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nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact' (Tepper, 2000, p. 178), abusive

Theory and hypotheses

The mediating role of affective commitment

We drew our hypotheses from the identity-based perspective, which comprises social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel, 1978, 1982, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and its extension, self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner, 1985, 1999; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). The core idea of the identity-based perspective is that a social category (e.g., an organization or a group) is part of the self-concept of an individual who belongs to the category. This part of self-concept represents the socially defined facet of identity, which is called social identity and is a mediating construct that links social context and individual attitudes and behaviours (Ashforth, 2000). For example, when employees identify with their organization, they will act in ways that are consistent with the organization's goals and expectations (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986) and invest more effort. Thus, higher performance is expected when an employee strongly identifies with the organization (Johnson & Saboe, 2010). Identifying with an organization forms not only a cognitive but also an emotional basis for the individual's organization-based identity (Hatch & Schultz, 2000). Hence, an employee's affective commitment, which is defined as 'an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization' (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67), is expected to be associated with the organization-based identity (Johnson & Chang, 2006; Johnson, Chang, & Yang, 2010). Therefore, higher affective commitment is hypothesized to be related to higher performance (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovith, & Topolnytsky, 2002).

From an identity-based perspective (Tajfel, 2010; Turner, 1999), we argue that abusive supervision influences employees' attitudes and behaviours through their self-identities. Previous research has suggested that employees associate their supervisors with the organization and see them as symbols of the organization (Biron & Bamberger, 2012). Thus, employees with an abusive supervisor will also blame their organization (Shoss *et al.*, 2013), as abusive supervision engenders employees' negative work experiences, such as perceived injustice (Tepper, 2000) and feeling disadvantaged in career-related outcomes (Aryee *et al.*, 2007). Consequently, employees will have a weaker identification with the organization due to these negative experiences (e.g., injustice; Johnson & Lord, 2010). Therefore, abusive supervision may decrease employees' identification with the organization. Considering the strong ties between organization-based identity and affective commitment, we further predicted that abusive supervision would reduce employees' affective commitment as well. Combining this prediction with the previous reasoning on the relationship between affective commitment and job performance, we propose that abusive supervision reduces employees' job performance through an identity path. In other words, affective commitment mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and job performance.

Extensive findings have yielded support for the negative relationship between abusive supervision and affective commitment (Aryee *et al.*, 2007; Tepper, 2000; Tepper *et al.*, 2008) and the positive relationship between affective commitment and performance (Meyer & Paunonen, 1989; Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Despite the importance of identity in linking leadership and outcomes (Lord & Brown, 2003), little is known about the role of followers' identities in the abusive supervision–job performance relationship. Previous research has suggested mediators in the abusive supervision–job performance relationship from a stress perspective (i.e., emotional exhaustion; Aryee *et al.*, 2008) and social exchange perspective (i.e., leader–member exchange [LMX]; Xu, Huang, Lam, & Miao, 2012). In addition to considering the effect of

abusive supervision on emotional exhaustion and LMX, we argue that abusive supervision damages employees' organization-based identities as well. Consequently, we predicted that affective commitment mediates the abusive supervision–job performance relationship, even after incorporating emotional exhaustion and LMX as competing mediators. This led to our first hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 1*: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and job performance.

The moderating role of FWSS

According to the identity-based perspective, there are different levels or types of self-identities (e.g., identity on the individual, interpersonal, or collective level; Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999) and their salience may vary (Turner & Onorato, 1999). Ashforth (2000) further suggested that differences in the salience of identities could allow individuals behave differently in the same social context. Following this perspective, we proposed that FWSS, the salience of the individual work-based identity in the future (Strauss *et al.*, 2012), would influence employees' identities in the organization in response to abusive supervision.

Future work self salience is the salience of future work selves, which represents the ease of construction and clarity of an individual's hoped-for work-based identity (Strauss *et al.*, 2012). Because employees in modern organizations have been playing a more active role in pursuing jobs fitting their values and needs (Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006), rather than passively reacting to the environment (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010), clear and positive future work-based identities can serve as incentives and compasses for career development (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Meara, Day, Chalk, Phelps, & Jeanne, 1995; Strauss *et al.*, 2012). A higher level of FWSS leads to proactive career behaviours (e.g., thinking about future possibilities), which promote an employee's personal career goals that match their future self-image (Strauss *et al.*, 2012).

Future-oriented identities also enable individuals to observe the incongruence between the desired future and current reality (Strauss *et al.*, 2012) and be more aware of the situational constraints (Atance & O'Neill, 2001). Therefore, employees with salient future work selves will be more sensitive to adverse working conditions within the organization and more likely to perceive them as current obstacles to their positive future career goals. Because abusive supervision represents a sustained hostile behaviour within the organization (Tepper, 2007), it is likely to be perceived as an adverse working condition for employees. Thus, high-FWSS employees will be more likely to see abusive supervision as an obstacle to their career goals and be less tolerant of it. Given that a leader is seen as a symbol of the organization for employees (Biron & Bamberger, 2012), it is reasonable to argue that high-FWSS employees would be more likely to lower their collective identities with the organization that has a high level of abusive supervision. As a result, the deleterious impact of abusive supervision on the identities associated with the current work for high-FWSS employees will be more severe than for employees with low FWSS. In other words, we expected that higher levels of FWSS would amplify the detrimental effect of abusive supervision on affective commitment.

In contrast, employees with low FWSS do not have a clear picture of their future work-based self (Strauss *et al.*, 2012); hence, they are less likely to be aware of the incongruence between their desired future and present reality. Thus, low-FWSS

employees may not see abusive supervision as obstructive on their way to future career goals as their high-FWSS colleagues do. Therefore, the negative impact of abusive supervision on the identities with the current organization will be less severe for employees with low FWSS. Thus, a less detrimental effect on affective commitment caused by abusive supervision for employees with low FWSS would be expected.

In addition, previous research has found that the meaning of work – a dimension of psychological empowerment – strengthens the abusive supervision–job performance relationship (Harris *et al.*, 2007). Defined as the value of work purpose based on one's own beliefs and ideals (Spreitzer, 1995), the meaning of work can be seen as the importance or centrality of identity with current work. We controlled for the meaning of work in the current research to investigate the unique role of FWSS as a future-oriented and work-based identity in the abusive supervision–job performance relationship.

As noted previously, affective commitment was expected to mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and job performance. Therefore, FWSS will moderate the indirect effect of abusive supervision on job performance through affective commitment (a moderated mediation model), as displayed in Figure 1. When employees have a clear picture of their positive work-based selves, their performance will be more severely impaired by abusive supervision through a decrease in affective commitment.

As we proposed that affective commitment would mediate the abusive supervision–job performance relationship after the incorporation of emotional exhaustion and LMX as competing mediators, we anticipate that FWSS, as a type of identity salience, will not moderate the indirect effect of abusive supervision on job performance via emotional exhaustion or LMX. Emotional exhaustion represents an individual's stress reaction (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996), and LMX concerns the dyadic relationship between the supervisor and subordinate (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995); both concepts have rather weak associations with self-identity. Therefore, we expected that FWSS would moderate the indirect relationship between abusive supervision and job performance through affective commitment, but not the indirect path through emotional exhaustion or LMX. This leads to our second hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 2:*   FWSS moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and affective commitment. Specifically, the negative relationship between abusive supervision and affective commitment is stronger when FWSS is high.
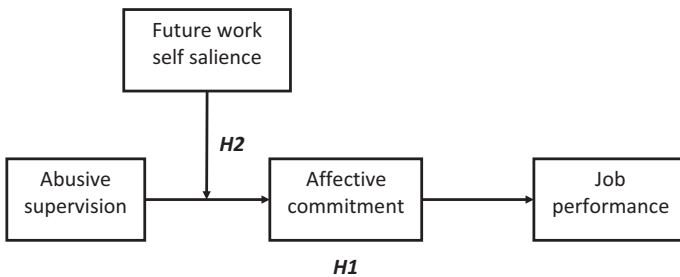

Figure 1. Abusive supervision and job performance: The mediating role of affective commitment and moderating role of future work self salience.

Method

Participants and procedures

We collected data from 717 telesales agents in a telemarketing centre of a large insurance company in China. Participants were from 97 teams; each team worked in an office unit and reported directly to a specific supervisor. Participation was voluntary, and all participants were assured of the anonymity of their responses. Data were gathered in three waves. At Time 1, employees evaluated their levels of FWSS and LMX and their supervisors' abusive supervision. One week later, at Time 2, participants evaluated their affective commitment, the meaning of work, and emotional exhaustion. Job performance data collected at Time 3 were employees' monthly sales performance for the month following Time 2.

In the first two waves, 579 participants completed the Time 1 questionnaires, of which 480 also completed questionnaires at Time 2, for a response rate of 66.95%. Their demographic data were as follows: 60.20% of the employees (n = 289) were female; the average age was 24.94 years (ranging from 19 to 49); and 46.50% had high school degrees and 41.00% had college degrees. To explore the possibility of differences between participants who completed both phases of the study (n = 480) and those who dropped after the Time 1 (n = 99), we tested for a non-response bias using analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was no significant difference found between the groups on gender, $F(1, 577)$ = 1.51, *ns*; age, $F(1, 577)$ = 0.33, *ns*; educational level, $F(1, 576)$ = 1.17, *ns*; abusive supervision, $F(1, 577)$ = 1.63, *ns*; or FWSS, $F(1, 577)$ = 0.00, *ns*. Thus, no evidence of non-response bias was found.

Measures

Abusive supervision

Abusive supervision was rated by employees on a 5-item scale developed by Mitchell and Ambrose (2007). This shortened version of an abusive supervision measurement has been shown to represent the content of abusive supervision (Tepper *et al.*, 2009) and has acceptable reliability and validity (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). An example item is 'My supervisor ridicules me'. Higher scores represent higher levels of abusive supervision. Cronbach's α for abusive supervision in this study was .91.

Future work self salience

Future work self salience was measured by Strauss *et al.*'s (2012) 5-item FWSS scale. The scale was modified from the measure of salience of possible selves (King & Patterson, 2000; King & Raspin, 2004). Participants were asked to 'mentally travel into the future' and, while imagining their future work selves, rate the salience of the future work selves. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Sample items include 'I am very clear about who and what I want to become in my future work', 'This future is very easy for me to imagine', and 'The type of future I want in relation to my work is very clear in my mind'. Higher scores represent more salience in the future work self. Cronbach's α for FWSS in this study was .87.

Affective commitment

Affective commitment was measured by the 6-item affective dimension of the organizational commitment scale (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). A sample item is 'I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization'. Higher scores represent higher commitment to the organization. Cronbach's α for affective commitment in this study was .62.

Job performance

We obtained job performance data for a period of 1 month after Time 2 from company records. Total contracted sales of employees in the 1-month period were used as indicators of their job performance. The performance data we received were standardized from the raw data of the company for confidentiality.

Control variables

Participants' demographic characteristics, including gender, age, and education level, were measured as control variables, because they may affect employee responses to interpersonal mistreatment (Aquino & Douglas, 2003).

To examine the mediating effect of affective commitment in the abusive supervision–job performance relationship, mediators found in previous studies, including employees' emotional exhaustion and LMX, were controlled. Emotional exhaustion was measured by the 5-item exhaustion dimension of the Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey (MBI-GS; Maslach *et al.*, 1996). Respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point scale (0 = never, 6 = every day). A sample item is 'I feel emotionally drained from my work'. Higher scores represent higher levels of emotional exhaustion at work. Cronbach's α for emotional exhaustion in this study was .92. A 7-item scale developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) was modified to measure LMX. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). A sample item is 'My leader well understands my job problems and needs'. Cronbach's α for LMX in this study was .89.

The meaning of work was also controlled because it has been found to be a moderator in the abusive supervision–job performance relationship. The meaning of work was measured by the 3-item meaning of work dimension of the psychological empowerment scale developed by Spreitzer (1995). Respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). A sample item is 'The work I do is very important to me'. Higher scores represent higher levels of meaning of work. Cronbach's α for the meaning of work in this study was .88.

Results

Preliminary analysis

According to Tepper's (2000) definition, abusive supervision is an employee's subjective perception of the leader's abusive behaviours, rather than the objective measure of the actual abusive behaviours. Hence, employees under the same leader may have different perceptions of abusive supervision (Wu & Hu, 2009), and it is the individual perception that influences employee's subsequent attitudes and behaviours. Considering that FWSS is also an individual characteristic, it was preferable to test our hypothesized model at the

individual level. However, as all participants in the current research were working in teams, it was possible that the data we collected were non-independent. We computed intraclass coefficients (ICCs; Shrout & Fleiss, 1979) to test this possibility. The ICC1s, which indicate the amount of variance explained by group membership, were .05 for abusive supervision, .12 for FWSS, .13 for affective commitment, .09 for meaning of work, .06 for emotional exhaustion, .09 for LMX, and .12 for sales performance. The ICC2s, which indicate the reliability of group means, were .21 for abusive supervision, .41 for FWSS, .43 for affective commitment, .33 for meaning of work, .22 for emotional exhaustion, .34 for LMX, and .40 for sales performance. According to Kenny (1995), the ICC1s of FWSS, affective commitment, and performance revealed a 'medium' effect of group membership. To eliminate the impact of between-group variance, we controlled for the group-level variances of all study variables during the estimation of our proposed model.

To establish the discriminant validity of the self-rated variables (abusive supervision, FWSS, and LMX at Time 1; affective commitment, meaning of work, and emotional exhaustion at Time 2), we performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using Mplus 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2012). The 6-factor model (i.e., all variables are independent of each other) provided a generally good fit to the data, $\chi^2(419) = 1482.42$, $p < .01$, comparative fit index (CFI) = .88, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = .87, and root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .07. According to the chi-square difference tests, the 6-factor model fits the data significantly better than the 5-factor model (i.e., combining abusive supervision and FWSS for active divergence), $\chi^2(424) = 2753.26$, $p < .01$, CFI = .74, TLI = .72, and RMSEA = .11; the 2-factor model (i.e., combining variables in each of the two waves), $\chi^2(433) = 5544.26$, $p < .001$, CFI = .43, TLI = .39, and RMSEA = .16; and the 1-factor model, $\chi^2(434) = 6605.80$, $p < .001$, CFI = .31, TLI = .26, and RMSEA = .17. Therefore, the results of CFA supported the research variables' discriminant validity.

Means, standard deviations, zero-order correlations, and scale reliabilities (α) of the research variables are presented in Table 1. As expected, abusive supervision had a significant negative correlation with affective commitment ($r = -.24$, $p < .01$), while FWSS had a significant positive correlation with affective commitment ($r = .28$, $p < .01$). Affective commitment was significantly correlated with sales performance ($r = .17$, $p < .01$). Employees' gender was positively correlated with affective commitment ($r = .09$, $p < .05$) and sales performance ($r = .17$, $p < .01$). Employees' age was negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion ($r = -.11$, $p < .05$) and positively correlated with affective commitment ($r = .10$, $p < .05$) and sales performance ($r = .16$, $p < .01$). Employees' educational level had no significant correlation with any of the research variables. Thus, we excluded educational level from further analysis.

Hypothesis tests

To examine the role of FWSS in the relationship between abusive supervision and performance via affective commitment, we used the 'first stage moderation model' approach (Edwards & Lambert, 2007), which refers to a model with the moderating effect taking place on the first stage of the indirect effect of *X* on *Y* through *M*. In our model, affective commitment played a mediating role in the relationship between abusive supervision and sales performance, and FWSS moderated the path from abusive supervision to affective commitment. Thus, there was a conditional indirect effect of abusive supervision on sales performance at different levels of FWSS. In addition,

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender	1.60	0.49	—									
2. Age	24.94	4.19	.16**	—								
3. Educational level	2.60	0.70	.01	.17**	—							
4. Meaning of work	5.92	1.08	−.07	.00	.01	(.88)						
5. Emotional exhaustion	2.24	1.42	−.02	−.11*	.00	−.28**	(.92)					
6. Leader–member exchange	5.55	1.14	−.04	−.05	.05	.44**	−.11*	(.89)				
7. Abusive supervision	2.45	1.70	−.06	−.01	−.02	−.24**	.27**	−.15*	(.91)			
8. Future work self salience	4.97	1.37	−.01	−.02	.06	.30**	−.21**	.44**	.04	(.87)		
9. Affective commitment	4.71	1.10	.09*	.10*	.02	.45**	−.43**	.28**	−.24**	.28**	(.62)	
10. Sales performance	0.00	1.00	.17**	.16**	−.02	.08	−.09	−.01	−.01	.02	.17**	—

Notes. N = 480. Reliability coefficients are reported along the diagonal. Gender was coded as follows: 1 = male, 2 = female; Educational level was coded as follows: 1 = middle school or below, 2 = high school degrees, 3 = associate degrees, 4 = bachelor degrees, 5 = master degrees or above. *p < .05; **p < .01.

considering that participants were nested in groups with a common supervisor for each team, we built a model that included the random effect of group and analysed it using the hierarchical linear modelling approach of Mplus 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2012).

Hypothesis 1 proposed that affective commitment mediates the abusive supervision–job performance relationship. First, we examined the mediating effect of affective commitment by controlling for gender and age. To account for the impact of group variance, we added the correlations of all study variables to the group level. The results of mediation analysis showed that the indirect effect of abusive supervision on job performance through affective commitment was $-.024$ ($SE = .008$, $p < .01$, 95% confidence interval [CI] = [-0.040, -0.009]), which suggested a significant mediating effect. Next, after incorporating emotional exhaustion and LMX as competing mediators and controlling for gender, age, and meaning of work, the indirect effect of abusive supervision on job performance through affective commitment was remained significant (*Estimate* = $-.013$, $SE = .006$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [-0.026, -0.0003]). In contrast, the indirect effect through emotional exhaustion was $-.002$ ($SE = .008$, *ns*, 95% CI = [-0.017, 0.013]), and the indirect effect through LMX was $.003$ ($SE = .003$, *ns*, 95% CI = [-0.003, 0.008]), neither of which was significant. These results showed that, with emotional exhaustion and LMX incorporated as competing mediators, affective commitment still had a significant mediating effect on the abusive supervision–job performance relationship. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

We then examined the proposed moderated mediation hypothesis (Hypothesis 2) following the procedure suggested by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007). First, we investigated the conditional indirect effect and controlled for gender and age. To account for the impact of group variance, group level (Level 2) intercepts of all individual level (Level 1) variables were set to free correlated. The results showed that the abusive supervision–FWSS interactive effect on affective commitment was significant (*Estimate* = $-.08$, $SE = .03$, $p < .01$). Moreover, FWSS significantly moderated the indirect effect of abusive supervision on performance through affective commitment. Specifically, the indirect effect was $-.036$ ($SE = .012$, $p < .01$, 95% CI = [-0.058, -0.013]) when FWSS was high (+1 *SD*) versus $-.004$ ($SE = .009$, *ns*, 95% CI = [-0.021, 0.013]) when FWSS was low (-1 *SD*). The effect of the difference between the two conditions was $-.032$ ($SE = .015$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [-0.060, -0.003]), indicating that the moderating effect of FWSS on the indirect effect was significant.

Next, as shown in Table 2, after incorporating emotional exhaustion and LMX as competing mediators and controlling for participants' gender, age, and the meaning of work, the abusive supervision–FWSS interactive effect on affective commitment remained significant (*Estimate* = $-.08$, $SE = .03$, $p < .01$). We did a simple slopes test at ±1 standard deviation of FWSS. The results are presented in Figure 2. Abusive supervision was negatively related to affective commitment for employees with high FWSS (+1 *SD*; *Estimate* = $-.16$, $SE = .04$, $p < .01$), but not significant for employees with low FWSS (-1 *SD*; *Estimate* = $.05$, $SE = .04$, *ns*).

We further investigated the conditional indirect effect of FWSS on the abusive supervision–performance relationship through affective commitment, emotional exhaustion, and LMX. As shown in Table 3, the conditional indirect effect of FWSS on abusive supervision–job performance relationship via affective commitment was significant when FWSS was high (+1 *SD*; *Estimate* = $-.024$, $SE = .011$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [-0.045, -0.003]), but not significant when FWSS was low (-1 *SD*; *Estimate* = $.007$, $SE = .008$, *ns*, 95% CI = [-0.008, 0.023]). Their difference, as the indicator of the conditional indirect effect, was $-.031$ ($SE = .016$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [-0.062, -0.0003]), which was

significant. In contrast, the conditional indirect effect via emotional exhaustion (*difference* = −.002,

Table 3. The conditional indirect effect of abusive supervision on job performance (±1 *SD* of future work self salience [FWSS])

Mediator	Level of FWSS	Job performance	
		Estimate (SE)	Confidence interval
Affective commitment	−1 *SD* FWSS	.007 (.008)	[−0.008, 0.023]
	+1 *SD* FWSS	−.024 (.011)*	[−0.045, −0.003]
	Difference	−.031 (.016)*	[−0.062, −0.0003]
Emotional exhaustion	−1 *SD* FWSS	.000 (.002)	[−0.004, 0.003]
	+1 *SD* FWSS	−.003 (.011)	[−0.024, 0.019]
	Difference	−.002 (.010)	[−0.021, 0.016]
Leader–member exchange	−1 *SD* FWSS	.008 (.008)	[−0.008, 0.024]
	+1 *SD* FWSS	.000 (.001)	[−0.003, 0.002]
	Difference	−.009 (.009)	[−0.025, 0.008]

Notes. N = 480. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

mediates the abusive supervision–job performance relationship and how FWSS moderates the indirect relationship between abusive supervision and job performance via affective commitment.

The findings of the current research supported our mediation hypothesis. Consistent with the identity-based perspective (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1999), we found that affective commitment mediated the abusive supervision–sales performance relationship, even after incorporating emotional exhaustion and LMX as competing mediators. This result suggests that, in addition to considering stress (Aryee *et al.*, 2008) or harm to exchange relationships (Xu *et al.*, 2012) caused by an abusive leader, employees also see the leader as part of a social context that can damage their organization-based identity. This damage to employees' identities, as indicated by lower affective commitment, will weaken their job performance.

Consistent with the identity-based perspective (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1999), our results also provide support for the moderating role of FWSS in the relationship between abusive supervision and job performance. First, we found that FWSS had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between abusive supervision and affective commitment. Furthermore, a moderated mediation analysis showed that the indirect effect of abusive supervision on job performance through affective commitment was stronger for employees with high FWSS and these results remained significant when emotional exhaustion and LMX were present as competing mediators. In contrast, FWSS did not moderate the indirect path of abusive supervision to job performance via emotional exhaustion or LMX, suggesting that employees with higher FWSS – who have salient hoped-for work-based identities – were more likely to have their job performance influenced by abusive supervision via the identity path rather than through other paths.

Our study has contributed to the existing literature on abusive supervision and identity theory in three ways. First, we advanced the identity approach in the area of occupational and organizational behaviour by demonstrating that the salience of the hoped-for work-based identity plays an important role in identity-based processes in organizational settings. Previous research had posited that there are different salience levels of identity (Turner & Onorato, 1999) and called for research investigating the role of identity salience in the identity processes. To the best of our knowledge, the current research is the first to

reveal how employees' self-identity salience affects the impact of working events and situations on their work-based identity. As a post-hoc sensitivity test, we reviewed a possible moderating effect of the meaning of work (which indicates the centrality of work-based identity) while controlling for FWSS and found that the meaning of work did not moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and affective commitment ($B = -.35$, ns). This result implies that, beyond the centrality of identity, the salience of identity plays a unique role in the identity process.

Second, we investigated the possible adverse effect of high FWSS at work. FWSS is a concept based on hoped-for possible selves, which represents an individual's hoped-for self in the future (Markus & Nurius, 1986). As a representative of a more specific and work-based future self, FWSS is regarded as a positive construct. Employees with higher FWSS have a clear picture of their future selves and have higher motivation for career development and proactive behaviour (Strauss *et al.*, 2012). However, as shown in the current study, the current affective commitment of employees with high FWSS is more easily affected by an adverse environment, namely abusive supervision. This result may have important implications for research on FWSS or other identity-related constructs in organizations.

Third, while previous research had primarily taken either a stress perspective and examined emotional exhaustion as a mediator (Aryee *et al.*, 2008; Harris *et al.*, 2007) or a social exchange perspective and examined LMX as a mediator (Xu *et al.*, 2012) in the abusive supervision–job performance relationship, we incorporated these two variables as competing mediators in the identity-based model and the mediating effect of affective commitment and the moderating effect of FWSS in the abusive supervision–job performance relationship were demonstrated. The results showed that the identity path explained more variance than the paths grounded in a stress or social exchange perspective. Furthermore, FWSS, an indicator of the salience of the hoped-for work-based identity, was found to moderate the identity-based path of the abusive supervision–sales performance relationship via affective commitment, but not via other potential mediation paths. These findings hint that the identity component accounts for a considerable part of the effect of abusive supervision on workplace outcomes, such as job performance.

Practical implications

The findings of the current study offer several practical implications. First, organizations should consider the possible double-edged effect of FWSS. On one hand, employees higher in FWSS are expected to have positive emotions at work (Sheldon, Kasser, Smith, & Share, 2002). Because positive emotions were found to be a predictor of creativity (Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw, 2005), higher FWSS employees may demonstrate more creativity in their work, which is beneficial for the organization. On the other hand, employees higher in FWSS have a clear image of their work-based selves (Strauss *et al.*, 2012) and are more likely to have their affective commitment and performance affected by adverse environmental situations, which could result in huge losses to the organizations. Thus, targeted treatment is needed for the high-FWSS employees. Building a work environment with less negative working experiences (e.g., injustice) would help them fulfil their potential and create greater value for the organization.

Second, attention should be paid to the leaders of teams. Organizations should set leadership training programmes targeting on abusive supervision – lectures, role-exchanging sessions, and group discussions – especially for leaders who are high in abusive supervision. In addition, because the high-FWSS employees are more likely to

have their affective commitment and job performance affected by abusive supervision, organizations should pay special attention to leaders' abusive behaviours or intentions in teams with a majority of high-FWSS employees and provide a less abusive work environment to increase affective commitment of those employees high in FWSS.

Limitations and directions for future research

We also must consider some limitations of the current study, and we simultaneously suggest directions for future research. First, drawing upon an identity-based perspective (Tajfel, 1982; Turner & Onorato, 1999), we argued that affective commitment mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and sales performance. Although affective commitment was expected to be associated with the organization-based identity, we acknowledge that they are not synonymous (van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). Affective commitment here acted as a proxy for organization-based identity. We recommend that future research directly measures identity as a mediator in the relationship between abusive supervision and outcomes. Doing so will provide a clearer understanding of the identity path through which abusive supervision affects organizational outcomes.

Second, we reasoned that employees who have salient hoped-for work-based identity are more likely to direct their actions accordingly and will be less tolerant to adverse aspects of the organization (e.g., abusive supervision), which act as obstacles on their way to the positive future identity. In other words, a high level of FWSS explains a more severe decrease in affective commitment under abusive supervision. While the current study focused on one type of identity salience (hoped-for work-based identity salience), future research could address other types of identity salience – such as the leader-related identity salience and the current team-based identity salience – to obtain a clearer picture of the identity-based mechanism of the relationship between abusive supervision and job performance.

Third, we chose to study the effect of abusive supervision on job performance in the current research because the goal of improving performance is a crucial objective for organizations (Gupta & Govindarajan, 1984). In addition to performance, the high-FWSS employees may also be more likely to leave the organization under abusive supervision because of their decreased affective commitment. Future research should focus on turnover intentions or behaviours of high-FWSS employees who are under abusive supervision. This line of investigation would clarify the identity consequences of abusive supervision and the impact of identity salience on workplace outcomes.

Conclusion

In summary, the current research drew on the identity-based perspective to investigate the role of affective commitment and FWSS on the effect of abusive supervision on job performance. The findings revealed that affective commitment mediated the relationship between abusive supervision and job performance even after incorporating emotional exhaustion and LMX as competing mediators. In addition, the identity-based path of abusive supervision to job performance via affective commitment was stronger for employees with high FWSS than for those with low FWSS, providing evidence of the impact of identity salience. With these findings on the identity-based process of the abusive supervision–job performance relationship and suggested future directions, we hope this research will serve as a catalyst for a more advanced and comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of abusive supervision–outcome relationships.

Acknowledgements

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