, scenario, and scores of satisfaction with supervision,  $F_{(1, 34)} = 2.47, p = .13$ . Military personnel in the abusive supervisor condition ( $M = 1.62, SD = 0.76$ ) did not rate their satisfaction with supervision style statistically significantly lower than individuals with only civilian experience ( $M = 1.12, SD = 0.32$ ) in the abusive condition.

Although there were no significant interactions, omnibus results indicated that there was a statistically significant effect in our model. There was a main effect of scenario type on intention to leave ratings,  $F_{(1, 34)} = 195.63, p < .001$ , indicating that individuals in the abusive condition were more likely to rate their intent to leave higher than those in the non-abusive condition. There was also a statistically significant main effect of scenario type on satisfaction with supervision scores,  $F_{(1, 34)} = 380.72, p < .001$ , and affective commitment scores,  $F_{(1, 34)} = 117.61, p < .001$ . Participants in the abusive scenario condition were more likely to rate their satisfaction with supervision style and affective commitment scores lower than those in the non-abusive condition. Results of all means and standard deviations of each analysis can be found in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

**Table 4**

*Descriptives of Factorial ANOVA for Service, Scenario, and Intent to Leave Scores.*

		Intention to Leave Scores		
	Scenario	Mean	SD	<i>n</i>
Civilian	Non-Abusive	7.22	2.22	9
	Abusive	22.60	3.34	10
	Total	15.32	8.37	19
Military	Non-Abusive	6.22	1.85	9
	Abusive	19.80	4.44	10
	Total	13.34	7.74	19
Total	Non-Abusive	6.72	2.05	18
	Abusive	21.20	4.09	20
	Total	14.34	8.01	38

**Table 5**

*Descriptives of Factorial ANOVA for Service, Scenario, and Affective Commitment.*

		Affective Commitment Scores		
	Scenario	Mean	SD	<i>n</i>
Civilian	Non-Abusive	3.83	0.46	9
	Abusive	1.81	0.49	10
	Total	2.77	1.13	19
Military	Non-Abusive	3.72	0.42	9
	Abusive	1.95	0.72	10
	Total	2.79	1.08	19
Total	Non-Abusive	3.78	0.43	18
	Abusive	1.88	0.60	20
	Total	2.78	1.09	38

**Table 6**

*Descriptives of Factorial ANOVA for Service, Scenario, and Satisfaction with Supervision Style.*

		Satisfaction with Supervision Score		
	Scenario	Mean	SD	<i>n</i>
Civilian	Non-Abusive	4.62	0.43	9
	Abusive	1.12	0.32	10
	Total	2.78	1.83	19
Military	Non-Abusive	4.60	0.40	9
	Abusive	1.62	0.76	10
	Total	3.03	1.64	19
Total	Non-Abusive	4.61	0.40	18
	Abusive	1.37	0.62	20
	Total	2.91	1.72	38

### **Core-Self Evaluation Post-Hoc**

At the beginning of the study, participants were asked to rate themselves on the Core-Self Evaluation measure (Judge et al., 2003). The purpose of the Core-Self Evaluation was to serve as a post-hoc analysis if there were no significant results found in Hypothesis 1a or Hypothesis 2a. Since there were no significant interactions between service type, scenario type, and intention to leave like Hypothesis 2a predicted, a correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between Core-Self Evaluation scores ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ) and intention to leave scores ( $M = 14.34$ ,  $SD = 8.01$ ). The purpose of this was to determine if individuals rate themselves low on these traits and, if they do, would it impact their decision to leave the organization for lack of self-confidence that they could find another occupation. Results indicated that there was



no statistically significant relationship between ratings on individuals' core-self evaluations and intent to leave scores ( $r = -0.21, p = .21$ ). The results of this relationship indicate that Core-Self Evaluation scores do not play a statistically significant role in an individual's intentions to leave score in this study.

### **Civilian Sample One-Way ANOVA**

An exploratory one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine if the non-abusive ( $n = 127$ ) or abusive scenario ( $n = 134$ ) type had any main effects on the three personal outcomes of intention to leave, satisfaction with supervision style, and affective commitment. Scenario type did have statistically significant effects on intention to leave, satisfaction with supervision style, and affective commitment scores. Participants in the abusive scenario condition were more likely to rate their intent to leave scores higher than those in the non-abusive condition,  $F_{(1, 259)} = 762.24, p = .0000$ . Participants were also more likely to rate their satisfaction with supervision style lower if they were in the abusive scenario condition compared to the non-abusive scenario condition,  $F_{(1, 259)} = 1695.55, p = .0000$ . Finally, those participants that were in the abusive scenario condition rated their affective commitment scores lower than those who were in the non-abusive scenario condition,  $F_{(1, 259)} = 471.21, p = .0000$ . See Table 7 for means, standard deviations, and effect sizes.

**Table 7***Civilian One-Way ANOVA of Scenario Type on Personal Outcomes*

Measure	Non-Abusive		Abusive		$F(1, 259)$	$\eta^2$
	$M$	$SD$	$M$	$SD$		
Intent to Leave	8.36	3.29	20.73	3.90	762.24***	.75
Satisfaction with Supervision	4.45	0.62	1.36	0.59	1695.55***	.87
Affective Commitment	3.56	0.67	1.89	0.58	471.21***	.65

Note.  $n = 261$ .

Bonferroni Correction: \*\*\* $p < .0003$

**Military Sample One-Way ANOVA**

Similar to the civilian-only sample, an exploratory one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine if the non-abusive ( $n = 9$ ) or abusive scenario ( $n = 10$ ) type had any main effects on the three personal outcomes in participants with military experience. Scenario type did have statistically significant effects on intention to leave, satisfaction with supervision style, and affective commitment scores. Participants with military experience in the abusive scenario condition were more likely to rate their intent to leave scores higher than those in the non-abusive condition,  $F_{(1, 17)} = 72.36, p = .0000$ . Participants with military experience were also more likely to rate their satisfaction with supervision style lower if they were in the abusive scenario condition compared to the non-abusive scenario condition,  $F_{(1, 17)} = 42.07, p = .0000$ . Finally, those participants that were in the abusive scenario condition rated their affective commitment scores lower than those who were in the non-abusive scenario condition,  $F_{(1, 17)} = 41.94, p = .0000$ . See Table 8 for means, standard deviations, and effect sizes.

**Table 8***Military One-Way ANOVA of Scenario Type on Personal Outcomes*

Measure	Non-Abusive		Abusive		$F(1, 259)$	$\eta^2$
	$M$	$SD$	$M$	$SD$		
Intent to Leave	6.22	1.86	19.80	4.44	72.36***	.81
Satisfaction with Supervision	4.60	0.40	1.62	0.24	109.75***	.87
Affective Commitment	3.72	0.42	1.95	0.72	41.94***	.71

*Note.*  $n = 261$ .Bonferroni Correction: \*\*\* $p < .0003$

## CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

### Main Findings

The purpose of the current study was to investigate if individuals who have either been previously or currently enlisted in the military perceive behaviors of abusive supervisors differently compared to individuals who have only had civilian work experience. The study also aimed to investigate any moderating effects of military experience on abusive supervisor behaviors on intention to leave, satisfaction with supervision style, and affective commitment. Overall, the hypothesized relationships in Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c were partially supported by the research. The analyses show that there are relationships between abusive supervisor perceptions and personal outcome scores in the civilian only, military only, and the combined samples with propensity score matches. Results of the 2 X 2 ANOVA did not support Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c via this study, which could be due to small sample sizes as a result of propensity score matching. Military experience did not impact any of the relationships to a significant extent. However, researchers did determine that there were relationships between abusive supervisor ratings and the three personal outcomes in the civilian-only sample and military only sample. An exploratory one-way ANOVA gave researchers a better explanation of these relationships. A post-hoc analysis also indicated that there does not seem to be a significant relationship between an individual's core-self evaluations and intention to leave scores, but the results of the analysis did illustrate a slightly negative relationship between these variables.

### ***Abusive Supervision Effects on Personal Outcomes***

It is apparent from this study that abusive supervisor behaviors impact an individual's scores on intention to leave, satisfaction with supervision style, and affective commitment. The increase in the perception that a supervisor might engage in more abusive behaviors based on a scenario, the more likely it is for an individual to want to separate from the organization, dislike the supervision style, and have lower feelings of emotional commitment to their organization. These findings are also prevalent in other studies that look at samples regarding abusive supervisor behaviors and personal outcomes. In their meta-analysis, Mackey et al. (2017) found that affective commitment had a low to moderate relationship with abusive supervision perceptions. In a similar study, Zhang and Liao (2015) also concluded that abusive supervision is negatively related to organizational commitment and positively related to employee turnover. It is possible that as subordinates in an organization experience abusive supervisor behavior, they are likely to associate these abusive behaviors with the organization and, as a result, their commitment to the organization decreases. Congruent with this, Schyns and Schilling (2013) found medium-sized correlations between destructive leadership and turnover intentions. This finding in previous research holds true for the current research, as the correlation results demonstrated that intention to leave had a positive relationship with perceptions of abusive supervisor behaviors. Even further, as affective commitment to the organization decreases, an individual's intention to leave could increase. This possible relationship is apparent in Table 2 with a negative relationship between affective commitment and intention to leave. According to Tepper et al. (2000), organizational justice fully mediates the effects of abusive supervision on affective commitment. These

findings suggest that individuals' reactions to abusive supervisor behaviors could be explained by their perceptions of justice in the workplace. Organizations that experience commitment issues among their employees may look at how they are handling abusive supervisor claims and if they could be doing more to exercise fair justice among those employees who express concerns with their supervisors.

### **Practical Implications**

Results indicate that perceptions of abusive supervisory behaviors have a relationship with intention to leave and affective commitment. If an organization is having unexplained turnover issues, it may be worthwhile to check into the types of tactics supervisors are using on their subordinates. The behaviors that leaders engage in could be impacting an individual's decision to stay or to leave the organization, as well as their overall affective commitment and emotional attachment to the organization.

Based on previous literature, other outcomes are linked to abusive supervisor behaviors that organizations should be aware of. Prolonged abusive supervisor behaviors can lead to outcomes that work against organizations like aggression, deviance poor morale, absenteeism, turnover, and reduced performance appraisals, both in-role and extra-role (Harris et al., 2007; Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2000). Abusive supervisor behaviors that go unchecked are also associated with employee anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, psychological stress, attitudes, family well-being, and overall well-being (Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2000). Organizations need to be conscious of how supervisors are treating subordinates. Not only do these prolonged abusive behaviors

impact individuals, but they can also have great impacts on organizational performance as a whole if individuals are not performing adequately.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The current study was designed to alleviate some limitations of several previous studies. First, many future directions of previous studies suggested using the Abusive Supervision measure created by Tepper (2000) in studies that examine military samples. Mackey et al. (2017) suggested that Tepper's measure be used across multiple occupations, while Martinko et al. (2013) specifically suggested researching industries such as the military for future abusive supervision research. The current study originally hypothesized relationships between military service experience and how these experiences in this industry impact the perceptions of abusive supervisor behaviors. Although the study was designed to potentially be a start at solving this common limitation, the data collection process for a military sample fell short with the small sample size.

Mackey et al. (2017) also stated that Tepper's (2000) measure be used to measure perceptions so results can be compared across studies. This study used Tepper's measure and adapted the rating scale to better measure the perceptions of individuals by providing participants with a scenario, and then having participants rate their perceived likelihood that other abusive behaviors would occur. Adapting the Abusive Supervision measure to measure perceptions of behaviors rather than the frequency of behaviors will be a start for the field to be able to accurately compare results across multiple studies. Being able to compare results across studies more easily can help researchers understand what

occupations or industries are more or less likely to perceive abusive behaviors as motivational.

### **Limitations**

This study is not free of limitations. The first limitation of the study is the size of the military sample that was collected. There could be multiple explanations for this limitation. It is possible that MTurk may not have enough diverse military personnel using the platform. To complicate the matter further, the screening requirements to participate in the survey could have narrowed this pool even more. Once it was clear that MTurk could not yield a usable sample, the researchers then turned to social media as a possible solution. After posting to multiple Facebook groups and waiting a week, there were no new survey responses to add to the already small sample. There could also be a few explanations for this result. Many of the groups were considered public. The surveys were posted to groups that had no less than 15,000 members. With that many members, the survey posting could have been easily overshadowed by other content, or it was never deemed relevant to the page. When trying to post to private Facebook groups, these groups often had rules such as, “no posting external links” or “no promotions.” These private groups often require your post to be approved by an administrator. Despite best efforts, none of the postings in private groups ever made it by the administrators of the group (possibly due to “group rules”). After cleaning the MTurk data, there were only a total of 19 military participant responses to use in data analysis. This creates sampling bias and a sample so small that, to test the hypotheses even partially, some civilian data had to manually be matched to the military data to yield any kind of usable result. It was



also difficult to try and find exact civilian matches to military matches regarding organizational tenure and supervisor experience, so these characteristics could have created more individual differences, threatening internal validity.

A second limitation of this study is that it is designed very similarly to Brees et al. (2016). As a part of their study, Brees et al. (2016) used video vignettes that displayed only a limited sample of possible abusive supervisor behaviors. The current study had a similar design, as it used written scenarios and the scenarios were then followed by rating the likelihood the supervisor in the scenario would engage in the abusive behaviors. However, the written scenarios only exemplified a narrow sample of abusive behaviors. Like Brees et al. (2016), the use of only a few abusive supervisory behaviors could understate the relationships between the hypothesized relationships. The small sample of behaviors in the scenarios could also impact the generalizability of the results, depending on the combination of abusive behaviors that are displayed in differing situations.

Another limitation of the current study would be the use of an adapted version of Tepper's (2000) Abusive Supervision Measure. Originally, the measure was created for a participant to indicate the frequency of which behaviors their supervisors were engaging in, using scale options such as "I cannot remember him/her using this behavior with me." However, the current study uses an adapted version of the measure by measuring participants' perceptions of the likelihood that the supervisor in the scenario would engage in the other abusive behaviors that were not detailed in the scenario, using scale options such as "Very likely." Using adaptations of the measure makes it hard to compare results across studies of abusive supervision. There should be a standardized adaptation

of this measure that allows researchers to measure perceptions and compare the results across studies.

The fourth limitation of this study is that the military sample had a majority of individuals in the Army (63.2%), as well as the majority of the sample being active duty (89.5%) with no National Guard representation. Although there were no significant results with military experience moderating abusive perceptions and personal outcomes, there are still disproportionate distributions in the sample that could impact the overall results and the generalizability to all military branches and components.

A final limitation of this study is that it analyzed self-report survey data. Many of the studies that have examined relationships with abusive supervision are cross-sectional in nature, rather than examining how relationships with abusive supervisors develop or progress over time, or the impacts that abusive supervisors have on personal outcomes of individuals over time. Continuous use of self-report data can also introduce potential for method bias.

### **Future Directions for Research**

Based on the limitations of the current study and other studies, some future research directions are suggested. Since the current study and many previous studies use survey types of research designs, it may be beneficial for abusive supervision research to continue branching out to more experimental designs to better test causal relationships and expand the generalizability of findings. Although the current study did use an experimental design, there were not enough participants to adequately test the study hypotheses, so it is hard to generalize the results to bigger populations. Researchers

should continue to try and build sample size to enhance generalizability. Also, survey studies using written or video vignettes can only display a limited amount of supervisor behaviors. Increasing the number of abusive supervisor behaviors that are displayed or presenting behaviors in various combinations would increase the generalizability and external validity of study results. Also, designing studies that allow researchers to watch the effects of abusive behaviors on subordinates over time may give a more realistic preview of the situations that influence these behaviors or the amount of time/extent to which it takes a toll on workers.

Another suggestion for future research would be to continue using the Tepper (2000) measure to assess the perceptions that workers have of abusive behaviors, rather than continuing to rate the frequency on which it occurs because the phenomenon is a subjective assessment. Using the Tepper (2000) measure for assessing perceptions of abusive behaviors would make results easier to compare across studies. Also, an area for future direction suggested by Mackey et al. (2017) would be to validate the Abusive Supervision measure by comparing rated perceptions of behavior with direct observations or reports of supervisor behaviors. This would benefit the research by providing objective data for the perceptual ratings that are made by participants.

Finally, there needs to be continued research on measuring the perceptions of abusive supervision in the military and other occupations/industries, such as healthcare, paramilitary, education, customer service, and so forth. Employees in different industries are likely to experience and perceive abusive supervisor behaviors differently depending on their working conditions and situations they encounter. Both the military and

healthcare industries are especially vulnerable to abusive behaviors (Martinko et al., 2013), which could be due to the demands of the occupation, or the risk that is associated with suboptimal decisions in these roles. There will need to be more research on perceptions of abusive supervisor behaviors by military personnel, as well as other occupations, to adequately determine if the demands of certain occupations can create variance in these perceptions. It is important to continue to research the relationship between occupations and abusive supervisors to gain an understanding to what industries are susceptible. Another possible direction could be measuring the perceptions of individuals who have been on varsity sports teams.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the present study provide evidence that individuals, regardless of experience/non-experience in the military, are more likely to report a higher intention to leave, lower satisfaction with supervision style, and lower affective commitment when they perceive supervisor behaviors as abusive. Understanding the relationships between supervisor behaviors and personal outcomes has many possible practical implications for organizations, as it could be a possible or partial explanation for turnover issues or low commitment from employees, as well as having various types of personal health outcomes. The theoretical implications of the present research contribute to previous literature by advancing Tepper's (2000) Abusive Supervision measure and using it to measure the perceived frequency that a supervisor would engage in those behaviors, making it easier to compare results across studies.

Although the current study was unable to collect enough participants with military experience to fully analyze the hypotheses, future research should continue to try and explore these relationships not only in the military but in other occupations as well. It is highly possible that individuals working in different industries can perceive abusive behaviors of their supervisors differently.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### Measure of Core Self-Evaluations (CSES)

Adapted From: Judge, T. A., Erez, A., Bono, J. E., & Thoresen, C. J. (2003)

Below are several statements about yourself with which you may agree or disagree. Below, indicate your agreement or disagreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item.

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

1. I am confident I get the success I deserve in life
2. Sometimes I feel depressed (R)
3. When I try, I generally succeed
4. Sometimes when I fail I feel worthless (R)
5. I complete tasks successfully
6. Sometimes, I do not feel in control of my work (R)
7. Overall, I am satisfied with myself
8. I am filled with doubts about my competence (R)
9. I determine what will happen in my life
10. I do not feel in control of my success in my career (R)
11. I am capable of coping with most of my problems
12. There are times when things look pretty bleak and hopeless to me (R)

(R) = Items scored in reverse

## Appendix B

### Scenarios

**Instructions:** As you read the following situation, please assume you are an employee that answers directly to the supervisor. After reading about the situation and your supervisor, you will be asked a set of questions regarding your feelings and beliefs about the situation.

#### **Abusive Supervisor Scenario:**

You are a new employee at a general retail store. The retail store sells everything from groceries to hardware. While you have some work experience, you don't have experience specific to this kind of store. It is your first week on the job and you are being trained by a supervisor in your department. Throughout the shift, your supervisor repeatedly came to you and instructed you to get to work. As the hours passed, your supervisor grew frustrated with you and finally left you to yourself and avoided speaking to you. The only time the supervisor would talk to you at all is when you started working on a task. After you started on a task, your supervisor would instruct you on how to do the task that you were already working on. You overhear your supervisor telling your coworkers that "if it were up to me, I would fire the new person (meaning you)."

On the next day, you come into your shift to find your co-workers getting yelled at by this same supervisor. Your supervisor starts telling all of their workers that they are all useless and that they are making the department look bad.

#### **Non-Abusive Supervisor Scenario:**

You are a new employee at a general retail store. The retail store sells everything from groceries to hardware. While you have some work experience, you don't have experience specific to this kind of store. The retail store sells everything from groceries to hardware. It is your first week on the job and you are being trained by a supervisor in your department. Throughout the shift, your supervisor repeatedly came to you with new tasks for you to learn and complete. For each task, your supervisor explained the task, demonstrated the task, watched you do the task as they gave feedback, and then left you to work on the task. As you got more comfortable with your new duties, your supervisor provided you with more independence and gave you feedback as needed. When you have had questions, you have found that your supervisor is friendly and welcoming. You overhear your supervisor telling your

coworkers that “if it were up to me, I would keep this new person (meaning you) on forever.”

On the next day, you come into your shift to find your co-workers chatting with this same supervisor. At the end of the conversation, your supervisor starts telling all of their workers that they are a key part of the store’s success, and they are making the department look great.

## Appendix C

### Measure of Intent to Leave

Adapted from: Michaels, C. E., & Spector, P. E. (1982).

Each of the statements below is something that a person might say about his or her job. Based on the information you read in the scenario, you are to indicate your own personal feelings about your job in the scenario by marking how much you agree with each of the statements.

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

How much do you agree with the statement?

1. I would often seriously consider leaving this job \*
2. If you are reading this question, answer with “strongly agree”
3. I would intend to quit this job \*
4. I would start looking for other jobs \*
5. I could see myself staying in this job for a while (R)
6. I would quit this job immediately

(R) = Items scored in reverse

\*Original items from measure



## Appendix D

### Measure of Satisfaction with Supervision Style

Adapted from: Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1974)

Please indicate how satisfied you would be with each aspect of your job that was detailed in the scenario you read. How satisfied would you be with this aspect of your job?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Dissatisfied		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied		Very Satisfied

1. The degree of respect I would receive from the supervisor in the scenario
2. The degree of fair treatment I would receive from the supervisor in the scenario
3. The degree of support I would receive from the supervisor in the scenario
4. The degree of guidance I would receive from the supervisor in the scenario
5. If you are reading this question, answer with "Very Dissatisfied"
6. The overall quality of the supervision I receive in this work

## Appendix E

### Measure of Affective Commitment

Adapted from: Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1997)

Each of the statements below is something that a person might say about his or her job. Based on the information you read in the scenario, you are to indicate your own personal feelings about your job in the scenario by marking how much you agree with each of the statements.

- |                      |   |                               |   |                   |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2 | 3                             | 4 | 5                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree |   | Neither Agree<br>nor Disagree |   | Strongly<br>Agree |
1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization
  2. I would enjoy discussing this organization with people outside of it
  3. I would really feel as if this organization's problems are my own
  4. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I could be to this one
  5. I would not feel like “part of the family” at this organization (R)
  6. I would not feel “emotionally attached” to this organization (R)
  7. If you are reading this question, answer with “strongly agree”
  8. This organization would have a great deal of personal meaning for me
  9. I would not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization (R)

(R) = Items scored in reverse

## Appendix F

### Abusive Supervision Ratings

Adapted from: Tepper (2000)

Based on the scenario you just read, how likely is it that this supervisor would engage in the following behaviors?

- |   | 1                | 2 | 3                              | 4 | 5              |
|---|------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|----------------|
|   | Very<br>Unlikely |   | Neither Likely<br>nor Unlikely |   | Very<br>Likely |
| 1. Ridiculing employees   |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 2. Telling employees their thoughts or feelings are stupid              |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 3. Giving employees the silent treatment                                |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 4. Putting employees down in front of others                            |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 5. Invading employees' privacy  |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 6. Reminding employees of their past mistakes and failures              |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 7. Not giving employees credit for jobs requiring a lot of effort       |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 8. Blaming other employees to save himself/herself embarrassment        |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 9. Breaking promises he/she makes                                       |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 10. Answer this question with "Very Likely"                             |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 11. Expressing anger at employees when he/she is mad for another reason |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 12. Making negative comments about individual employees to others       |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 13. Being rude to employees   |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 14. Not allowing employees to interact with their coworkers             |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 15. Telling employees they are incompetent                              |                  |   |                                |   |                |
| 16. Lying to employees  |                  |   |                                |   |                |

## Appendix G

### Consideration Ratings

Adapted from: Halpin (1957)

Based on the scenario you just read, how likely is it that this supervisor would engage in the following behaviors?

- |                  |   |                                |   |                |
|------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|----------------|
| 1                | 2 | 3                              | 4 | 5              |
| Very<br>Unlikely |   | Neither Likely<br>nor Unlikely |   | Very<br>Likely |
1. Doing personal favors for group members
  2. Doing little things to make it pleasant to be a member of the group
  3. Being easy to understand
  4. Finding time to listen to group members
  5. Keeping to themselves (R)
  6. Looking out for the personal welfare of individual group members
  7. Refusing to explain their actions (R)
  8. Acting without consulting the group (R)
  9. Answering this question with “Very Unlikely”
  10. Backing up the members in their actions
  11. Treating all group members in their actions
  12. Treating all group members as their equals
  13. Being willing to make changes
  14. Being friendly and approachable
  15. Making group members feel at ease when talking with them
  16. Putting suggestions made by the group in operation
  17. Getting group approval on important matters before going ahead

(R) = Items scored in reverse

## Appendix H

### Initiating Structure Ratings

Adapted from: Halpin (1957)

Based on the scenario you just read, how likely would this supervisor engage in the following behaviors?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unlikely		Neither Likely nor Unlikely		Very Likely

1. Making their attitudes clear to the group
2. Trying out their new ideas with the group
3. Ruling with an iron hand
4. Criticizing poor work
5. Speaking in a manner not to be questioned
6. Assigning group members to particular tasks
7. Scheduling the work to be done
8. Maintaining definite standards of performance
9. Emphasizing the meeting of deadlines
10. Answering this question with "Very Likely"
11. Encouraging the use of uniform procedures
12. Making sure that their part in the organization is understood by all group members
13. Asking that group members follow standard rules and regulations
14. Letting group members know what is expected of them
15. Seeing to it that group members are working up to capacity
16. Seeing to it that the work of group members is coordinated

## **Appendix I**

### **Manipulation Check**

In the scenario you read, who were you being trained by?

- a. A coworker
- b. The CEO
- c. A supervisor

In the scenario you read, what was the work environment that was described?

- a. Retail
- b. Healthcare
- c. Education

## Appendix J

### Demographics

Questions with “\*” at the beginning are mandatory

- 1) What is your gender?
  - a. Man
  - b. Woman
  - c. Other
  - d. Prefer not to say
- 2) \*What is your age in years?  
\_\_\_\_\_ years old
- 3) Which of the following best represents your ethnicity? Select all that apply
  - ☐ White/European American
  - ☐ Black/African American
  - ☐ Hispanic
  - ☐ Latinx
  - ☐ Asian
  - ☐ Pacific Islander
  - ☐ Native American
  - ☐ Other
- 4) \*Are you currently employed? (Skip logic)
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 4a) \*Where is your country of employment located?
  - a. United States
  - b. China
  - c. Japan
  - d. India
  - e. Brazil
  - f. United Kingdom
  - g. Germany

- h. Russia
- i. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4b) \*How many years have you been working in your current role/organization?

\_\_\_\_\_

5) \*How many years of total, full-time work experience do you have?

\_\_\_\_\_

6) Have you ever been a supervisor?

- a. Yes
- b. No

7) \*Are you currently serving in the U.S. Military or a Veteran of the U.S. Military?

(Skip logic)

- a. Yes
- b. No

7a) If yes, what branch?

- a. Army
- b. Air Force
- c. Navy
- d. Marine Corps
- e. Coast Guard

7b) Please specify your component:

- a. Active Duty
- b. Reserves
- c. National Guard

7c) Check all that apply:

- ☐ Enlisted
- ☐ Non-commissioned Officer
- ☐ Officer

7d) How long have you served in the U.S. military?

\_\_\_\_\_



7e) What is/was your paygrade?

7f) If no, did you serve in the military in another country?

8) Were you ever a college varsity athlete?

a. Yes

b. No

## **Appendix K**

### **Screening Questions**

#### **Civilian Only Participant Screening Questions**

1. Are you 25 years or older? (Yes/No)
2. Are you proficient at reading and speaking English? (Yes/No)
3. Have you had any military experience? (Yes/No)
4. Are you currently working a full-time job the United States? (Yes/No)
5. Do you have at least 5 years of work experience? (Yes/No)

#### **Military Participant Screening Questions**

1. Are you 25 years or older? (Yes/No)
2. Are you proficient at reading and speaking English? (Yes/No)
3. Are you currently working a full-time job the United States? (Yes/No)
4. Do you have at least 5 years of military service experience? (Yes/No)

## Appendix L

### MTurk Survey Descriptions

#### MTurk Recruitment Posting – Civilian Only Sample

##### **Participant Requirements:**

- Must be 25 years of age or older
- Must be proficient at reading and speaking English
- Must have **NO** military experience
- Must have a full-time job in the United States
- Must have at least 5 years of work experience

By choosing to participate in this 30-minute study, you will be presented with a scenario involving a supervisor in the workplace. You will be asked to rate the supervisor in this scenario on various scales. All information you provide will be kept anonymous, and the risks involved in this survey are minimal. If you participate in the survey, you will be compensated with a \$1.25 payment through MTurk.

If you fail to qualify for the research based on the above participant requirements, the research will end and you will not be compensated.

Please be aware that duplicate attempts to participate in the study will not be compensated. You will only be compensated for your first attempt at the study. Be advised that you must complete the survey in one sitting. You will not be permitted to exit the survey and return later. Read below for instructions if you do decide to withdraw from the study after it has been partially completed:

**To be compensated, you must receive a completion code. That requires clicking to the final screen of the study. If you choose to stop for any reason, you will still need to click through until the end to receive compensation.**

If any questions arise as you participate in this survey, contact Madison Thompson at [met5e@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:met5e@mtmail.mtsu.edu).

Thank you.

## MTurk Recruitment Posting – Military Sample

### Participant Requirements:

- Must be 25 years of age or older
- Must be proficient at reading and speaking English
- Must be currently working a full-time job in the United States
- Must have **at least** 5 years of military service experience

By choosing to participate in this 30-minute study, you will be presented with a scenario involving a supervisor in the workplace. You will be asked to rate the supervisor in this scenario on various scales. All information you provide will be kept anonymous, and the risks involved in this survey are minimal. If you participate in the survey, you will be compensated with a \$1.25 payment through MTurk.

If you fail to qualify for the research based on the above participant requirements, the research will end and you will not be compensated.

Please be aware that duplicate attempts to participate in the study will not be compensated. You will only be compensated for your first attempt at the study. Be advised that you must complete the survey in one sitting. You will not be permitted to exit the survey and return later. Read below for instructions if you do decide to withdraw from the study after it has been partially completed:

**To be compensated, you must receive a completion code. That requires clicking to the final screen of the study. If you choose to stop for any reason, you will still need to click through until the end to receive compensation.**

If any questions arise as you participate in this survey, contact Madison Thompson at [met5e@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:met5e@mtmail.mtsu.edu).

Thank you.

## Appendix M

### Social Media Survey Description

Hello. My name is Madison Thompson, and I am an Industrial-Organizational Psychology Master's student at Middle Tennessee State University. I am conducting a research study examining the relationship between an individual's work experiences and their perceptions of supervisor behaviors. I have created a survey that will help me examine this relationship, and kindly ask that you help me by filling it out. Although there will be no direct benefits or compensation for your participation, you will be helping me contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between worker perceptions of certain supervisory behaviors.

#### **Participant Requirements:**

- Must be 25 years of age or older
- Must be proficient at reading and speaking English
- Must be currently working a full-time job in the United States
- Must have **at least** 5 years of military service experience

If you are interested in participating, please follow the link below:

**Survey Link:** [https://mtsu.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0i89C9Hy4yMyBAG](https://mtsu.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0i89C9Hy4yMyBAG)

This research has been approved by the Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board; Protocol Number: 22-1160 2q.

**Contact:** If you should have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Madison Thompson by email met5e@mtmail.mtsu.edu OR my faculty advisor, Dr. Rick Moffett at rick.moffett@mtsu.edu. You can also contact the MTSU Office of Compliance via telephone (615 494 8918) or by email (compliance@mtsu.edu). This contact information will be presented again at the end of the experiment.

## **Appendix N**

### **Debriefing**

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

The goal of this study is to better understand the relationship between people's perceptions for the behavioral styles of their leaders based on the work experiences they have had (in the military or civilian only). In the survey, you were asked to rate your feelings on three personal outcomes (intent to leave, satisfaction with supervision style, and affective commitment).

You were also to rate your perceptions on the types of behaviors that a supervisor might engage in after reading a random supervisor scenario (abusive supervision scenario or non-abusive supervision scenario).

The data we collect from this study will be used to determine whether employees with certain workplace experiences tend to perceive the same leadership style differently.

Ultimately, knowing this could contribute to improvements in leader-employee relationships.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact us at [met5e@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:met5e@mtmail.mtsu.edu) (primary investigator) or [rick.moffett@mtsu.edu](mailto:rick.moffett@mtsu.edu) (faculty advisor).

## Appendix O

### MTSU IRB Approval Letter

#### IRB

#### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Office of Research Compliance,  
010A Sam Ingram Building,  
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129  
FWA: 00005331/IRB Regn.. 0003571



#### IRBN007 – EXEMPTION DETERMINATION NOTICE

Friday, June 17, 2022

**Protocol Title** *Abusive Supervision: A systematic Comparison between Military and Civilian Leadership Perception*  
**Protocol ID** *22-1160 2q*  
**Principal Investigator** *Madison Thompson (Student)* **Faculty Advisor:** Rick Moffett  
**Co-Investigators** Michael Hein and Mark Frame  
**Investigator Email(s)** *met5e@mtmail.mtsu.edu; rick.moffett@mtsu.edu*  
**Department/Affiliation** Psychology

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the **EXEMPT** review mechanism under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) within the research category **(2) Educational Tests, surveys, interviews or observations of public behavior (Qualtrics Survey)**. A summary of the IRB action and other particulars of this protocol are shown below:

<b>IRB Action</b>	<b>EXEMPT from further IRB Review</b> Exempt from further continuing review but other oversight requirements apply
<b>Date of Expiration</b>	<b>5/31/2023</b> <b>Date of Approval:</b> 6/2/22 <b>Recent Amendment:</b> 6/18/22
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>FIVE HUNDRED AND FORTY (540)</b>
<b>Participant Pool</b>	<b>Healthy adults (18 or older) – Military and Civilian participants recruited through Amazon M Turk platform</b>
<b>Exceptions</b>	Online consent followed by internet-based survey using Qualtrics is permitted (Qualtrics links on file).
<b>Type of Interaction</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-interventional or Data Analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Virtual/Remote/Online Interview/survey <input type="checkbox"/> In person or physical– Mandatory COVID-19 Management (refer next page)
<b>Mandatory Restrictions</b>	<b>1. All restrictions for exemption apply.</b> <b>2. The participants must be 18 years or older.</b> <b>3. Mandatory ACTIVE informed consent.</b> <b>4. Identifiable information, such as, names, addresses, and voice/video data, must not be obtained.</b> <b>5. NOT approved for in-person data collection.</b>
<b>Approved IRB Templates</b>	<b>IRB Templates:</b> Online Informed Consent Scripts <b>Non-MTSU Templates:</b> Recruitment Script(s)
<b>Research Inducement</b>	<b>\$1.25 paid through MTurk using PIs personal funds – NO receipts are necessary.</b> No compensation for non MTurk participants.
<b>Comments</b>	NONE

**Summary of the Post-approval Requirements:** The PI and FA must read and abide by the post-approval conditions (Refer "Quick Links" in the bottom):

- **Final Report:** The Faculty Advisor (FA) is responsible for submitting a final report to close-out this protocol before **5/31/2023**; if more time is needed to complete the data collection, the FA must request an extension by email. **REMINDERS WILL NOT BE SENT. Failure to close-out (or request extension) may result in penalties** including cancellation of the data collected using this protocol or withholding student diploma.
- **Protocol Amendments:** IRB approval must be obtained for all types of amendments, such as:
  - Addition/removal of subject population and sample size.
  - Change in investigators.
  - Changes to the research sites – appropriate permission letter(s) from may be needed.
  - Alternation to funding.
  - Amendments must be clearly described in an addendum request form submitted by the FA.
  - The proposed change must be consistent with the approved protocol and they must comply with exemption requirements.
- **Reporting Adverse Events:** Research-related injuries to the participants and other events, such as, deviations & misconduct, must be reported within 48 hours of such events to [compliance@mtsu.edu](mailto:compliance@mtsu.edu).
- **Research Participant Compensation:** Compensation for research participation must be awarded as proposed in Chapter 6 of the Exempt protocol. The documentation of the monetary compensation must Appendix J and MUST NOT include protocol details when reporting to the MTSU Business Office.
- **COVID-19:** Regardless whether this study poses a threat to the participants or not, refer to the COVID-19 Management section for important information for the FA.

#### COVID-19 Management:

The FA must enforce social distancing guidelines and other practices to avoid viral exposure to the participants and other workers when physical contact with the subjects is made during the study.

- The study must be stopped if a participant or an investigator should test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of the research interaction. This must be reported to the IRB as an "adverse event."
- The FA must enforce the MTSU's "Return-to-work" questionnaire found in Pipeline must be filled and signed by the investigators on the day of the research interaction prior to physical contact.
- PPE must be worn if the participant would be within 6 feet from the each other or with an investigator.
- Physical surfaces that will come in contact with the participants must be sanitized between use
- **FA's Responsibility:** The FA is given the administrative authority to make emergency changes to protect the wellbeing of the participants and student researchers during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the FA must notify the IRB after such changes have been made. The IRB will audit the changes at a later date and the PI will be instructed to carryout remedial measures if needed.

#### Post-approval Protocol Amendments:

The current MTSU IRB policies allow the investigators to implement minor and significant amendments that would not result in the cancellation of the protocol's eligibility for exemption. **Only THREE procedural amendments will be entertained per year (changes like addition/removal of research personnel are not restricted by this rule).**

Date	Amendment(s)	IRB Comments
06/18/2022	1. Participant sample size increased to 270 from 33. 2. The source for the target population expanded: in addition to MTurk, general pulation will be contacted through social media. There will be no compensation for participants recruited in this manner. A new recruitment statement and informed consent are added.	IRBA2022-373

#### Post-approval IRB Actions:

The following actions are done subsequent to the approval of this protocol on request by the PI or on recommendation by the IRB or by both.

Date	IRB Action(s)	IRB Comments
NONE	NONE.	NONE



**Mandatory Data Storage Requirement:**

All research-related records (signed consent forms, investigator training and etc.) must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) at the secure location mentioned in the protocol application. The data must be stored for at least three (3) years after the study is closed. Additionally, the Tennessee State data retention requirement may apply (*refer "Quick Links" below for policy 129*). Subsequently, the data may be destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity of the research subjects. **The IRB reserves the right to modify/update the approval criteria or change/cancel the terms listed in this notice.** Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board  
Middle Tennessee State University

**Quick Links:**

- Post-approval Responsibilities: <http://www.mtsu.edu/irb/FAQ/PostApprovalResponsibilities.php>
- Exemption Procedures: <https://mtsu.edu/irb/ExemptPaperWork.php>
- MTSU Policy 129: Records retention & Disposal: <https://www.mtsu.edu/policies/general/129.php>