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ความรู้สึกถูกควบคุมดูแลที่ไม่เหมาะสมและความตั้งใจออกจากงานของพนักงานส่วนหน้า: บทบาทการส่งผ่านของตัวแปรความเครียดจากการทำงาน

Abusive Supervision and Frontline Employee Turnover Intentions: the Mediating Role of Work Stress

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บทคัดย่อ

    งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจความสัมพันธ์ทางตรงและทางอ้อม ระหว่างความรู้สึกถูกควบคุมดูแลที่ไม่เหมาะสม ความเครียดจากการทำงาน และความตั้งใจออกจากงาน ของพนักงานส่วนหน้าในเขตกรุงเทพฯ โดยใช้แบบสอบถามเป็นเครื่องมือในการรวบรวมข้อมูล กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ตอบแบบสอบถามจำนวน 368 คน โดยใช้เทคนิคการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบง่าย ทดสอบสมมติฐานโดยการวิเคราะห์อิทธิพลตัวแปรจากโมเดลสมการโครงสร้างกำลังสองน้อยที่สุด (PLS-SEM) ผลการวิจัยพบว่าทุกตัวแปรมีความสัมพันธ์ทางตรงเชิงบวกอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ โดยการความรู้สึกถูกควบคุมดูแลที่ไม่เหมาะสมมีอิทธิพลทางตรงต่อความตั้งใจออกจากงาน ความรู้สึกถูกควบคุมดูแลที่ไม่เหมาะสมมีอิทธิพลทางตรงต่อความเครียดจากการทำงาน และความเครียดจากการทำงานมีอิทธิพลทางตรงต่อความตั้งใจออกจากงาน นอกจากนี้ยังพบความสัมพันธ์ทางอ้อมอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติระหว่างความรู้สึกถูกควบคุมดูแลที่ไม่เหมาะสม และความตั้งใจออกจากงานผ่านทางตัวแปรส่งผ่านความเครียดจากการทำงาน ผลการวิจัยนี้สามารถนำไปใช้เป็นข้อมูลในการบริหารงานด้านความตั้งใจออกจากงานของพนักงานส่วนหน้า โดยเฉพาะพฤติกรรมของหัวหน้างานที่ส่งผลต่อความเครียดจากการทำงานและความตั้งใจออกจากงานของพนักงาน

คำสำคัญ: ความรู้สึกถูกควบคุมดูแลที่ไม่เหมาะสม ความเครียดจากการทำงาน ความตั้งใจออกจากงาน

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore the direct and indirect relationship between abusive supervision, work stress, and turnover intention of frontline employees in Bangkok. A questionnaire was used as a tool to collect data. The selected sample size was 368 by using a simple random sampling technique. Further, the partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique was implemented. The finding revealed positive and significant effects among the direct path relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention; abusive supervision and work stress; work stress and turnover intention. Moreover, the indirect path relationship of work stress between the relationship of abusive supervision and turnover intention was also positive and significant. This study has substantial implications for frontline employees concerning turnover intention. That is the supervisor's behavior is related to work stress and turnover intention.

Keywords: Abuse supervision, Work stress, Turnover intention

Introduction

The global employee turnover rate from 2010 to 2018 reported the significance of increasing (Work Institute, 2019). The issue has become a critical problem and major attention (Li, Kim & Zhao, 2017). Employee resignation financially affects the human resource management of the organization. The impacts are in both direct and indirect forms. The direct impact is related to the cost of recruiting and training new employees. The indirect impact is related to the inefficient and lower volume in the production of goods or services during the period of recruiting or training new employees. On one hand, employees are considered the most essential intangible resources in managing an organization's operation and driving organizational goals. Especially if it is an employee who has the expertise and specialist knowledge in the job, it will affect and cause damage to the organization (Mobley, 1982). These intangible resources are employee's abilities, knowledge, and experience that can't be replaced. Employee leaving an organization might be able to replace physically, however, employee's skills and knowledge cannot be exactly replaced by other new workers, as each individual possesses different skills and experiences. Several reasons influence the employee's intentions to leave their job. For example, they are not satisfied with their works, lack of support from their supervisor or colleagues, high work

stress, low pay and lack of benefit packages, bad working conditions, lack of organizational commitment, and other dispositional factors such as self-esteem, supervisor locus of control (Maertz et al., 2016). This phenomenon happens especially with the frontline employee such as call center workers, hotel workers, bank workers, who always communicate and interact directly with the customer (Bamfo, Dogbe & Mingle, 2018; Cheng et al., 2013). By nature of the job, it is risky to get stressed and high turnover intention (Chattrawanit & Jadesadalug, 2019; Cho et al., 2017). They are considered the heart and soul of a service organization (Kashif, Braganca, Awang & Cyril De Run, 2017), and whenever they leave, the quality of services offered is adversely affected. Past researches (Maetz et al., 2007; Shih-Tse Wang, 2014). proposed the relationship between supervisor behavior and turnover intention. They empirically examined the causal relationship among dimensions of perceived supervisor support and turnover intention. The results are a mix. Few studies revealed that supervisor behavior affects turnover intention (Lindblom, Kajalo & Mitronen, 2015; Maetz et al., 2007). However, others reported insignificance in the relationship (Greenbaum et al., 2013). These show that there may be other interfering variables that exist across different contexts. In meeting this research gap, the current study looked at how frontline employee work stress could mediate the relationship between abusive supervisor behavior and employee turnover intentions.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To explore the direct relationship between abusive supervision, work stress, and turnover intention of frontline employees in Bangkok.

2. To explore the indirect relationship between abusive supervision, work stress, and turnover intention of frontline employees in Bangkok.

Literature review and hypothesis development

Abusive supervision refers to the extent to which a supervisor engages in consistent hostile verbal and non-verbal actions towards a subordinate, excluding physical contact (Richard et al., 2020). It happens when subordinates in an organization feel that their supervisor treats them negatively and aggressively (Tepper, 2000). Previous studies found abusive supervision lead to several organizational problems such as reduced productivity and increased legal costs (Inness, Barling & Turner 2005; Lian, Ferris & Brown, 2012; Tepper,

2007; Tepper et al., 2008). Besides, abusive supervision have been found to have a great influence on the workplace attitudes and behaviors of employees such as organizational injustice perceptions, employee aggression, undesirable workplace behaviors, low job satisfaction, decreased organizational commitment, negative interpersonal relationship, and psychological distress (Avolio et al., 2004; Bouckenooghe, Zafar & Raja, 2015; Brees, Martinko & Harvey, 2016; Ferris et al., 2007; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994; Tepper, 2000; Tepper, 2007; Zhang & Liao, 2015). As a result, these negative workplace attitudes and behaviors influence turnover intention (Lindblom et al., 2015; Maetz et al., 2007; Palanski, Avey & Jiraporn, 2014; Tso-Jen & Chi-Min, 2017). Turnover intention has been considered a major issue in human resource management. Turnover intention refers to the intention of the employees to voluntarily leave the organization (Lee & Mowday, 1987). Based on the aforementioned argument, the following hypothesis is posited:

H1: Abusive supervision positively affects turnover intentions.

Work stress is defined as a psychological, physiological, and behavioral response to work-related demands, threats, and challenges (Dollard, Winefield & Winefield, 2003; Ganster & Rosen, 2013; Jamal, 2005). Many studies found that abusive supervision was related to subordinates' attitudes and well-being (Bouckenooghe et al., 2015; Brees et al., 2016; Ferris et al., 2007; Richard et al., 2020; Zhang & Liao, 2015). Particularly, this treatment can cause mental sufferings such as feeling stress, exhaustion, and nervousness (Hobfoll, 1989; Tepper, 2000; Tepper, 2007). Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H2: Abusive supervision positively affects work stress.

Several studies have attempted to identify the factors that predict employee aggression and turnover intentions. They found high levels of work stress can make employees unhealthy, unmotivated, less productive, and unsafe at work (Ganster & Rosen, 2013; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). Work stress and revenge response are some of the preliminary behavior that can be related to employee turnover intentions (Arshadi & Damiri, 2013; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). Work stress increases employee turnover intentions (Kashif et al., 2017). Hence, the following hypothesis is posited:

H3: Work stress positively affects turnover intentions.

Few prior studies revealed that supervisor behavior has a direct impact on turnover intention (Lindblom et al., 2015; Maetz et al., 2007). However, others found no significance in the relationship (Greenbaum et al., 2013). The mixed results show that there may be other interfering variables that exist across different contexts. Recently, few studies have

investigated the association between abusive supervision and its consequences. They suggested that there are some level of moderation and/or mediation effects in the relationship (e.g. Agarwal, 2019; Greenbaum et al., 2013; Kiewitz et al., 2016). Few studies such as Lim, Loo & Lee (2017) examined the effect of job satisfaction on affective organizational commitment as mediating variables in the relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intention. Wu, An-Jin Shie & Gordon, (2017) investigated the impact of customer orientation on the turnover intention with the mediating role of emotional labor. Fukui, Wu & Salyers, (2019) studied the mediating role of job satisfaction and burnout on the relationship between supervisor support and turnover intentions. Their results confirmed the mediating role of these factors. The direct impact of abusive supervision on employee stress and turnover intentions is well established, and there is a need to investigate the indirect relationship (Agarwal, 2019). Based on the above, the following hypothesis is posited:

H4: Work stress mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions

Based on the aforementioned literature, arguments, and hypotheses, Figure 1 describes the conceptual framework for this study. It illustrates the model of studied relationships among abusive supervision, work stress, and turnover intentions of the frontline employees in Thailand.
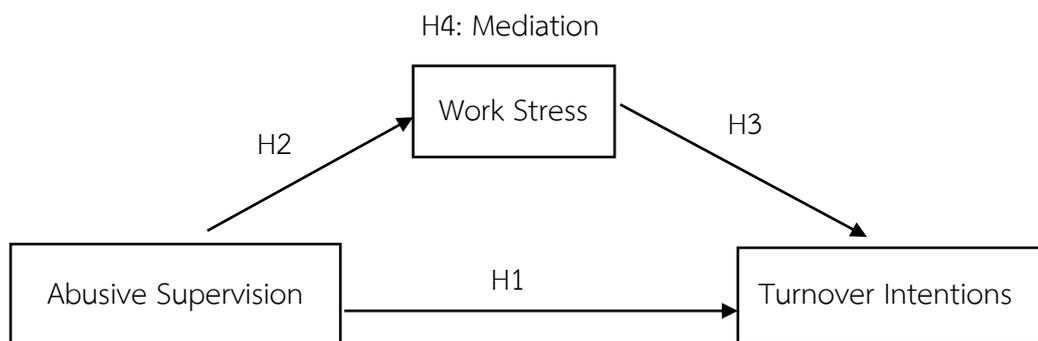

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Sample and Procedure

Data were collected by random sampling technic in January 2020, through a survey questionnaire from frontline employees in various industries in Bangkok, Thailand. In 2020, there were 4,319,408 frontline related employees in Bangkok (National Labour Information Center, 2020). Frontline employees are employees who directly interact with customers such as customer service, sales, operators who answer the phone or help clients in person in spaces like shops, banks, and hospitals. By using Yamane's formula to determine sample size, with an error of 5% and with a confidence coefficient of 95% (Yamane, 1967), the calculation from a population of 4,319,408 came up with 400 samples. The questionnaires were distributed to 550 frontline employees in Bangkok. The response rate was 66.9%, meaning that there were 368 useable questionnaires. The questionnaire comprises 3 aspects: abusive supervision, work stress, and turnover intentions. The collected data were analyzed using SmartPLS 3 software. A Path analysis model was used to evaluate causal models by examining the relationships between the dependent variable and independent variables.

Measures

The questionnaire was developed from previous studies found in the literature. Originally, there were 15 question items. After receiving feedback and recommendations from three experts, the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was used to find the content validity. The items that had scores lower than 0.5 were revised. On the other hand, the items that had scores higher than or equal to 0.5 were reserved. Then, the questionnaire was tested with 30 frontline employees that were not in the sample group. The reliability value was calculated by using Cronbach's alpha to ensure whether there was internal consistency within the items. The result of the Cronbach's alpha of each factor ranged from 0.648 to 0.986. The factor items that received lower than 0.7 loading were removed or modified (Hair et al., 2014). As a result, the final questionnaire consists of 11 items of measurement.

Abusive Supervision was derived from Tepper (2000) which includes four items, that is, my supervisor ridicules me; my supervisor tells me my thoughts and feelings are stupid; expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason; puts me down in front of others people.

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Work stress includes four items, that is, I feel great pressure from work; I feel a high level of tension from work; I have trouble falling asleep because of work; I feel nervous because of work. These items were adapted from the report (Hassard et al., 2013).

The turnover intention was modified into three measurement items (Kim, Eisenberger & Baik, 2016; Wayne & Liden, 2013) includes I'm planning to quit my job; I am actively looking for another job outside of this organization; I am hoping to quit my current job very soon.

Respondent Demographics

The demographic data of the responding 368 samples are presented in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the sample comprises 61.1% females and 38.9% males. The majority of the frontline employees are between the ages range of 20 to 30 years old (49.5%). Further, 47.6% of respondents are having 1-5 years of working experience.

Table 1 Sample demographics (N = 368)

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	143	38.9
Female	225	61.1
Age		
20-30 years	182	49.5
31-40 years	109	29.6
41-50 years	58	15.8
More than 50 years	19	5.1
Period of working		
Less than 1 year	48	13.0
1-5 years	175	47.6
6-10 years	101	27.4
More than 10 years	44	12.0

Model fit analysis

The research model in this study was validated by using partial least squares (PLS) which is one of the most popular techniques for analyzing structural equation modeling. Table 2 shows that the collinearity statistics (VIF) values for all the constructs of this study were below the suggested value of 3.3; to conclude that there is no common method bias in this model (Kock & Lynn, 2012). The effect size (f^2) determines whether an exogenous latent construct has a substantial, weak, or moderate impact on an endogenous latent structure. The suggested value of f^2 is 0.02 (small effects), 0.15 (medium effects) and 0.35 (large effects) (Cohen, 1988). Table 2 shows the result of f^2 values, the relationship of abusive supervision and turnover intentions (AS -> TI) is medium effects, abusive supervision and work stress (AS -> WS) is large effects, and work stress and turnover intentions (WS -> TI) is small effects.

Table 2 Collinearity statistics (VIF) and effect sizes (f^2)

Construct	VIF	f^2
AS -> TI	2.626	0.055
AS -> WS	1.000	1.626
WS -> TI	2.626	0.017

For the evaluation of the structural equation model as indicated by (Hair et al., 2014), the bootstrapping technique was run with 5,000 resamples. To measure the structural model, two parameters were considering. The first parameter was the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). The SRMR is the difference between the observed correlation and implicit correlation matrix model, the values less than 0.08 are considered a good fit model. The second parameter was the normed fit index (NFI). The NFI is an incremental adjustment measure, the values above 0.9 represent an acceptable fit.

Table 3 Model Fit Analysis

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.049	0.049
NFI	0.892	0.892

Table 3, shows the SRMR value for the saturated model is 0.049 and the estimated model is 0.049. For both models, SRMR is less than 0.08. According to Hu & Bentler (1998), it shows a model fit. A zero value of the difference in SRMR between both models indicates a

perfect match between the model predictions and the data. The NFI values for both models are closed to 0.9, which can represent an acceptable fit.

Table 4 R-square (R^2) values and Q-square (Q^2) values

	R^2	Q^2
Turnover Intentions	0.238	0.199
Work Stress	0.619	0.491

The R-square (R^2) value confirms the percentage of the variance in the dependent variable. According to Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt (2011).   the R-Square value above 0.75 is substantial, 0.50 is moderate and 0.25 is weak. The R-Square value in table 4 can be concluded that the variance explained is moderate. The Q-square (Q^2) value is an indicator of the model's predictive relevance. The Q^2 value is obtained by using the blindfolding procedure. Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt (2017) suggested values of 0.02 small predictive relevance, 0.15 medium, 0.35 large. If $Q^2 < 0$ indicates that there is no predictive relevance for the proposed model, the model is very poor. Table 4 shows that all the values of Q^2 are more than 0, the exogenous are medium and large predictive relevance.

Assessment of the Measurement Model

To evaluate the measurement model, convergent validity and discriminant validity are examined, by running the PLS algorithm. The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of correlations (HTMT) is a new method for assessing discriminant validity in partial least squares structural equation modeling. If the HTMT value is below 1.0 (Henseler, Hubona & Ray, 2016; Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015), discriminant validity has been established between two reflective constructs. Table 5 shows all HTMT values below 1.0.

Table 5 HTMT criteria testing (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio)

	Abusive Supervision	Turnover Intentions
Turnover Intentions	0.525	
Work Stress	0.869	0.482

The model was run by PLS algorithm to observe the outer loading. The loading above the threshold level of 0.5 is acceptable (Chin, 1998). The above listed in Table 6 shows all loadings are above 0.5. According to Fornell & Larcker (1981) proposed the AVE (Average variance explained) can be accepted when the value is greater than 0.50. Based on these two tests, the results of the measurement model were ensured.

Rho_A is used for checking the reliability of PLS construct score as defined by Dijkstra & Henseler (2015). A rho_A value of above 0.7 is preferred to demonstrate composite reliability. On the other hand, a rho_A value above 1.0 is abnormal and should not occur in the model. Table 5 displays all the Rho_A values of the factors above 0.7; the results of the measurement model were ensured.

The internal consistency of measurement items is evaluated by Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). In general, a score of more than 0.70 is usually acceptable (Hair et al., 2014). However, some authors suggest higher values of 0.90 to 0.95 is excellent. The Cronbach's alpha values in this model are between 0.890 to 0.919. It means the items have relatively high internal consistency.

Composite Reliability (CR) is a preferred alternative to Cronbach's alpha as a measure of reliability because Cronbach's alpha may over-or underestimate scale reliability (Peterson & Kim, 2013). According to Hair et al. (2011), the composite reliability above 0.7 is acceptable. Table 6 shows CR values for each factor of the model are above 0.9.

Table 6 Measurement model (Construct Reliability and validity)

Construct	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Abusive Supervision (AS)					
AS1	0.840	0.889	0.890	0.923	0.75
AS2	0.852				
AS3	0.885				
AS4	0.886				
Turnover Intentions(TI)					
TI1	0.929	0.914	0.917	0.946	0.854
TI2	0.927				
TI3	0.917				
Work Stress (WS)					
WS1	0.912	0.917	0.919	0.941	0.800
WS2	0.898				
WS3	0.887				
WS4	0.881				

* Note: Average Variance Extracted (AVE); Composite Reliability (CR)

Result

The bootstrapping was performed. Table 7 shows a descriptive analysis of all the variables. All variables show similar mean values, which possessed low levels from 1.896 to 2.144. Turnover Intentions had the highest mean value. In addition, the correlation matrix shows all variables are associated with each other. The relationship between abusive supervision and work stress is the strongest. However, the relationship between turnover intentions and abusive supervision, and between turnover intentions and work stress, are not as strong as the other correlations.

Table 7 Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Matrix

Construct	Mean	SD	AS	WS	TI
Abusive Supervision (AS)	1.921	0.853	1.000		
Work Stress (WS)	1.896	0.864	0.785**	1.000	
Turnover Intentions (TI)	2.144	1.038	0.473**	0.442**	1.000

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

As shown in Table 8 and Figure 2, all the hypotheses have a p-value less than 0.05. Hence, Hypotheses; H1, H2, H3, H4 can be concluded that significant.

Table 8 Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	AS -> TI	0.330	0.333	0.092	3.588	0.000*	Support
H2	AS -> WS	0.787	0.789	0.034	23.026	0.000*	Support
H3	WS -> TI	0.183	0.180	0.102	1.793	0.037*	Support
H4	AS-> WS -> TI	0.144	0.142	0.082	1.757	0.040*	Support

Note: * $p < 0.05$

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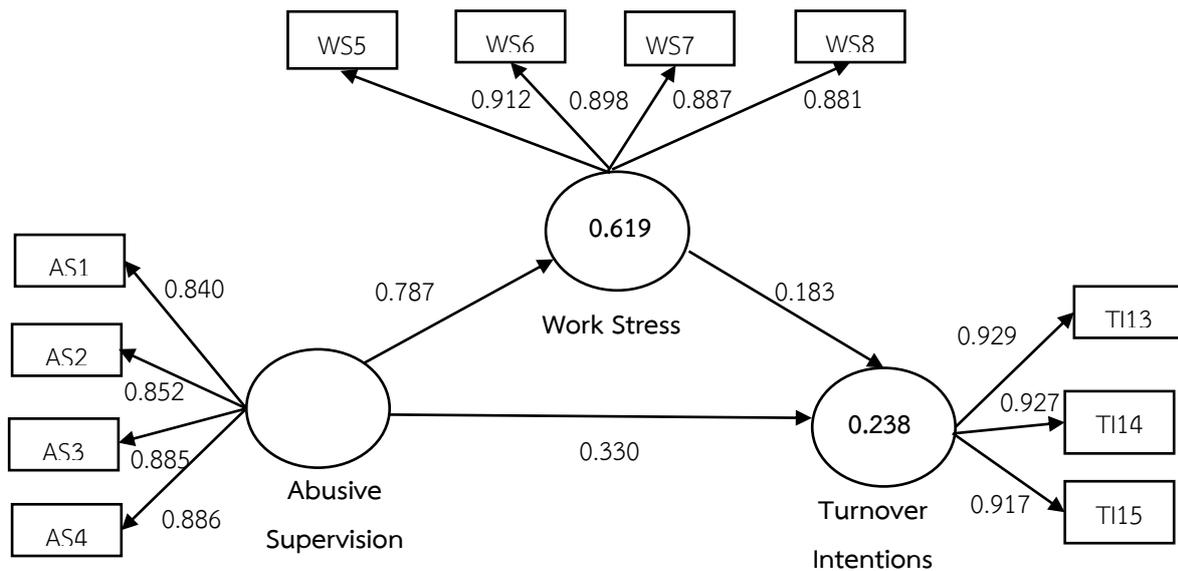ปีที่ 22 ฉบับที่ 2 พฤษภาคม – สิงหาคม 2564 | Vol. 22 No. 2 Mary – August 2021

Figure 2 Structural Equation Model

Discussion

      This study suggests that perceived abuse supervision has a significant direct and indirect effect on employee's turnover intention and work stress. The result revealed positive and significant effects among the direct path relationship of abuse supervision and turnover intention (33.00%; hypothesis 1), abuse supervision and work stress (78.70%; hypothesis 2), work stress and turnover intention (18.30%; hypothesis 3). Moreover, the indirect path relationship of work stress between the relationship of abuse supervision and turnover intention (14.4%; hypothesis 4). Significant relationships are presented in Figure 2.

      Consistent with the previous literature on abusive supervision (Lindblom et al., 2015; Maetz et al., 2007; Palanski et al., 2014; Tso-Jen & Chi-Min, 2017), the finding of this study showed the support for the positive relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention. Frontline employees who perceived abusive supervision chose to leave their workplace. The results also consistent with the prior studies wherein the researchers have examined the relationship between abusive supervision and work stress (Hobfoll, 1989; Tepper, 2000; Tepper, 2007). Abusive supervision can cause mental suffering such as feeling stress and exhaustion. On one hand, the results showed the support of the recent study (Kashif et al., 2017) of a positive relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention. Work stress increases employee turnover intentions.

This study also highlighted the indirect relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention, with the mediation effects from work stress. The result is among the first investigation on the mediation effects of the relationship. It can be explained that abuse supervising directly leads to a feeling of leaving the organizations, as well as leads to work stress and then influence turnover intentions among the frontline employees.

Conclusion and Suggestions

In conclusion, abuse supervision has a significant direct and indirect effect on the frontline employee's turnover intention. Moreover, work stress affects the indirect relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intention. Frontline employees are very important to organizations. The nature of the works is to communicate and interact directly with the customer. The pressures from the supervisor and customers can negatively influence the workplace attitudes and behaviors of the workers. As a result, the stress and feeling of leaving the organizations are high. Thus, administrators must understand the negative outcomes of abusive supervision and make sure that this behavior should not be performed by any supervisor.

There are a few limitations to this study. The first limitation concerns the sampling of this study includes frontline employees from one province. There is a need to expand the investigation to a wider context. Another limitation is the data was collected by cross-sectional and is not longitudinal. In the future, the sampling can be indifference career and various provinces and using the longitudinal method to collect the data.

New knowledge and the effects on society local and communities

This study investigated the perceived abusive supervision and its consequences, particularly the work stress and the turnover intention among the frontline employee such as call center workers, hotel workers, and bank workers. These employees are very important for organizations because they are the key employees who always communicate and interact directly with the customer. Past researches proposed supervisor behavior has a relationship with turnover intention. They empirically examined the causal relationship among dimensions of perceived supervisor support and turnover intention. The results are a mix. Few studies revealed that supervisor behavior affects turnover intention. However, others reported insignificance in the relationship These show that there may be other

interfering variables that exist across different contexts. In meeting this research gap, the current study found how frontline employee work stress mediates the relationship between abusive supervisor behavior and employee turnover intentions. Thus, the results of this study could be beneficial to human resource departments and organizations to develop policies and preventive mechanisms to prevent negative behavior from their supervisors. In addition, supervisors should be trained to spot some of the markers for abusive behavior, such as withdrawal behaviors, low morale, and distrust.

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