

ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AS A SUPERVISORY STRATEGY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN THE APPAREL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

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1. Introduction

Leaders with abusive behavior are considered as one of the most emotionally impactful and distressing experiences for subordinates in the workplace. It is evident that the apparel industry continues to exercise daily abusive supervision. Yet, it unveils a positive and strategic potential, suggesting a novel perspective on redefining abusive supervision as a viable strategy. Therefore, this study investigates organizations' ability to leverage abusive supervision as a supervisory strategy.

2. Research Methodology

An interpretive research philosophy was used in this study, which utilized a qualitative research methodology. Ten in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with production supervisors, and respondents were selected using the convenient sampling technique. Content analysis was performed to analyze the data.

3. Findings and Discussion

To practice abusive supervision as a strategy, supervisors must understand the primary ways of exhibiting abusive supervision, which are mainly identified as direct face-to-face actions and indirectly organized strategies. Supervisors exhibit abusive behaviors in situations involving performance & accountability and workplace behavior & compliance. Production line requirements, supervisors' personal qualities, employee-related factors, and top management pressure lead to abusive supervision. Six key elements: post behavior and feelings of the supervisor, post employee behavior, tactic usage of abusive supervision, potential benefits, and organizational acceptance of abusive supervision as a supervisory strategy determine the likelihood of its strategic usage.

4. Conclusion and Implications

This study offers valuable insights into the literature regarding positive and strategic aspects of abusive supervision and how organizations can utilize abusive supervision as a strategy.

Keywords: Abusive supervision, Apparel industry, Supervisor perspective, Supervisory strategy.