

**DO TWO RIGHTS FIX A WRONG?
A STUDY OF EMPLOYEE AND
ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES TO
ABUSIVE SUPERVISION IN NEW ZEALAND**

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Abstract

Organizational justice theories suggest that employees who are abused by their supervisor are likely to respond with lower job and personal outcomes. However, an under-explored area has been the influence of support perceptions. The present study suggests that perceived supervisor support (PSS) and perceived organizational support (POS) may moderate the influence of abusive supervision, and this was tested with three-way interactions.

Data was collected from two samples: (1) 100 blue-collar workers in construction and (2) 218 random Maori employees from a variety of industries and professions. Structural equation modeling confirmed the unique constructs of the study measures towards abusive supervision and PSS and POS. Direct effects showed abusive supervision was significant and negative in both samples towards life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and organizational-based self-esteem (OBSE), and significant and positive in both samples towards turnover intentions, anxiety, depression, and insomnia. The results indicated that abusive supervision accounted for large amounts of variance towards all outcomes, with the exception of life satisfaction in study two (7%), and insomnia (8% in study one, and 4% in study two), ranging from 13%-32% variance.

Significant three-way interactions were found for all outcomes except turnover intentions and insomnia. The three-way interaction towards life satisfaction in study one indicated that under abusive supervision, respondents with high PSS and high POS experienced the greatest levels of life satisfaction. Similar relationships were found toward depression (study one and two) and anxiety (study one), showing that respondents who experienced high abusive

supervision, high PSS, and high POS had the lowest levels of negative mental health outcomes amongst all abused respondents. This suggested a potentially cumulative effect of multiple sources of support. Furthermore, towards job satisfaction in study two, findings show respondents with high abusive supervision and high POS reported the highest job satisfaction, irrespective of levels of PSS. A similar relationship was found toward OBSE in study two, suggesting that of the support variables examined, POS may have greater effect on outcomes, thereby supporting research of Dawley, Andrews and Bucklew (2008) who found POS to be the best predictor of organizational outcomes.

Overall, this paper supports the notion that perceptions of support may moderate the influence of abusive supervision perceptions on employee's work and personal outcomes. The findings show that while abusive supervision can play a dominant role on outcomes, this can be somewhat nullified by greater support from the organization. This has strong implications for firms dealing with problem supervisors, signaling the importance of establishing POS, and emphasizing that creating a supportive organization may be the first step to enabling employees to develop positive work and individual outcomes.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	ix
Introduction	1
CHAPTER 1: Theory building and hypothesis generation	3
1.1 Abusive supervision	3
1.1.1 Defining the concept	3
1.1.2 Related terms	5
1.1.3 Justice and Abusive Supervision	9
1.1.4 Social Exchange Theory and Abusive Supervision	14
1.1.5 Antecedents of Abusive Supervision	16
1.1.6 Outcomes of Abusive Supervision	24
1.1.7 Minimizing abusive supervision	34
1.2 Supervisor Support	38
1.2.1 Defining the concept	38
1.2.2 Social exchange theory and interactional justice	41
1.2.3 Outcomes of supervisor support	42
1.3 Perceived organizational support (POS)	50
1.3.1 Defining the concept	50
1.3.2 Origins of POS and Organizational Support Theory	51
1.3.3 POS and reciprocity	54
1.3.4 POS and justice perceptions	56
1.3.5 Distinguishing POS from other constructs	57
1.3.6 Outcomes of POS	58
1.4 POS and Supervisor Support	65
1.5 Three-Way Interactions	69

CHAPTER 2: Method	77
2.1 Sample and Procedure	77
2.2 Measures	80
2.3 Analysis	86
CHAPTER 3: Results	87
3.1 Direct Effects of Abusive Supervision	90
3.2 Interaction Effects towards Outcomes	106
3.2.1 Interaction Effects towards Life Satisfaction	106
3.2.2 Interaction Effects towards Job Satisfaction	112
3.2.3 Interaction Effects towards Turnover Intentions	117
3.2.4 Interaction Effects towards Anxiety	123
3.2.5 Interaction Effects towards Depression	127
3.2.6 Interaction Effects towards Insomnia	132
3.2.7 Interaction Effects towards OBSE	139
3.3 Overall Model Strengths	145
CHAPTER 4: Discussion	147
4.1 Direct effects	147
4.2 Moderating role of PSS	150
4.3 Moderating role of POS	155
4.4 Cumulative effect of PSS and POS	157
4.5 Three-way interaction effects	159
4.6 Practical Implications	163
4.7 Strengths	167
4.8 Limitations	170
CHAPTER 5: Conclusion	173
References	175

List of Figures

Figure 1. Study Relationships	76
Figure 2. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Life Satisfaction (Study 1) as Dependent Variable	109
Figure 3. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Life Satisfaction (Study 1) as Dependent Variable	110
Figure 4. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with Life Satisfaction (Study 1) as Dependent Variable	111
Figure 5. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Job Satisfaction (Study 1) as Dependent Variable	113
Figure 6. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Job Satisfaction (Study 1) as Dependent Variable	115
Figure 7. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with Job Satisfaction (Study 2) as Dependent Variable	116
Figure 8. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Turnover Intentions (Study 1) as Dependent Variable	119
Figure 9. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Turnover Intentions (Study 1) as Dependent Variable	120
Figure 10. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Turnover Intentions (Study 2) as Dependent Variable	122
Figure 11. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with Anxiety (Study 1) as Dependent Variable.....	124
Figure 12. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Anxiety (Study 2) as Dependent Variable.....	125
Figure 13. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Depression (Study 1) as Dependent Variable.....	128
Figure 14. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with Depression (Study 1) as Dependent Variable.....	130
Figure 15. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with Depression (Study 2) as Dependent Variable.....	131
Figure 16. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Insomnia (Study 1) as Dependent Variable.....	134
Figure 17. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Insomnia (Study 1) as	

Dependent Variable.....	135
Figure 18. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Insomnia (Study 1) as Dependent Variable.....	137
Figure 19. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Insomnia (Study 2) as Dependent Variable.....	138
Figure 20. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with OBSE (Study 2) as Dependent Variable.....	141

List of Tables

Table 1. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Support Measures	83
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations	89
Table 3. Regression Coefficients for Life Satisfaction (Study 1)	91
Table 4. Regression Coefficients for Life Satisfaction (Study 2)	92
Table 5. Regression Coefficients for Job Satisfaction (Study 1)	93
Table 6. Regression Coefficients for Job Satisfaction (Study 2)	94
Table 7. Regression Coefficients for Turnover Intentions (Study 1).....	95
Table 8. Regression Coefficients for Turnover Intentions (Study 2).....	96
Table 9. Regression Coefficients for Anxiety (Study 1).....	98
Table 10. Regression Coefficients for Anxiety (Study 2).....	99
Table 11. Regression Coefficients for Depression (Study 1).....	100
Table 12. Regression Coefficients for Depression (Study 2).....	101
Table 13. Regression Coefficients for Insomnia (Study 1).....	102
Table 14. Regression Coefficients for Insomnia (Study 2).....	103
Table 15. Regression Coefficients for OBSE (Study 2)	104
Table 16. Summary of direct effects of abusive supervision.....	105
Table 17. Summary of intervening effects toward life satisfaction	108
Table 18. Summary of intervening effects toward job satisfaction	117
Table 19. Summary of intervening effects for turnover intentions.....	121
Table 20. Summary of intervening effects toward anxiety	126
Table 21. Summary of intervening effects toward depression.....	132
Table 22. Summary of intervening effects toward insomnia.....	139
Table 23. Summary of intervening effects toward OBSE	140
Table 24. Intervening effects of POS, supervisor support, and abusive supervision on outcomes.	142

Introduction

As human resources are increasingly being utilized as the source of an organizations competitive advantage, it seems important to examine what makes employees 'tick', in order to ensure that they remain encouraged and motivated to meet business targets. In the case of abusive supervision, it seems logical that being told you are 'useless' or a 'waste of time and resources' by your supervisor is unlikely to be motivating. It is also unsurprising that "People leave managers... Not organizations" (Tate & White, 2005, p. 1) has emerged as a catch phrase, and has led to large debate as to the extent of influence a manager has on a subordinates attitudes and work outcomes. However, employee turnover is only the beginning when it comes to consequences of abusive supervision, of which other deleterious effects include counter-productivity (Duffy, Ganster & Pagon, 2002; Detert, Trevino, Burris & Andiappan, 2007), workplace deviance (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), and decreased organizational citizenship behaviours (Zellars, Tepper & Duffy, 2002). Therefore, identifying ways of reducing the effects of abusive supervision is imperative.

Tepper (2007) found that abusive supervision affected roughly 13.6% of workers in the United States of America (USA) alone, resulting in an estimated cost to organizations of \$23 billion US dollars. While the prevalence of abusive supervision is largely unknown for New Zealand (NZ) organizations, these statistics suggest that investigating the nature of abusive supervision could be of significant benefit to an organization. Furthermore, identifying ways to reduce the effects of an abusive supervisor could reduce the potentially colossal costs to organizations, and as such, makes the phenomena worthy of further investigation.

While literature to date has examined the consequences associated with abusive supervision, the antecedents have received little attention (Tepper, 2000). Most of the research regarding antecedents indicates a link to (1) a supervisors own perceptions of justice and psychological contract breach (Tepper, 2007), and (2) personality traits of the supervisor (Tepper, Duffy & Shaw, 2001). However, a researcher may query if there is something more that the *organization* could do to improve the situation. A potential way of reducing the harmful effects of abusive supervision may be through increased support in the workplace, such as perceived supervisor support (PSS), or perceived organizational support (POS). For example, supervisor support may enable a subordinate to deal more effectively with stress in the workplace (Cummins, 1990). Furthermore, if an employee feels cared for by the *whole* organization, they are more likely to feel valued and view the organization more favourably (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sowa, 1986). This *overall* support may diminish the effects of the individual supervisor.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of abusive supervision in a New Zealand context. The study aims to examine the direct effects of an abusive supervisor on (1) work outcomes (such as job satisfaction), (2) non-work outcomes (specifically, life satisfaction), and (3) mental health outcomes (such as anxiety). Furthermore, it will also examine the moderating role of PSS and POS, in order to ascertain whether support can reduce the harmful effects of an individual abusive supervisor, and to identify which dimension is more important (e.g. organization versus individual). The research has important implications, because if these forms of support can reduce the effects of an abusive supervisor, the organization may be able to implement strategies which would downplay the (potentially) negative effects of abusive supervision.

CHAPTER 1: Theory building and hypothesis generation

1.1 Abusive supervision

1.1.1 Defining the concept

When one hears the term ‘abusive supervision’, the first thing that often jumps to mind is the image of an overbearing boss – yelling, screaming, and telling subordinates that they’re not worth the paper their employment agreement is written on, thereby fuelling uneasy feelings amongst junior employees (Tepper, 2000). In fact, abusive supervision can include managers being rude, coercive, and publicly criticising subordinates. An important feature of abusive supervision is that the abuse is *not* of a *physical* nature (Tepper, 2007). More specifically, abusive supervision can be defined as a “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178).

Destructive supervisor behaviour is often observed through non-physical acts, such as using derogatory names, intimidation, using threats of job loss, engaging in explosive and angry outbursts, withholding necessary information, taking credit for a subordinate’s success, and humiliating or ridiculing a subordinate in front of others (Keashly, 1998; Zellars et al., 2002; Tepper, 2007). Given this, it is unsurprising that abused subordinates signal feelings of frustration, alienation from work, helplessness, powerlessness, feeling undermined, and so forth (Tepper, 2000).

Another important characteristic of abusive supervision is that the manager's behaviour has to be wilful or deliberate (Tepper, 2007). However, whether or not the abusive behaviour is conducted to intentionally *cause harm* to the subordinate is irrelevant. For example, a supervisor may mistreat their subordinate in order to encourage improved performance – thus the behaviour is intentional, yet not for reasons of causing harm (Tepper, 2007). Thus abusive supervision is not defined in relation to the intended outcome of the supervisor. Rather, it is defined to indicate that supervisors engage in abusive behaviour for a *purpose* (Tepper, 2007). Therefore, some acts of abusive supervision fall outside the realm of 'aggression', which is typically defined as a "behaviour aimed at injury of a person or thing" (Reading, 1996, p. 14). This notion is important, as it aids in differentiating abusive supervision from other similar concepts that examine the destructive side of supervisor behaviour. Thus, for example, a supervisor who pushes his subordinates to work hard in order to gain the greatest performance out of the work unit may still be judged as abusive supervision.

Abusive supervision is based on a subordinate's *perceptions*, thus the abusive supervisor-subordinate relationship has the potential to be experienced differently by numerous people across various contexts (Tepper, 2000). Furthermore, as abusive supervision involves a subordinate's *subjective* assessment, which is established through observed behaviours of their supervisor, these observations may be influenced by both individual and contextual factors (Tepper, 2007). Individual characteristics of the subordinate and supervisor (such as personality and demographic details), and contextual factors (including the work environment) may all affect a subordinate's assessment of their supervisor's abusive behaviours (Tepper, 2007). These antecedents shall be explored later.

The final characteristic of abusive supervision is that it involves *sustained* displays of hostility, thereby indicating that a subordinate is perpetually exposed to abuse (Tepper, 2007). An angry outburst by a supervisor would only be considered abusive should the behaviour become a regular event. Thus, an abusive relationship will endure until (1) the subordinate leaves the relationship, (2) the supervisor terminates the relationship, or (3) the supervisor changes their behaviour (Tepper, 2000). A subordinate will often endure the abuse because they feel powerless to their supervisor's actions. They may not take corrective action for fear of being fired – especially if the subordinate is economically dependent on the organization (Tepper, 2000). Furthermore, as a supervisor's abuse can often be interspersed with normal behaviour, the subordinate may simply think that at some point the abuse will end, thus remain in the relationship (Tepper, 2000). These characteristics emphasize the idiosyncratic nature of abusive supervision, thereby indicating the need for careful examination of the content domain.

1.1.2 Related terms

Numerous terms have been used to discuss the damaging side of supervisor behaviours. Similarly to abusive supervision, 'supervisor undermining', 'supervisor aggression', 'petty tyrant', and 'workplace bullying' have all been used to describe an abusive relationship. However, it must be acknowledged that while there is some convergence between them, the three terms are actually distinct concepts. In order to distinguish between these terms and the 'abusive supervision' content domain, they shall be discussed further below.

1.1.2.1 Supervisor undermining

Duffy et al. (2002) defined supervisor undermining as “behaviour to hinder, over time, the ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, work-related success, and favorable reputation” (p. 332). Similarly to abusive supervision, this excludes physical aggression. However, an important distinction between the two concepts is that supervisor undermining acknowledges the *intended outcomes* of the supervisor, whereas abusive supervision reflects indifference (Tepper, 2000; Tepper, 2007). In regard to supervisor undermining, the intent is to cause harm. In contrast, the intent of abusive supervision is irrelevant – more simply, the behaviour must just have a purpose of some kind (Tepper, 2007).

1.1.2.2 Supervisor aggression

The term ‘supervisor aggression’ is often used interchangeably with abusive supervision, however the concepts are distinct. Neuman and Baron (1998) defined workplace aggression as “a general term encompassing all forms of behaviour by which individuals attempt to harm others at work or their organizations” (p. 393). Thus, supervisor aggression differs from abusive supervision in that it *includes physical hostility*. In fact, Baron (1993, as cited in Neuman & Baron, 1998) suggested that there are three ‘levels’ of aggression: (1) withholding cooperation, (2) intense arguments, and (3) frequent displays of anger resulting in destructive physical outcomes. Finally, supervisor aggression differs from abusive supervision as it includes reference to its intended outcome - to cause harm.

1.1.2.3 Petty Tyrant

Ashforth (1997) described a petty tyrant as someone who “uses their power and authority oppressively, capriciously, and perhaps vindictively.... [and] who lords their power over others” (p. 126). In fact, Ashforth (1997) identified six key behaviours of a petty tyrant: (1) arbitrariness and self-aggrandizement (such as using power for personal gain), (2) belittling subordinates, (3) lacking consideration, (4) engaging in a forcing style of conflict resolution, (5) discouraging the use of initiative in subordinates, and (6) engaging in non-contingent punishment. While these behaviours show an overlap with the abusive supervision domain (e.g. belittling subordinates), petty tyranny goes beyond abusive supervision to capture behaviours that may, *or may not*, be considered ‘hostile’ (Tepper, 2000; Tepper, 2007). For example, a manager that displays ‘low consideration’ through lacking a friendly or approachable manner would not necessarily be perceived as hostile. Similarly, discouraging subordinates to participate in decision making may not be viewed as hostile – whereas, comments such as “I’m not interested in your stupid suggestions” may be seen as abusive behaviour (Tepper, 2007, p. 266). Thus, petty tyranny is considered a broader concept, as some of the behavioural dimensions do not always capture the downward hostility exhibited under abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007).

1.1.2.4 Workplace Bullying

Similarly to abusive supervision, workplace bullying involves persistent contact with hostile actions at work (Tepper, 2007). In fact, workplace bullying

involves hostile and aggressive behaviours which are methodically targeted (whether unconscious or deliberate) at a colleague(s), resulting in a stigmatization and victimization of the receiver, as the target has difficulty in defending themselves against these actions (Einarsen, 1999; Tepper, 2007). Consequently, workplace bullying shows links to abusive supervision through its sustained, hostile, and purposeful nature (Tepper, 2007). While bullying is often thought of as a ‘playground phenomena’ amongst children, a study of 1137 part-time University students in the United Kingdom revealed workplace bullying to be a prevalent issue, with 53% of individuals reporting they felt they had been bullied at some point during their working lives (Rayner, 1997).

Rayner and Hoel (1997) identified several categories of workplace bullying behaviours, including: threats to an individual’s professional status (e.g. belittling opinions), threats to an individual’s personal standing (e.g. name-calling), isolation (e.g. withholding information), overwork (e.g. impossible deadlines), and destabilization (e.g. setting up to fail). However, while there is some convergence between the behaviours exhibited under workplace bullying and abusive supervision, workplace bullying is not confined to hierarchical hostility (Tepper, 2007). Thus bullying behaviour may not necessarily be directed *downwards* from an individual’s direct reports, and could be the result of abuse from peers, or even subordinates (Tepper, 2007). Furthermore, workplace bullying differs from abusive supervision in that it includes reference to the perpetrators intended outcome – to cause *harm* (Tepper, 2007).

1.1.3 Justice and Abusive Supervision

The deleterious effects observed under abusive supervision can be explained through organizational justice theories (Tepper, 2000). The word ‘justice’ is synonymous with behaviour that is morally right, ethical, fair, honest, or equitable (Waite & Hawker, 2009, p. 509). Tepper et al. (2001) suggested that “individuals experience perceptions of unfairness concerning interpersonal treatment when organizational representatives fail to meet acceptable standards of demeanour and politeness” (p. 974). Thus, it is logical that being publically ridiculed or yelled at by an abusive supervisor is regarded as ‘unfair’ (Tepper, 2000). In fact, a subordinate’s perception of unfairness can help to explain their responses to abusive supervision.

Tepper (2000) stated that “employees regard abusive supervision as a source of injustice that, in turn, has implications for their attitudes and wellbeing” (p. 186). Yet different dimensions of justice play distinct roles when it comes to prediction of outcomes. According to justice theory, an individual assesses the fairness of a situation based on their perception of three types of organizational justice: (1) distributive, (2) procedural, and (3) interactional justice (Tepper, 2000). Specifically, distributive justice is more closely aligned with employee attitudes, while procedural justice is more aligned with organizational outcomes. While some suggest interactional justice is comprised of two further dimensions – including interpersonal and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001), interactional justice can be broadly defined as concerning the fairness of specific exchanges between individuals (Tepper, 2000; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). As research is increasingly indicating that the three types of justice are conceptually distinct

(Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002), the different dimensions shall be explored further below.

1.1.3.1 Distributive Justice

Distributive justice is associated with the perceived fairness of the *outcomes* received by an individual (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). As such, during allocation of outcomes, distributions should be made so that each individual receives a fair share. According to equity theory, individuals assess whether their share is reasonable by evaluating their contributions (or inputs) and the outcomes they are allocated, and comparing this with a referent – often a co-worker (Anderson, Ones, Sinangil, & Viswesvaran, 2002; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). As this assessment is based upon an individual's *perceptions*, it is unlikely that two people will perceive justices and injustices in exactly the same way – perhaps due to differing values, or because individuals use different people as their 'referent other' (Anderson et al., 2002). Regardless of this, if the input-output ratio is perceived as unbalanced, the individual is likely to view the distribution of outcomes as unfair and inequitable; and consequently, they will perceive a breach in fairness (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

Equity theory states that employees value fair treatment, and feel distressed when participating in inequitable relationships (Anderson et al., 2002). It is important to note that the outcomes received are not unsatisfactory in and of themselves, but through the comparison of one's outcomes with others. This notion is known as *relative-deprivation theory* - as relative to another, they feel deprived of positive outcomes (Tepper, 2000). In the case of abusive supervision,

this could be seen between two employees who, over time, expend the same amount of time, effort, and have similar performance levels. One individual receives abuse in return for their efforts, and one receives recognition for completing the job. In this situation, it is likely that the abused subordinate will perceive the outcomes as unfair, as in relation to their referent, their similar inputs have resulted in different, unfair outcomes. Furthermore, subordinates with an abusive supervisor may not only feel the situation is unfair, but also feel *disadvantaged* - especially if their non-abused counterparts receive advice which they can learn from and improve their performance (Tepper, 2000). This notion was confirmed by Tepper (2000), who found that distributive justice was significantly and negatively correlated with abusive supervision ($r = -0.39, p < 0.01$). Thus as abuse increased, perceptions of distributive justice went down (and vice-versa). Moreover, in a meta-analysis of organizational outcomes, Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) found that distributive justice was significantly related to job satisfaction, OCB, counter-productivity, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. This emphasizes the importance of justice perceptions when dealing with abusive supervision.

1.1.3.2 Procedural Justice

Procedural justice is associated with the fairness of the process or *procedures* used, in order to make allocation decisions. In the case of abusive supervision, this suggests that a subordinate might perceive a situation to be procedurally unjust if an organization has not endeavoured to employ appropriate procedures to protect them (the target of the abuse), and discipline their abusing

supervisor. This was confirmed by Tepper (2000), who found that procedural justice was significantly and negatively correlated to abusive supervision ($r = -0.48, p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the *fair process effect* states that individuals are likely to perceive unfair procedures as producing unfair outcomes. This suggests that a subordinate who experiences procedural injustice may also perceive their outcomes as less beneficial than a co-worker who has a non-abusive supervisor.

As an organization tends to determine and establish procedures and processes, employees tend to relate procedural justice with the organization as a whole. Thus, as an individual perceives the processes used to make allocation decisions as fair, they tend to reimburse the firm with positive attitudes regarding the whole organization. In his seminal study, Tepper (2000) confirmed this effect. Results from a survey of 712 full-time employees in the mid-western United States found that procedural justice was related to organizational outcomes, including organizational commitment. Procedural justice was also related to job satisfaction and work-family conflict.

Finally, in a meta-analysis of 190 studies, Cohen-Charash & Spector (2001) found that procedural justice was significantly related to outcomes including organizational commitment, trust, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB), job performance, turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behaviours. This meta-analysis emphasizes the important impact of procedural justice perceptions on various work outcomes, especially when injustice is often linked to negative emotional reactions including anger and frustration (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

1.1.3.3 Interactional Justice

Cropanzano et al. (2002) stated that interactional justice is the “the quality of the interpersonal interaction between individuals” (p. 326), and thus, is often related to a subordinate’s reactions of their supervisor, and the immediate work environment. Thus interactional *injustice* is experienced when an individual is not treated with respect, propriety, honesty, and so forth (Tepper, 2000). Given this, it may be unsurprising that interactional justice has been found to be positively related to: job and life satisfaction, normative commitment, and affective commitment, and negatively related to family-work conflict, depression, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion (Tepper, 2000). A meta-analysis has also shown that interactional justice was significantly related to job satisfaction, OCB, and organizational commitment (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

In contrast to procedural justice, interactional justice is often associated with individuals rather than the whole organization, because it is established based on one-on-one interactions. In fact, Cropanzano et al. (2002) defined interactional justice as including “the exchange between the individual and his or her supervisor... [and is] more closely associated with reactions toward one’s supervisor and job performance” (p. 324). This third type of justice is particularly relevant to the abusive supervisor-subordinate relationship, because it focuses on the interpersonal component of fairness. In fact, Tepper (2000) found interactional justice was significantly and negatively related to abusive supervision ($r = -0.53, p < 0.01$). Furthermore, this relationship appears stronger than those of distributive and procedural justice. Cropanzano et al. (2002) found interactional justice was positively related to: a subordinate’s satisfaction with their supervisor, the

perceived quality of their supervisor, and the perceived fairness with which they were treated by their supervisor. Meanwhile, Aryee, Chen, Sun and Debrah (2007) found that interactional justice fully mediated the relationship between abusive supervisor and work outcomes. These results emphasize the importance of justice perceptions when examining abusive supervision in the workplace.

1.1.4 Social Exchange Theory and Abusive Supervision

Elaborating on justice theories, social exchange theory has also been employed to explain the damaging effects of abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000). Social exchange theory has been described as “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring” (Blau, 1964, as cited in Emerson, 1976, p. 340). Built on the norm of reciprocity, social exchange theory involves mutual exchanges of ‘give and take’ (Gouldner, 1960). It is a “two-sided, mutually contingent, and mutually rewarding process involving ‘transactions’, or simply ‘exchange’” (Emerson, 1976, p. 336). Therefore social exchange theory suggests the conditions whereby an individual would feel morally obligated to reciprocate when they personally benefit from the actions of someone else (Lambert, 2000; Haar & Spell, 2004).

From an organizational perspective, it is these underlying feelings of obligation embedded in social exchanges which make this such an important theory. For example, a supervisor may provide a subordinate with additional benefits that go beyond the call of duty, such as: extra informational support, feedback, training, mentoring, or encouragement. This exchange would then invoke an obligation on behalf of the subordinate to return the benefit – such as

through increased commitment, reduced absenteeism, and so forth (Haar & Spell, 2004). Moreover, by repaying this perceived obligation, it reinforces that the relationship is mutually beneficial, and encourages future positive exchanges (Haar & Spell, 2004). Subsequently, an organization which has supportive supervisors may experience benefits such as increased productivity, morale, job satisfaction, commitment, and so forth.

Human beings are social animals that are dependent on one another, thereby making it common to provide things and expect some return, and indicating the importance of the role of reciprocity (Walumbwa, Cropanzano, & Hartnell, 2009). Furthermore, while reciprocity is important, according to justice theories, individuals tend to believe that the outcomes of social exchanges should be equitable or fair, for all parties involved. In fact, Walumbwa et al. (2009) stated that social exchange theory calls on various justice theories, such as; distributive, procedural, interactional, and interpersonal justice. Therefore according to social exchange theory, our attitude toward someone is influenced by our long-term evaluations of the cost-reward nature of the relationship (Vaughn & Hogg, 2005).

Individuals may often subconsciously act in such a way as to minimise costs and maximise rewards. However, according to equity theory, people generally believe that the outcomes of a social exchange should be fair and just for both parties, with outcomes proportional to inputs (Vaughn & Hogg, 2005). A positive social-exchange can result in satisfaction, gratification, and pleasure, while a consequence of an unsatisfactory relationship is wasted time and effort, and even embarrassment (Vaughn & Hogg, 2005). The more an individual feels the relationship is unfair or inequitable, the more they will feel distressed. Thus,

social exchange theory assumes that over time, individuals assess the difference between inputs and outputs, and their actions will reflect this – thereby responding to good behaviour with good, and reciprocating bad behaviour with bad (Vaughn & Hogg, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2009).

Under abusive supervision, when a subordinate puts in effort and their supervisor is abusive in return, it is likely that the subordinate will feel an inequitable social exchange has formed. Therefore, abusive supervision signals a poor-quality relationship or negative social exchange, and feelings of injustice and distress are likely (Tepper, 2000). Consequently, social exchange theory is a fundamental premise of abusive supervision. This notion was asserted by Tepper (2000), who found that a subordinates' perception of unfairness or injustice explained their responses to abusive supervision. Thus, social exchange theory can help to explain the harmful effects associated with abusive supervision.

1.1.5 Antecedents of Abusive Supervision

Justice theories and social exchange theory have been presented as a framework for understanding the effect of abusive supervision in the workplace. Following this, it seems important to turn to the antecedents of abusive supervision, in order to find out the stimulus for such abuse. Various studies have examined the antecedents of abusive supervision, focussing on both individual and situational factors (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006; Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Aryee et al., 2007). In addition, many studies describe abusive supervision as a form of displaced aggression, and as part of a trickle-down model (Tepper et al., 2006; Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Aryee et al., 2007). Therefore, psychological

contract violation, supervisor justice perceptions, subordinate disposition, supervisor disposition, and supervisor leadership style have all been linked as antecedents of abusive supervision (Tepper et al., 2006; Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Aryee et al., 2007). These are discussed further below.

1.1.5.1 Trickle down model and displaced aggression

Hoobler and Brass (2006) described abusive supervision as part of a trickle-down model, similarly to one link in a chain of workplace events. Viewed not as a single event but as a system of social interactions, abusive supervision has been likened to a ‘kick-the-dog’ metaphor (Hoobler & Brass, 2006). Put more simply, the kick-the-dog metaphor states that; when an individual is abused or criticised in some way by their boss, they do not react to it for fear of provoking further abuse or losing their job. Instead, when they later arrive home, they respond to their dog by kicking it (Hoobler & Brass, 2006). This notion is very similar to the idea of displaced aggression, which can be described as “hostility that is directed against convenient and innocent targets when retaliation against the source of one’s frustration is not possible or feasible” (Tepper, 2007, p. 269). This inability to retaliate relates to the power relationship between supervisor and subordinate. Most of the research conducted regarding the antecedents of abusive supervision utilizes this concept of ‘displaced aggression’ to explain its occurrence (Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Tepper et al., 2006; Aryee et al., 2007).

1.1.5.2 Psychological contract violation

A psychological contract can be defined as “an individual’s belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party” (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123). This bi-directional relationship between employee and employer not only focuses on an individual’s expectations, but also the *mutual obligations* formed between the two parties (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). A psychological contract can form from the moment one party believes the other party has made a promise of future return, thus it can shape from the early stages of employment, such as promising pay-for-performance (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Furthermore, the contract can include any beliefs that an employee has regarding the entitlements that they think they will receive, or they perceive have been promised to them by their employer, including high pay, promotion, power, responsibilities, job security, training opportunities and career development (Robinson, 1996; Hamel, 2009). When an employer fails to meet these expectations, obligations, or promises, the employee experiences psychological contract breach. This results in feelings of injustice, frustration, disappointment, anger, mistrust, and moral outrage (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

Hoobler and Brass (2006) suggested that a supervisor’s own perception of psychological contract violation may set the scene for abusive behaviour toward subordinates. Conducting a survey across six universities in the United States of America, the study consisted of 210 matched sets of surveys, between (1) subordinates (MBA students), (2) their supervisors, and (3) the subordinates family members or partners. Hoobler and Brass (2006) found a significant and

positive relationship between a supervisor's perception of psychological contract violation and a subordinate's perception of abusive supervision ($r = 0.23, p < 0.01$). The authors suggested that when an employee experiences a psychological contract violation, they may not be able to directly decipher which member of the organization has done them wrong. Therefore, because of the inability to pinpoint the offending party, supervisors who experience psychological contract breach may justify displaced aggression, and as they have control over a subordinate, they become the obvious and easy target (Hoobler & Brass, 2006).

Moreover, a subordinate is unlikely to directly retaliate to their supervisor for fear of further abuse, or losing their job. This is emphasized by Hoobler and Brass (2006), who found that as a supervisor became more abusive, their subordinate became less likely to confront them ($r = -0.17, p < 0.05$). Thus, subordinates are unlikely to confront their supervisor, instead, displacing their aggression in areas of their lives that they have more control – such as at home. In fact, Hoobler and Brass (2006) also found that abusive supervision was positively related to family undermining ($r = 0.19, p < 0.01$), where family undermining includes behaviours such as increased arguing, disagreements, and negative mood states. In addition, the relationship between a supervisor's perceptions of psychological contract violation, and family member's perceptions of undermining was mediated by a subordinate's perception of abusive supervision (Hoobler & Brass, 2006). This emphasizes the trickle-down model proposed by Hoobler and Brass (2006). A supervisor perceives their psychological contract has been violated, and through displaced aggression, they take their frustration out on their subordinates. Following this, the subordinate takes their frustration out on their family when they get home (Hoobler & Brass, 2006).

1.1.5.3 Supervisor disposition

Hoobler and Brass (2006) also suggested that a supervisor's disposition may affect their tendency to be abusive. More specifically, they examined the effect of hostile attribution bias – or the tendency for an individual to interpret others behaviour as hostile, even when it was not their intention (Hoobler & Brass, 2006). For example, after being hit by a supermarket trolley, an old lady with hostile attribution bias would perceive she was hit on purpose by the young boy, rather than some other reason – such as the trolley having unstable wheels, and the young boy being unable to control it (Kirsh, 2006). Tendencies to perceive aggression and hostility, even when it is not warranted, are due to bias in social information processing, or misunderstanding social cues which indicate a person's intent (Kirsh, 2006). As such, this perceived hostility is likely to motivate feelings of revenge (Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Kirsh, 2006).

Regarding abusive supervision, Hoobler and Brass (2006) found that when a supervisor had low hostile attribution bias, subordinates expressed little difference in their perception of abusive supervision. However, when supervisors had high hostile attribution bias, a subordinate's perceptions of abuse were significantly increased under their psychological contract violation. This added further weight to the trickle-down model proposed by Hoobler and Brass (2006). Thus, a supervisor with high hostile attribution bias perceives their psychological contract has been violated, and through displaced aggression, they take their frustration out on their subordinates (Hoobler & Brass, 2006).

1.1.5.4 Supervisor's leadership style

In regard to leadership style, Aryee et al. (2007) conducted a study of telecommunication companies located in southeast China, examining supervisor-subordinate pairs. Specifically examining an 'authoritarian' or rigid, rule-governing management style, the results indicated that a highly authoritarian leadership style was significantly and positively related to abusive supervision ($r = 0.38, p < 0.01$). Aryee et al. (2007) suggested that abusive supervision may act as an avenue to satisfy highly authoritarian individuals need for power and control. Furthermore, the results indicated that a supervisor's own experience of interactional justice was negatively related to abusive supervision ($r = -0.195, p < 0.01$). Thus the more a supervisor had adverse experiences with their own manager, the more abusive they became. Aryee et al. (2007) suggested this may occur because a supervisor who experiences interactional injustice will take out their frustration on a less powerful target, thereby engaging in displaced aggression, and abusing their subordinate. However, during regression analysis, after controlling for gender and authoritarian leadership style, a supervisor's perception of injustice was unrelated to abusive supervision. This suggests that a supervisor's perception of injustice is an essential but not sufficient factor for provoking abusive supervision. As authoritarian leadership style moderated the relationship between interactional injustice and abusive supervision, this suggests that while a supervisor may be aggravated or provoked through their own perceived interactional injustice, they are more likely to actually engage in abuse supervision if their leadership style is highly authoritarian. These results also add weight to the idea of abusive supervision as part of a trickle down model, and the notion of displaced aggression.

1.1.5.5 Supervisor perceptions of justice

Tepper et al. (2006) conducted a field survey on 334 National Guard members and their military supervisors, thereby constructing a model of antecedents of abusive supervision. They identified a supervisor's perceived procedural injustice as a potential trigger for abusive supervision, as it can result in negative emotional states such as feeling undervalued, diminished self-efficacy, and depression. These feelings of powerlessness may, in turn, result in deviant or abusive behaviour – such as abusing convenient targets like their subordinates. Furthermore, procedural justice is linked to depression, depressed people tend to be more hostile than non-depressed individuals, and hostility is an outcome related to abusive supervision. Therefore, Tepper et al. (2006) suggested that depression may play a mediating role between a supervisor's procedural justice and a subordinate's reported levels of abuse. In fact, the results found strong support for this trickle-down model, whereby a supervisor's perceived procedural injustices translated into depression, thereby resulting in greater instances of abusive of their subordinates (Tepper et al., 2006). Furthermore, depression was found to moderate this relationship between procedural justice and subordinates perceptions of abusive supervision.

1.1.5.6 Subordinate disposition

The trickle-down model proposed by Tepper et al. (2006) also examined the role of a subordinate's level of negative affectivity - which involves a subordinate's tendency to experience high levels of distressing emotions (such as

hostility, sadness, fear, or anger). Negative affectivity is one factor associated with victim precipitation. The notion of victim precipitation means that some individuals are at risk of being victimized by displaying indicators (often unconsciously) that they are unable to defend themselves against attack (Tepper et al., 2006). These indicators may include displaying feelings of anxiousness, distress, insecurity, submissiveness, and vulnerability – as seen under high negative affectivity. This makes the subordinate a formidable target for exploitation, and a seemingly safe target for supervisor's to displace their aggression (Tepper et al., 2006). According to displaced aggression, a supervisor can only engage in abusive supervision when they have a nearby target. Therefore, it makes sense that a nearby subordinate with a negative affect would provide an ideal outlet for a supervisor's own frustrations. This was supported by Tepper et al. (2006), who found that a subordinate's level of negative affect strengthened this mediation framework (as discussed above).

More specifically, when a subordinate was high in negative affectivity, a supervisor's low procedural justice (or injustice) was linked to depression, thereby translating into perceived abuse by the subordinate (Tepper et al., 2006). When a subordinate had low negative affectivity, depression did not mediate this relationship, as supervisor's procedural justice was directly related to abusive supervision (Tepper et al., 2006). This trickle-down framework indicates that supervisor's injustice perceptions affect their subordinate's injustice perceptions – through abusive supervision. Therefore, Tepper et al. (2006) suggested that organizations may need to start with the examination and fair treatment of their *supervisors*, in order to reduce hostility in the workplace.

1.1.6 Outcomes of Abusive Supervision

As discussed above, organizational justice theories suggest that subordinates who are abused by their supervisors are likely to experience feelings of frustration, and thus, they are likely to respond with undesirable job and personal outcomes. In fact, abusive supervision has been linked to a wide range of outcomes including subordinates problem drinking (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006) depression, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and work-family conflict (Tepper, 2000), job dissatisfaction (Keashly, Trott & MacLean, 1994; Tepper, 2000; Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler & Ensley, 2004), life dissatisfaction (Tepper, 2000), increased intention to quit (Keashly et al., 1994; Tepper, 2000), lower organizational commitment (Duffy et al., 2002), counterproductivity (Duffy et al., 2002; Detert et al., 2007), diminished self-efficacy (Duffy et al., 2002), burnout (Grandey, Kern & Frone, 2007), workplace deviance (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), decreased organizational citizenship behaviours (Zellars et al., 2002), and decreased job performance (Harris, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2007). Given the focus of this thesis, the main outcomes discussed further below include: (1) subordinate's behavioural responses, (2) work and life outcomes, (3) mental health outcomes, and (4) organizational-based self esteem.

1.1.6.1 Subordinate's behavioural responses

Abusive supervision acts as a source of interactional injustice, thereby producing feelings of resentment (Tepper et al., 2001). Therefore, according to social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, it is reasonable to expect that

a subordinate will want to respond to their supervisors' abuse in some manner, to punish them for their misconduct, thereby restoring the balance (Tepper et al., 2001; Zellars et al., 2002; Tepper et al., 2006). Targets of abusive supervision often feel powerless, and unable to take corrective action for fear that they may evoke further mistreatment, or lose their job (Tepper, 2007). This was emphasized by Tepper (2000), who found that the effects of abusive supervision were amplified when an individual had less job mobility. As 'job mobility' refers to the extent to which a person believes they have other attractive employment alternatives (Tepper, 2000), this suggests that abused subordinates who lack job mobility may feel trapped within their present job, and thus, unable to escape the source of their stress. Furthermore, Lord (1998) found that an individual will rarely target their abuse at someone more powerful than themselves. For this reason, it is unlikely that an abused subordinate will retaliate to their supervisor with abuse, choosing to respond in a less overt manner (Tepper et al., 2001).

According to the idea of 'displaced aggression', subordinates are unlikely to directly or abusively retaliate to abusive supervision, as doing so may trigger more abuse from the supervisor (Zellars et al., 2002). Therefore, subordinates are more likely to look for more covert ways of getting even for their perceived injustices, and restore an equitable situation by: resisting their supervisor's downward influence attempts (Tepper, 2001), engaging in workplace deviance (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), withholding organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB) or 'extra role behaviours' (Zellars et al., 2002; Ayree et al., 2007, being counterproductive (Duffy et al., 2002; Detert et al., 2007), and reducing job performance (Harris et al., 2007).

In fact, Tepper et al. (2001) found that abusive supervision was positively related to a subordinate's use of resistance tactics, as abused subordinates engaged in both constructive resistance tactics (e.g. negotiation and requesting clarification), and dysfunctional resistance tactics (e.g. passive-aggressive responses to the abuser, including procrastinating etc.), more often than their non-abused counterparts. Moreover, Mitchell and Ambrose (2007) examined the relationship between abusive supervision and employee workplace deviance (purposefully harmful behaviours, such as shirking), finding that abusive supervision was linked to three types of employee deviance – including deviance directed at their supervisor, organizational, and interpersonal-directed deviance ($r = 0.40, 0.17, 0.21$ respectively, when $p < 0.01$). Interestingly, in a two-wave investigation of 243 employees, Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, and Duffy (2008) found that the relationship between abusive supervision and organizational deviance was stronger when subordinates perceived their co-workers were approving of the deviance - thereby emphasizing the destructive power of organizational 'norms'. Furthermore, Tepper, Moss, Lockhart and Carr (2007) found abused subordinates were more likely to engage in *regulative* tactics (such as avoiding all contact) than *direct* tactics (such as openly communicating). The use of these tactics suggests that abused subordinates are unwilling to speak out or 'whistle-blow' unless doing so proves to be effective and un-costly.

Additionally, both Zellars et al. (2002) and Ayree et al. (2007) found that OCB decreased when subordinates experienced abusive supervision. As OCB includes *extra*-role behaviours which go above and beyond the requirement of a job, removing such behaviours means they should not jeopardize their job within the organization, as omission of OCB's are un-punishable (Zellars et al., 2002).

Furthermore, in a longitudinal study of 265 restaurants in the USA, Detert et al. (2007) also found that abusive supervision was positively related to counter-productivity ($r = 0.20, p < 0.01$), whereby counter-productivity was measured via food loss for each company. As counterproductive work behaviours (carelessness, neglect, theft, wasting time and resources etc.) includes actions of an employee which violate an organization's legitimate interests, they have the potential to produce deleterious consequences on both efficiency, and an organizations financial well-being (Detert et al., 2007).

Finally, in a survey of 204 automotive industry employees, Harris et al. (2007) found that abusive supervision was negatively related to job performance. Harris et al. (2007) suggested performance may decrease as subordinates spend more time dealing with their abuse, rather than doing their job. This was particularly the case for individuals who attached more meaning to their work - who experienced a stronger negative relationship between abusive supervision and job performance (Harris et al., 2007). Employees who find their work meaningful tend to heavily invest resources in their job (such as time, energy, and effort). When faced with abusive supervision, the subordinate's resources become drained as they endeavour to deal with the abuse; thereby removing their ability to engage in work behaviours, and decreasing job performance (Harris et al., 2007).

Resistance tactics, workplace deviance, reducing OCB, and counter-productivity all involve behaviours that would largely go undetected, thus they provide an employee with a 'safe' means of retaliation and retribution against both the abusive supervisor and organization – without gaining further abuse from their supervisor (Detert et al., 2007). When the research above is examined

together, it suggests that the reactive behaviours from abused subordinates were not only linked to the source of the abuse (the abusive supervisor), but also created unintended or incidental damage to the organization as well. This link between abusive managerial behaviour and organizational outcomes indicates that a supervisor's behaviour may have long lasting effects, which may 'come back to bite' both the direct abuser, and organization in the future. This emphasizes the importance of reducing abusive supervision, and breaking destructive organizational norms.

1.1.6.2 Work and life outcomes

A subordinate's experience of injustice explains many of their reactions to abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000). As discussed above, workplace injustices can cause frustration, threaten a subordinate's self and social image, and even produce moral outrage. In some circumstances, these perceived injustices are likely to translate into both dislike for their job, as well as prompting the subordinate to seek out and obtain alternative employment (Tepper, 2000). An employee who experiences injustice through abusive supervision is likely to feel the organization does not care about them, or value their contributions (Tepper, 2000). Therefore, according to the psychological contract, employees are unlikely to feel obliged to remain with the organization, or develop an emotional attachment or sense of identification with the organization. This suggests that an employee's organizational commitment will be low, while turnover intentions may be high (Tepper, 2007). For example, a supervisor publicly criticizes a subordinate, and later, takes credit for their work. According to social exchange theory, bad

behaviour is usually reciprocated with bad behaviour, thus the subordinate is likely to respond with increased inclined to leave the organization, less satisfaction with their job, less commitment to the organization, and so forth.

In his seminal empirical study, Tepper (2000) found abusive supervision was significantly and negatively related to job satisfaction ($r = -0.35, p < 0.01$), and life satisfaction ($r = -0.19$). Furthermore, as work often plays a significant role in terms of people's time, emotional involvement, fulfillment, and self esteem, it seems logical that perceived injustices from abusive supervision would translate into higher turnover intentions, and decreased job and life satisfaction (Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2004).

For this reason, I expect that the unjust treatment of subordinates will increase their desire to leave an organization, and will reduce a subordinate's level of job and life satisfaction. Therefore, in regard to work and life attitudes, the following hypotheses provide the alternate to the null hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Abusive supervision will be negatively related to life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Abusive supervision will be negatively related to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Abusive supervision will be positively related to turnover intentions.

1.1.6.3 Mental health outcomes

In regard to the effects of abusive supervision, Tepper (2000) developed and tested a model of the consequences of abusive supervision in the workplace. The study involved surveying 712 participants, who were contacted via telephone using random-digit dialing. A second wave of surveys were dispatched six-months later, gaining a total response of 362 corresponding part 1 and 2 surveys. In regard to mental health outcomes, the results indicated that abusive supervision was statistically related to all dimensions of mental health ($p < 0.01$ for all dimensions). Furthermore, when a subordinate reported their supervisors as exhibiting abusive behavior, they reported small increases in levels of depression (3%) and anxiety (4%), and moderate increases in emotional exhaustion (13%). Tepper (2000) suggested that feelings of injustice can undermine an individual's self-esteem or sense of self-worth. This undermining may stimulate feelings of anxiety, helplessness, and distress.

For this reason, it seems logical that being abused at work is likely to result in negative mental health outcomes. Being told “your thoughts are nothing; you are nothing” (Tepper, 2000, p.178) and “my bath mat means more to me than you” (Tepper, 2000, p.178) is unlikely to result in positive thoughts. In reality, it is much more probable that abusive supervision will be linked to feelings of depression, stress, and anxiety when it comes to dealing with work matters. Thus I expect abusive supervision will result in increased harmful mental health problems, and thus, be positively related to the negative mental health outcomes of this study. Therefore, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4: Abusive supervision will be positively related to anxiety.

Hypothesis 5: Abusive supervision will be positively related to depression.

Hypothesis 6: Abusive supervision will be positively related to insomnia.

1.1.6.4 Organization-based self esteem (OBSE)

Abusive supervision may also affect a subordinate's organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, and Dunham (1989) studied the role of self-esteem in organizational models. Defined as "a self-evaluation that individuals make and maintain with regard to themselves" (Pierce et al., 1989, p. 625), an individual's self-esteem can be said to be an expression of their level of approval toward themselves, indicating the extent they believe they are capable and worthy. In relation to self-esteem within an organization, Pierce and Gardner (2004) defined OBSE as "the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member" (p. 593). While OBSE shows links to self-efficacy, the two are conceptually distinct, as OBSE is related to perceived competence within the organization, while high self-efficacy reflects the employee's belief that their competency can be transferred into successful performance (Pierce et al., 1989).

Individuals with high OBSE are likely to have a sense of satisfying their needs through their organizational roles in the past, and thus, will have a high

sense of personal adequacy as organizational members. Therefore OBSE is reflective of an employee's self-perceived value as a competent and capable organization member, and the degree they believe the statement "I count around here" (Pierce & Gardner, 2004, p. 593). In fact, in a study of 2,444 individuals, it was found that employee's with high OBSE perceived that they were important, effectual, meaningful, and worthwhile employing within the organization (Pierce et al., 1989).

As OBSE involves the self-esteem formed around work and organizational experiences, it may be unsurprising that it has the potential to effect an employee's intrinsic motivation, general attitudes (including global self-esteem, and general satisfaction), work attitudes (such as organizational commitment, organizational satisfaction, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions), and work-related behaviours (including actual turnover, job performance, and OCB) (Pierce et al., 1989; Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Research into self-esteem in the workplace has suggested that individuals tend to act in accordance with their personal level of self-esteem. Therefore, individuals will maintain favourable work attitudes if they have high self esteem, while those with low self esteem will tend to develop and sustain unproductive work behaviours and negative work attitudes (Pierce et al., 1989). This would occur because these behaviours are consistent with the individual's attitude that they are of high/low competence. Thus, people behave in ways which will enable them to preserve their current levels of self esteem (Pierce et al., 1989).

Grounded amongst organizational experiences, determinants of employee OBSE include social messages that an employee receives and internalizes that

have come from meaningful co-workers within the organization, as well as direct and personal experiences (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Thus it seems reasonable to suggest that OBSE may be directly affected by a subordinate's interaction with their supervisor. A supervisor may appear to be a meaningful co-worker, or even a representative of the whole organization. Therefore, when a subordinate experiences high abuse from their supervisor, it is likely to send a message to the subordinate that they don't matter to the organization. These harmful messages may become internalized over time, and thus, reduce the subordinate's OBSE.

Overall, there is limited research linking abusive supervision and OBSE. Recently, Kiazad Restubog, Zagenczyk, and Kiewitz (2010) tested OBSE as a moderator of authoritarian leadership, with abusive supervision as the outcome. They found OBSE and abusive supervision were significantly correlated at $r = -0.21$ ($p < 0.01$). Moreover, in a study of 175 employee-supervisor dyads in the Philippines, Rafferty and Restubog (in press) tested OBSE as a mediator of abusive supervision and prosocial outcomes. They also found OBSE and abusive supervision were significantly correlated at $r = -0.31$ ($p < 0.001$). As such, Rafferty and Restubog (in press) stated that "abusive supervision will be negatively associated with OBSE as being treated in hostile fashion by one's direct leader will reduce employees' sense that they are capable, significant and worthy" (pp. 5-6). Only recently, research has emerged which has begun to examine the nature of the relationship between abusive supervision and OBSE. Therefore, it seems important to extend on this research, thereby adding a new contribution to the current literature. This leads to the next hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7: Abusive supervision will be negatively related to OBSE.

1.1.7 Minimizing abusive supervision

The results of the studies presented above demonstrate the damaging effects of negative social exchanges and perceived injustices that subordinate's experience under abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000). As organizations endeavour to become more efficient, it may be unsurprising that companies have an increasing concern for employee wellbeing (Barney, 1991). As stated under the resource-based view of the firm, human resources can be utilized and maximized in order to gain a sustained competitive advantage, as the resource can be considered to be: valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable when compared with those of another firm (Barney, 1991). Thus, organizations are increasingly utilizing their staff as a means of setting their business apart from all of the rest.

The results presented above suggest that ensuring abusive supervision is minimized could have significant benefits for an organization, because of the reduction in negative effects experienced by critical human resources. Therefore, it seems important to take a more detailed look at ways of mitigating the effects of abusive supervision, such as through the role of support in the workplace. While most studies acknowledge the prevalence and deleterious effects associated with abusive supervision, little research has focused on ways to reduce this conflict. Therefore, both supervisor support, and perceived organizational support shall be investigated below, as a potential buffer to the effects of abusive supervision in the workplace. In this regard, this thesis seeks to better enable organizations and employees to manage the detrimental influence of abusive supervision.

1.1.7.1 Buffering role of supervisor support

One of the focuses of this study is to examine the potentially buffering effect of supervisor support in regard to abusive supervision in the workplace. To some individuals, it may seem counterintuitive to think that a supervisor can be both abusive and supportive concurrently. However, if one closely examines the definitions of abusive supervision and perceived supervisor support (PSS), it indicates that there is room for both to occur.

In a workplace setting, the role of a supervisor is meant to be someone to guide and help subordinates with workplace tasks, thereby reducing workplace ambiguity and stress (Yagil, 2006). Nevertheless, as examined above, the reality is that certain aspects of their behaviour may cause stress, and many subordinates experience abuse from their supervisors. Therefore, Yagil (2006) suggested it is possible for a subordinate to experience both abuse and support from their supervisor – especially when in a mild form. Abuse behaviours do not have to be extreme to have a negative result on a subordinate, as the high status of a supervisor can be intimidating, and thus, even small interactions including insensitivity and poor communication can encourage stress in a subordinate (Yagil, 2006).

Abusive supervision and supervisor support are not polar opposites of the spectrum (Duffy et al., 2002; Yagil, 2006). Duffy et al. (2002) argued that while supervisor undermining (a related field to abusive supervision) is negative, and supervisor support is positive, rather than being extreme opposites, they are simply distinct conceptual dimensions. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that there is the ability for abusive supervision and PSS to co-exist. In fact, Duffy et al.

(2002) went on to state that that “although it is tempting to suggest that relationships characterized by support would not be simultaneously characterized by undermining, research suggests the opposite. People often experience high amounts of support and conflict from the same person” (p. 337). In addition, Tepper (2000) found that a subordinate often remains in an abusive relationship because the supervisor intersperses abuse with normal or supportive behaviour, thereby confusing a subordinate, and suggesting the abuse may be only temporary. For instance, a supervisor may come to work, and support their subordinate by offering them strategies with how to deal with a problem regarding client pricing. However, when the subordinate later phones their boss about a related matter, the supervisor is terse with the employee, telling them they’re useless and waste of time, and to figure out a solution on their own. Consequently, within the course of a single working day, the subordinate has experienced both supportive and abusive supervision, potentially leaving them with both positive and negative feelings regarding the day’s interactions.

Yagil (2006) examined the role of both abusive supervision and supervisor support in a study of 249 Israeli employees from various organizational settings. The results indicated that abusive supervision was significantly negatively related to supervisor support ($p < 0.0001$). However, while abusive supervision and supervisor support were both were related to employees upward influence tactics to supervision; they were related through different moderating variables, or different paths, thereby indicating that abusive supervision and supervisor support are related, but different concepts. Yagil (2006) suggested that as supervisors may engage in both abuse and support at varying times, it is imperative to consider the separate and cumulative effects both behaviours may have on a subordinate.

Therefore, abuse and support are not complete opposites – a supervisor is not *always* abusive, or *always* supportive (Duffy et al., 2002). Thus, the focus of this study is to examine whether the good potentially outweighs the bad. In other words, the present study examines whether the support received from a supervisor can outweigh the negative effects experienced on the occasions when a supervisor is abusive. Therefore, careful examination of the supervisor support literature is required.

1.2 Supervisor Support

1.2.1 Defining the concept

The term ‘supervisor support’ relates to the global beliefs that employees develop regarding the degree their supervisor cares about their well-being, and values their contributions (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988). Also referred to as perceived supervisor support (PSS), the notion involves a subordinate’s subjective evaluations of their individual supervisor’s behaviour. Babin and Boles (1996) defined supervisor support as “the degree to which employees perceive that supervisors offer employees support, encouragement and concern (Babin & Boles, 1996, p. 60)”. Chen, Wang, Chang and Hu (2008) further described PSS as “the positive feedback and benefits that subordinates receive from their supervisors for their contributions” (p. 322). Thus, it may be unsurprising that the encouragement, feedback, and support of a supervisor has been linked to positive mental health and work outcomes, including decreased stress, decreased burnout, and increased job satisfaction (Russell, Altmaier & Van Velzen, 1987; Cummins, 1990; Babin & Boles, 1996; Wong, Cheuk, & Rosen, 2000), to name a few.

Similarly to abusive supervision, the idiosyncratic nature of a subordinate’s evaluations means that their perceptions of supervisor support can change over time, and be interpreted in different ways by individual employees. Thus, two employees could report differences in the extent and manner in which they find their shared supervisor to be supportive. This emphasizes the complex nature of PSS, as subordinates must adjust their behaviour in accordance with supervisor expectations, in order to obtain recognition and reward from their supervisor, and likewise, the supervisor must treat subordinates with similar

affection in order to earn their loyalty, enthusiasm, and encourage future valuable contributions (Chen & Chiu, 2008). This suggests that quality supervisor-subordinate relationships are built upon respect, trust, loyalty, interpersonal support, and development (Hopkins, 2005).

Most of the literature regarding supervisor support has been examined through the domain of 'social support' in the workplace. Quick and Quick (1984) discussed four different forms of workplace social support, including (1) informational (such as obtaining reports on a critical issue), (2) emotional (including empathy, love, care, and trust), (3) instrumental (such as a colleague facilitating behaviours which enable the individual to complete work tasks), and (4) appraisal (such as a subordinate gaining evaluation and feedback on their performance from their supervisor). For this reason, it seems logical that these types of practical and emotional support from a supervisor may enable a worker to resolve conflict and stress in the workplace, thereby increasing their satisfaction and preventing depression – especially when compared to their unsupported counterparts (Thanacoody, Bartram, & Casimir, 2009). This was emphasized by Babin and Boles (1996), who found that subordinates experienced reduced role conflict and role ambiguity as PSS increased, thereby confirming that support practices provided subordinates with tools to go about their work with greater ease. Moreover, Babin and Boles (1996) suggested that supportive management practices may directly influence a subordinate's perception of their well-being, thereby encouraging increased satisfaction.

While supervisors and organizations are viewed as distinct entities, a supervisor can play a key role in subordinate attitudes, as they can: act like a

gatekeeper to organizational practices, influence the extent to which organizational policies are publicised and understood, and lead in the creation of social norms (Hopkins, 2005). Thus, while organizations may strive to encourage supportive work environments, the 'front-line' nature of a supervisor means their own personal attitudes and behaviours have the ability to greatly effect a subordinate's perceptions (Hopkins, 2005). This perceived 'position of power' signals to subordinates that their manager's thoughts and values are important, thereby enabling them to have great influence over subordinate attitudes. Hopkins (2005) suggested that this may make the supervisor critical in creating a supportive work environment. This was emphasized by Russell et al. (1987) who examined the difference in the effectiveness of support from different sources, including a teacher's: supervisor, co-worker, spouse, and friend/relative. The study of 316 public school teachers found that supervisor support was the most effective source of support in buffering the negative effects of stress in the classroom (Russell et al., 1987). Ng and Sorensen (2008) examined the effect of PSS, compared to perceived co-worker support (PCS). The meta-analysis of 59 samples found that PSS was more strongly related to outcomes than PCS, specifically towards turnover intentions ($r = -0.36$ vs. -0.19), job satisfaction ($r = 0.52$ vs. 0.37), and affective commitment ($r = 0.48$ vs. 0.28). Once again, these results emphasize the critical role of a supervisor on subordinates attitudes and behaviours.

Furthermore, as supervisor support enables a subordinate to feel valued and respected, the encouragement received from a supervisor may satisfy an individual's socio-emotional needs. This fulfilment emphasizes the importance of positive social exchanges (Hopkins, 2005). Consequently, the beneficial outcomes

of PSS in the workplace are often explained through justice theories including: interactional justice, social exchange theory, and the norm of reciprocity, just as with abusive supervision.

1.2.2 Social exchange theory and interactional justice

Similarly to abusive supervision, PSS is often examined through the lens of social exchange theory, and interactional justice. According to social exchange theory, gestures of goodwill are exchanged, and warrant reciprocity. In fact, regarding social exchanges in the workplace, Settoon, Bennett, and Liden, (1996) stated that "positive, beneficial actions directed at employees by the organization and/or its representatives contribute to the establishment of high quality exchange relationships that create obligations for employees to reciprocate in positive, beneficial ways" (p. 219). This suggests that a supportive, understanding, and flexible supervisor will be rewarded with loyalty and hard work.

Moreover, exchanges with supervisors are often viewed as distinct interactions from those directly with the organization (Hopkins, 2005; Maertz Jr, Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007). Therefore, supervisor support is often examined closely with interactional justice. Just as PSS focuses on one-on-one interactions with a subordinate's supervisor, interactional justice also focuses on the interpersonal element of fairness (Cropanzano et al., 2002). As discussed above, when a subordinate feels supported by their supervisor, this leads to feelings of being valued, and cared about. Thus Cropanzano et al. (2002) suggested that high supervisor support may be more closely aligned with positive social exchanges, and as a result, subordinates are more likely to perceive that

they are being treated fairly by their supervisor. Therefore, it may be unsurprising that positive social exchanges and PSS have been associated with a range of positive organizational outcomes, including increased organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and OCB, to name a few (Jiang & Klein, 2000; Kidd & Smewing, 2001; Chen et al., 2008; Karatepe & Uludag, 2008). Accordingly, outcomes of PSS shall be explored further below.

1.2.3 Outcomes of supervisor support

Forms of social support have been increasingly examined because of the notion that support may be able to buffer or alleviate the bad effects associated with organizational stressors (Cummins, 1990). Through support from their supervisor, employees feel that they are cared about, wanted, and valued (Kirmeyer & Dougherty, 1988). According to social exchange theory, this sense of ‘belonging’ provides employees with a communication network, and enables employees to engage in a network of mutual obligation (Kirmeyer & Dougherty, 1988). Furthermore, supervisor support systems have been described as a way of improving a subordinate’s adaptive competence, thereby enabling them to deal with short-term crises, and long-term life transitions and challenges (Thanacoody et al., 2009). Thus PSS is often examined in a work-family context – as seen through a study of New Zealand managers, which found PSS to be significantly and negatively related to psychological strain, work-family conflict (WFC), and family-work conflict (FWC) (O’Driscoll, Poelmans, Spector, Kalliath, Allen, Cooper, & Sanchez, 2003). However, with a narrower focus of enquiry for this study, only work and life outcomes, and mental health shall be explored further.

1.2.3.1 Work and life outcomes

In accordance with social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, positive supervisor behaviour is reciprocated with positive work outcomes from employees. This was emphasized by a study of 265 employees from a range of organizations, where it was found that PSS was positively related to organizational commitment (Kidd & Smewing, 2001). In addition, Chen et al. (2008) examined the role of support in a hospital setting, examining 300 supervisor-subordinate dyads. The level of subordinate PSS was directly related to their trust in their supervisor. The findings also indicated that high PSS was positively related to commitment, promotion of OCB in the workplace, greater organizational effectiveness, and reduced turnover intentions. Moreover, Gagnon and Michael (2004) examined the role of PSS on work attitudes and outcomes on a sample of 577 blue-collared workers. The results indicated that high PSS was positively related to: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance. When these studies are examined concurrently, it emphasizes the nature of reciprocity - as compared to their unsupported counterparts, subordinates with high PSS in the workplace also reported having increased: affective commitment, job satisfaction, trust, performance, and OCB, and less desire to leave the organization. This emphasizes the critical role of a supervisor in the workplace - as a strong front-line manager may be crucial in encouraging desirable attitudes and behaviours within their employees (Kidd & Smewing, 2001; Gagnon & Michael, 2004; Chen et al., 2008).

Furthermore, Jiang and Klein (2000) suggested that PSS may encourage subordinates at a deeper level than the immediate job at hand. In a study of 101

entry-level information systems professionals, it was found that PSS was positively related to both career satisfaction, *and* perceived career opportunities. Jiang and Klein (2000) suggested that as supervisor support affects subordinates on a more personal and interactional level, it is likely to influence career development – particularly if the supervisor were to provide personal support, or helpful feedback on career advancement opportunities. Moreover, Chen and Chiu (2008) explained that supervisor support may go beyond simply providing a subordinate with coping mechanisms to reduce job tension – and actually aid in satisfying a subordinate’s socio-emotional needs. In a Taiwanese study, data was collected from 323 supervisor-subordinate dyads in seven companies. Results found that PSS was positively related to person-organization fit, job satisfaction, and OCB, and was negatively related to job tension (Chen & Chiu, 2008). Thus increased PSS would increase their trust in their supervisor, thereby increasing their job satisfaction, and making them feel more like they belong within the organization.

Karatepe and Uludag (2008) developed and tested a model of supervisor support in the Turkish hotel industry, using a sample of 332 front-line hotel workers. The path analysis indicated that subordinates with high PSS experienced reduced WFC and FWC. Furthermore, high PSS was linked to increased family and career satisfaction. Karatepe and Uludag (2008) suggested that frontline employees receiving support from their supervisor may be able to cope with difficulties more easily, thereby alleviating a subordinate from conflict, and giving them increased opportunities to enjoy their work and family - resulting in increased family and career satisfaction.

Finally, Thanacoody et al. (2009) conducted a study of 114 cancer clinicians working at an Australian hospital. The results indicated that supervisor support was negatively related to WFC ($r = -0.24, p < 0.01$), burnout ($r = -0.41, p < 0.001$), and intention to leave ($r = -0.53, p < 0.001$). Furthermore, PSS buffered the effects of both WFC and FWC on burnout and intention to leave. Thanacoody et al. (2009) suggested this provided strong support for the buffering hypothesis, as the moderation hypothesis was stronger in the presence of high PSS.

A large amount of evidence (provided above) has shown support for the buffering effect of PSS on outcomes, indicating that it may also provide a buffer to abusive supervision. Consequently, I expect that high PSS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and work and life outcomes, such that the impact of abusive supervision will be mitigated under higher levels of PSS. As such, I test whether a subordinate with an abusive, and yet supportive supervisor, is likely to feel greater satisfaction for their role compared to a subordinate who is unsupported and abused. Therefore, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 8a: PSS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and life satisfaction, with higher PSS buffering (moderating) the direct effect of abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 9a: PSS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction, with higher PSS buffering (moderating) the direct effect of abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 10a: PSS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions, with higher PSS moderating the direct effect of abusive supervision.

1.2.3.2 Mental health outcomes

Occupational stress has become an area of concern for employers, as research continues to point out both the prevalence, and detrimental effects associated with stress in the workplace (Cummins, 1990). Work dissatisfaction, lower productivity, reduced performance, and increased intention to leave, are just a few negative behavioural and attitudinal outcomes frequently associated with increased workplace stress (Cummins, 1990). However, supportive work environments are increasingly being examined as a potential buffer to workplace stress, reducing these damaging effects, and as such, various studies have examined the role of supervisor support in mitigating stress in the workplace.

Cummins (1990) examined the role of supervisor support in the workplace. Based on survey results from 96 United States employees, results indicated that PSS was significantly and negatively related to job stress ($r = -0.36$, $p < 0.01$), and significantly and positively related to job satisfaction ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.001$, accounting for 5% of the variance). Furthermore, PSS moderated the relationship between job stress and job dissatisfaction. Cummins (1990) highlighted the role of social exchange theory, as the supervisor's good behaviour was reciprocated with positive work outcomes, and thus, emphasized the importance of supervisor support in the workplace.

In addition, Kirmeyer and Dougherty (1988) suggested that supportive interactions with managers at work may enable an employee to cope with work overload and stress more effectively by; keeping employees focused on the task at hand rather than any anxiety, by encouraging employees to develop coping mechanisms to deal with work overload, and by ensuring employees that they will

support any action they take. Kirmeyer and Dougherty (1988) found support for the buffering role of PSS on tension and anxiety in the workplace. The authors suggested that PSS may reduce the emotional distress associated with overload, and encourage problem focussed coping mechanisms (Kirmeyer & Dougherty, 1988). This was supported by Wong et al. (2000), who in a Hong Kong study of 108 kindergarten principals, found that informational support (providing information to help an individual to deal with the situation at hand more effectively) from their supervisor was negatively related to job stress. The authors suggested PSS may enable an employee to identify appropriate strategies to deal with job stress (Wong et al., 2000). Thus supervisor support encourages coping mechanisms, thereby acting as a buffer against the tension-anxiety outcomes experienced under a high workload (Kirmeyer & Dougherty, 1988).

More specifically, Russell et al. (1987) found that supervisor support was the most instrumental source in predicting outcomes, and was negatively related to both emotional exhaustion (burnout) and depersonalisation (negative attitudes toward students), and positively related to personal accomplishment. The moderating or buffering hypothesis was supported, as PSS interacted with job stress to predict depersonalization (Russell et al., 1987). Thus as PSS increased, the relationship between job-stress and depersonalization decreased. Teachers with high PSS reported receiving positive feedback regarding their skills and abilities as a teacher, as well as reassurance of worth and reliable alliance (Russell et al., 1987). Thus, a supportive supervisor would reassure or encourage teachers, boosting their self-confidence, and making them less susceptible to burnout. Russell et al. (1987) suggested that while other sources of support may still be beneficial, supervisor support may be the only source where the subordinate feels

understood, and like the supervisor could truly relate to their situation.

Finally, Gibson, Grey and Hastings (2009) conducted a study examining the role of PSS amongst 81 therapists, who were working in schools that employ the applied behaviour analysis (ABA) methodology to teach autistic children. The results of the study indicated that PSS played a critical role in predicting outcomes, as high levels of PSS were associated with; reduced depersonalization, reduced burnout (emotional exhaustion), increased perceived therapeutic self-efficacy (their confidence in dealing with a child who is difficult to engage), and increased personal accomplishment (Gibson et al., 2009). Furthermore, the results indicated that high work demands coupled with low support gained the highest level of work-place stress, suggesting that support could *buffer* therapists from reduced self-efficacy and personal accomplishment under times of demanding work. In fact, PSS moderated the relationship between work-demands, and personal accomplishment burnout. Under high work-demands and high support, subordinates reported higher personal accomplishment scores than their unsupported counterparts. Gibson et al. (2009) suggested these findings highlight the importance of supervisor support, particularly in stressful occupations with high work-demands.

Taken together, these studies highlight the potentially buffering role of supervisor support on mental health outcomes under stressful work conditions. The results presented above suggest that high PSS enables subordinates to deal better with stress in the workplace - which may potentially include stress due to abusive supervision. Furthermore, feeling cared about by a supervisor may enable a subordinate to feel as though they count, increasing their OBSE when compared

to their unsupported counterparts. For this reason, I expect PSS to reduce the harmful effects of abusive supervision in the workplace, and propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 11a: Supervisor support will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and anxiety, with higher supervisor support buffering (moderating) the direct effect of abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 12a: Supervisor support will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and depression, with higher supervisor support buffering (moderating) the direct effect of abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 13a: Supervisor support will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and insomnia, with higher supervisor support buffering (moderating) the direct effect of abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 14a: Supervisor support will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and OBSE, with higher supervisor support buffering (moderating) the direct effect of abusive supervision.

1.3 Perceived organizational support (POS)

Another main focus of this study is to examine the potentially moderating role of perceived organizational support on abusive supervision toward individual and organizational outcomes. Therefore the concept shall be examined closely below.

1.3.1 Defining the concept

Perceived organizational support (POS) has been defined from an employee's perspective, as the "general belief that their work organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 698). Similarly to abusive supervision and PSS, POS has also been examined through the lens of social exchange theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger, Cotterell & Marvel, 1987; Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro, 1990). Building on the norm of reciprocity, POS emerged due to the observation that if an organization is concerned and committed to its employees, their employees show focus and commitment in return (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Thus employees provide hard work and commitment in exchange for both; socio-emotional resources, and tangible rewards (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Similarly to abusive supervision and PSS, POS is based on *subjective* assessments of the organizations actions, thus is likely to be influenced by the frequency, extremity, and sincerity of any statements of approval or praise made by the organization. Furthermore, material rewards such as pay, job enrichment, and work-family benefits are likely to affect an employee's POS, but only to the extent that they influence the organizations positive evaluation of the employee.

When an employee experiences high POS, it signals that they feel valued and cared for. According to social exchange theory, this develops feelings of ‘obligation’ to repay the organization for their attention to the individual’s socio-emotional needs, thereby resulting in beneficial work outcomes (Hochwarter, Witt, Treadway, & Ferris, 2006). Thus, it may be unsurprising that POS has been found to be positively related to OCB and productivity, and negatively related to stress, absenteeism and turnover (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Hochwarter et al., 2006).

1.3.2 Origins of POS and Organizational Support Theory

The employment relationship is often referred to as “the trade of effort and loyalty for material commodities or social rewards” (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 500). The underlying social nature of employment relationships signifies that there is value to be gained from understanding social exchanges in the workplace (Eisenberger et al., 1990). For an employee, the organization is not only a source of tangible benefits (such as wages), but also socio-emotional resources - such as feelings of being cared for, and respected (Eisenberger et al., 1986). A ‘positive valuation’ by an organization signals to the employee that their hard work will be noticed and rewarded. In addition, gaining high regard within an organization may, in turn, fulfil an employee’s personal need for affiliation, approval, and high-esteem (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). This suggests that employee’s assess the extent to which their employer cares about them, which consequently, affects their effort (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Therefore, employees may experience both economic commitment (dependence

for wages), and affective commitment (emotional ties) toward an organization (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006).

Employees make judgements about whether or not an organization fosters a favourable orientation toward them, through ascribing anthropomorphic attributions to the organizations' nature, or dispositional traits (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). By attributing human qualities to the organization, employees can relate to them as though they are human, as well as generalizing their feelings about co-workers to the organization as a whole (Levinson, 1965; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Levinson (1965) suggested that employees assign humanlike characteristics because the organization would then be accountable for their agent's (such as a specific manager) actions, provide continuity and prescribe role behaviours through organizational norms and policies, and exert power over specific employees through their agents. By personifying the organization in this manner, it emphasizes that employee's bring a social exchange approach to employment (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

More simply, POS has developed in conjunction with organizational support theory (OST). OST suggests that the formation of POS is encouraged by an employee's tendency to assign an organization with humanlike characteristics (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). Thus actions from one agent of the organization are often considered to be an indication of the entire organization's intent, rather than the agent's own personal motives. Therefore, an organization must take responsibility (moral, financial and legal) for their agents' actions, through implementing organizational norms and policies which would prescribe acceptable role behaviours (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Aselage &

Eisenberger, 2003). According to OST, through this personification, employees develop beliefs about the extent the organization values them, based upon the level of favourable or unfavourable treatment they receive (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Shore & Shore, 1995; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). This was highlighted by Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, and Rhoades (2002), who found that employees consistently agreed on various statements regarding the extent their organization appreciated their contributions, and how they would be treated in varying settings. Thus OST presumes that employees believe the organization has a general orientation toward them, which includes both concern for their welfare, and recognition of their contributions (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

In fact, Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo and Lynch (1998) investigated the effects of socio-emotional resources on POS in the workplace. In a study of 308 police patrol officers from the U.S. state police department, the focus was how the strength of an employee's socio-emotional needs impacted the relationship between POS and job performance. 'Socio-emotional needs' can include a need for; esteem (praise and recognition), affiliation (affection and cognitive stimulation), and emotional support (consolation and sympathy) (Armeli et al., 1998). The results indicated a positive relationship between POS and performance for patrol officers who had high socio-emotional needs, but not for officers with low socio-emotional needs. This suggests POS may help to fulfil an employee's socio-emotional needs, thereby creating an obligation for them to repay the organization with increased performance (Armeli et al., 1998). Police officers with high socio-emotional needs made more arrests for driving-under-the-influence (DUI) of alcohol, and speeding citations. Patrol officers with lower

socio-emotional needs displayed a negative relationship between POS and DUI arrests, suggesting employees with lower socio-emotional needs may face fewer obligations to respond to POS with higher work performance (Armeli et al., 1998).

These results support the social-exchange view of employment, as receiving socio-emotional resources encourages greater work effort, POS may act as a means of fulfilling employees socio-emotional needs, and finally, the effect of POS (and an employee's obligation to reciprocate POS with greater performance) increases according to the strength of an employee's socio-emotional needs (Armeli et al., 1998).

1.3.3 POS and reciprocity

In accordance with expectancy theory, an employee's performance is contingent on their belief that; increasing their effort will lead to performance, and that the desired performance will be rewarded by the organization. This theory is particularly important to the calculative aspect of commitment. In contrast, according to a more emotional based view of commitment, there is more emphasis on a sense of unity and shared values between employees and the organization. However, relevant to both of these approaches is the norm of reciprocity. Gouldner (1960) stated that the recipient of any organizational benefits would be 'morally obligated' to reciprocate to the donor party. Any assistance which would indicate the donor's positive opinion of the recipient would be particularly valued – as this would suggest that the donor could be relied on in the future for further help. Therefore, any discretionary benefits provided by an organization would be

viewed as the organization caring about an employee's well-being, and therefore, dependable for subsequent help and rewards.

Eisenberger et al. (1986) suggested that POS "strengthens employees effort-outcome expectancy and affective attachment to the organization, resulting in greater efforts to fulfil the organization's goals" (p. 501). Thus, POS would raise an employee's expectancy that the organization would remunerate greater effort exerted toward meeting organizational goals (i.e. effort-outcome expectancy), in accordance with expectancy theory. Should POS meet an individual's need for praise and approval, it should also strengthen an employee's membership with the organization, and result in a greater emotional bond. In fact, OST suggests that POS would strengthen a subordinate's affective commitment to the organization, due to the nature of reciprocity (Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001). Therefore, both calculative and affective commitment have an important role in an employee's POS – especially when combined with social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity.

Eisenberger et al. (2001) examined the role of reciprocity in explaining employee's POS. In a study of 413 postal workers in the U.S., it was confirmed that POS was positively related to an employee's felt obligation to help the organization reach its objectives. Furthermore, an employee's feelings of obligation toward the organization mediated the relationship between POS and outcomes, including; in-role performance, extra role activities (or 'organizational spontaneity'), and affective commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2001). This adds weight to the argument that when an employee feels valued due to POS, it gives employees a sense of emotional attachment, thereby resulting in obligation to

reciprocate the organization for providing socio-emotional resources, resulting in displays of extra-role behaviours. In addition, Eisenberger et al. (2001) found that as employees increasingly believed that the norm of reciprocity applied to a work context (a strong exchange ideology), the relationship between POS and their feelings of obligation also increased. Thus, it seems that POS strengthens work outcomes (including job performance and affective commitment) through the norm of reciprocity (Eisenberger et al., 2001). These results add support for the use of social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity as a means of explaining POS (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

1.3.4 POS and justice perceptions

As discussed above, POS has been examined through the lens of social exchange theory; however justice perceptions also play an important role. In fact, Moorman, Blakely, and Niehoff (1998) examined POS and the influence of procedural justice, and OCB. Data was gathered from 157 supervisor-subordinate dyads, from a large military hospital in the United States. The results revealed that procedural justice was significantly and highly correlated with POS ($r = 0.71, p < 0.001$), and POS was positively related to three of four sub dimensions OCB. Furthermore, POS fully mediated the relationship between procedural justice and OCB. Moorman et al. (1998) suggested that procedural justice acted as an antecedent to POS, which in turn, created feelings of obligation to reciprocate with OCB, thereby emphasizing the social-exchange approach to POS.

Furthermore, Loi, Hang-Yue and Foley (2006) examined the mediating role of POS on 524 practising solicitors in Hong Kong. Results found that

procedural justice and distributive justice were antecedents of POS, contributing to the development of POS. Furthermore, POS mediated the positive relationship between justice outcomes and an employee's organizational commitment, and negative relationship with justice outcomes and intention to leave (Loi, et al., 2006). The results of these studies emphasize that justice perceptions have an important part to play in development of POS in employees.

1.3.5 Distinguishing POS from other constructs

As POS is frequently aligned with organizational justice theories and organizational commitment, it is often stated that the concepts may not be conceptually distinct. In fact, various studies have found POS to be positively correlated with many different forms of organizational commitment (Settoon et al., 1996; O'Driscoll & Randall, 1999). Therefore, various studies have examined the construct validity of POS. Shore and Tetrick (1991) collected surveys from 330 employees of a large multinational corporation in the USA, and using confirmatory factor analysis, found that while POS was strongly correlated to measures of commitment, POS was conceptually and empirically *distinct* from both affective and continuance commitment. This adds support to the notion that POS is a one-dimensional scale, distinguishable from similar constructs. Moreover, Shore and Wayne (1993) went beyond this, not only finding that POS is a distinct construct, but also finding that it was a better predictor of outcomes when compared to two forms of commitment – both affective and continuance commitment. The results add weight to the idea of POS as a form of social exchange, whereby feelings of obligation result in beneficial organizational

outcomes. Shore and Wayne (1993) suggested that POS is a stronger construct than organizational commitment due to social exchange theory. In fact, Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie (2006) suggested that commitment is more simply, associated with emotional attachment. Meanwhile, social-exchange theory goes beyond simple attachment, whereby reciprocity creates feelings of mutual obligations - which are most long lasting.

1.3.6 Outcomes of POS

Regarding outcomes of POS, it makes sense that feeling supported by the whole organization would enable employees to meet their needs for approval, esteem, and social identity, and also create an expectation that superior performance would be recognized and rewarded by an organization (Eisenberger Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). According to social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, POS strengthens the affective commitment of employees, thus employees increase their effort in return for their emotional fulfilment from the organization. Thus employees trade effort and loyalty for socio-emotional benefits (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When an employee experiences low POS, it indicates an employee's contributions are less valued, thereby reducing their obligation to provide superior performance to their employer (Eisenberger et al., 1997). Therefore, it may be unsurprising that POS has been found to be positively related to supervisor support, job satisfaction, organization-directed OCB, procedural justice and organizational commitment, and negatively related to intentions to quit (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Rhoades et al., 2001). More specific outcomes of POS shall be discussed further below.

1.3.6.1 General work outcomes

Eisenberger et al. (1990) found a positive relationship between POS and job performance ($r = 0.33, p < 0.01$), and a negative relationship between POS and days absent from work ($r = -0.32, p < 0.01$). Thus as POS increased, employee attendance increased, as did their performance on the job. Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann and Birjulin (1999) conducted a study of 128 employees from three organizations in the USA, across a range of industries. The results indicated that POS was positively related to job satisfaction, commitment, OCB, and job performance, and negatively related to employee turnover intentions. These results suggest that employees who feel cared about by their organization reciprocate with conscientiousness in carrying out job responsibilities. Eisenberger et al. (1990) stated that POS would “promote the incorporation of organizational membership and role status into employees' self-identity” (p. 57). Therefore, this sense of affiliation and loyalty to the organization raises employee performance through increasing the tendency to recognize and internalize an organizations; goals, values, norms, gains, and losses, as ones own.

Two meta-analyses have been conducted regarding POS studies (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Riggle, Edmondson, & Hansen, 2009). Both studies found POS to be a major predictor of job attitudes and behaviours. Specifically, in a meta-analysis of more than 70 studies, Rhoades and Eisenberger, (2002) found that POS was positively related to job satisfaction, mood, organizational commitment, affective commitment, job involvement, task performance (both in-role and extra-role performance), and negatively with withdrawal behaviours (such as intentions to leave, absenteeism, and tardiness). Rhoades et al. (2001)

suggested that favourable work conditions increase an employee's affective commitment, by acting through POS. This commitment, in turn, decreases employee's withdrawal behaviour and voluntary turnover, thereby making POS a vital link to organizational outcomes. Consistent with OST, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) suggested that the outcomes of POS depended on the level of obligation a subordinate experienced. Thus obligation to reciprocate depended on: whether the organizations actions were discretionary, fulfilment of socio-emotional needs, and the employee's performance-reward expectancies.

Furthermore, Riggle et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of over 20 years of research regarding POS. Collating the results from 167 studies, the study indicated that POS is strongly and positively related to organizational commitment ($r = 0.71, p < 0.001$) and job satisfaction ($r = 0.61, p < 0.001$), moderately and positively related to employee task performance ($r = 0.18, p < 0.01$) and contextual performance ($r = 0.26, p < 0.001$), and finally, strongly and negatively related to an employee's intention to leave ($r = -0.49, p < 0.001$). In fact, POS explained nearly 25% of the variance for intention to leave, nearly 38% of the variance of job satisfaction, and 50% of the variance of organizational commitment. Riggle et al. (2009) also found a moderating effect of job type between POS and all outcomes (apart from contextual performance, which was not significant), such that the results were stronger for non-frontline (e.g. factory workers) compared to frontline (e.g. sales and customer service) employees.

In addition, concerning employee's treatment by the organization, fairness had the strongest positive relationship with POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). As both fairness and social exchange theory can be used as a platform for

examining abusive supervision and POS, it suggests the two concepts may be linked in some way. Because abusive supervision results from *one* individual, compared to POS which is *organization* wide, it may be that POS has a greater overall impact on an individual, thereby eradicating the effects of an abusive supervisor. Therefore, one of the purposes of this study is to examine whether high POS can reduce the harmful effects of abusive supervision. For this reason, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 8b: POS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and life satisfaction, with higher POS buffering (moderating) the direct effects of abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 9b: POS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and job satisfaction, with higher POS buffering (moderating) the direct effects of abusive supervision.

1.3.6.2 Absenteeism and turnover intentions

Eisenberger et al. (1986) examined the effect of POS on employee absenteeism. In part one of the study, a 36 item measure was created to examine the global nature of POS, and surveys were collated from 361 credit bureau and telephone company employees. With a reliability measure of 0.97 (Cronbach's alpha), the results of the item analysis indicated strong loading on every item, and minimal evidence for other factors. These results support the theory that employees develop *global beliefs* regarding an organizations concern for their wellbeing. In part two of the study, surveys were distributed and collated from 97

private high school teachers. The results indicated that individuals who experienced high POS had reduced absenteeism, and this relationship was stronger for individuals with a greater exchange ideology – or a strong belief in the norm of reciprocity. Therefore, the greater an individual experienced POS and the more they believed in reciprocity, the less they were absent from work. Eisenberger et al. (1986) suggested that POS increases an employee's expectancy that greater effort toward organizational goals will be rewarded, and because of this, an employee increases their effort to reach organizational goals through greater attendance. Furthermore, Eisenberger et al. (1986) also suggested that when employees have a high exchange ideology, they experience a mutual exchange of rewards, and thus, feel a moral obligation to repay the support shown to them – which the employee does through reduced absenteeism.

Furthermore, Allen, Shore and Griffeth (2003) studied the role of POS in predicting voluntary turnover. In a study of 215 salespeople and 197 insurance agents, it was found that POS developed through employee perceptions of supportive human resource practices, such as; growth opportunities, the fairness of any rewards received, and participating in decision making processes. Moreover, POS mediated the relationship between supportive human resource practices, and both job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Allen et al., 2003). The results emphasize the importance of social exchange theory, with supportive human resource practices signalling to employee's that their contributions are valued, and that the organization cares for their well-being. Thus, employees develop affective attachment to the organization, reciprocating with commitment to the organization. Allen et al. (2003) emphasized the importance of supportive human resource practices, suggesting they set the scene

for POS to develop in employees, acting as an antecedent for POS, which in turn, has a significant effect on organizational outcomes. Thus one of the purposes of this study is to examine whether high POS can buffer the effect of abusive supervision on turnover intentions. For this reason, I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 10b: POS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and turnover intentions, with higher POS buffering the direct effects of abusive supervision.

1.3.6.3 Mental health outcomes

While the role of POS on mental health outcomes has received minimal examination to date, results have indicated that POS is linked to decreased depersonalization and decreased emotional exhaustion (Jawahar, Stone, & Kisamore, 2007). In addition, in a study of 120 professional employees, it was found that POS moderated the relationship between role-conflict and emotional exhaustion, thereby indicating the importance of social-exchange theory, and the potentially buffering effect of POS on mental health outcomes (Jawahar et al., 2007). For this reason, this study aims to ascertain whether POS can moderate the effect of abusive supervision on negative mental health outcomes. According to the norm of reciprocity, high support is likely to engender increased feelings of self-esteem and reduced stress, and perhaps buffer the effects of abusive supervision. Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 11b: POS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and anxiety, with higher POS buffering (moderating) the direct effects of abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 12b: POS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and depression, with higher POS buffering (moderating) the direct effects of abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 13b: POS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and insomnia, with higher POS buffering (moderating) the direct effects of abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 14b: POS will moderate the relationship between abusive supervision and OBSE, with higher POS buffering (moderating) the direct effects of abusive supervision.

1.4 POS and Supervisor Support

Although the focus of this study is abusive supervision and the moderating role of PSS and POS, the nature of data analysis (three-way moderation analysis) is such that results regarding the cumulative effects of PSS and POS irrespective of abusive supervision shall also be produced. Therefore, the following literature examines the potential effects of PSS and POS on individual and organizational outcomes.

Supervisor support and POS have both been examined through the lens of social exchange theory (Lambert, 2000; Eisenberger et al., 1986), thus the question is often raised as to whether the two constructs are actually distinct. Various studies have been conducted which examine the differences between supervisor and organization support, thereby confirming that the two constructs are conceptually different (Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997; Masterson et al., 2000; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002). In fact, in a study of 212 employees, Stinglhamber, De Cremer, and Mercken (2006) found that POS and PSS were related to different types of justice. Specifically, the results indicated that the link between procedural justice and trust in the organization was mediated by POS, while the link between interactional justice and trust in supervisor was mediated by PSS. Masterson et al. (2000) also found that procedural justice affected supervisor-related outcomes (including job satisfaction and supervisor-directed OCB) through supervisor interactions, while a subordinate's perceptions of procedural justice affected organizational-related outcomes (including organization-directed OCB and organizational commitment) through POS as a mediating variable. Of utmost importance, these results indicate

that organizations and supervisors are two distinct sources of support, and separate sources of trust (Stinglhamber et al., 2006).

Wayne et al. (1997) found that while social exchange theory may be critical in explaining the rationale for PSS and POS, the two constructs were conceptually distinct. The results of their study indicated the PSS and POS had unique antecedents and outcome variables (Wayne et al., 1997). In fact, in a sample of 211 subordinate-supervisor dyads, Wayne et al. (2002) found that antecedents unique to POS included procedural and distributive justice, as well as inclusion and recognition by top management. In contrast, antecedents to PSS included contingent rewards, and outcomes included in-role performance (Wayne et al., 2002).

More specifically, Settoon et al. (1996) found that PSS was related to more work directed outcomes including in-role behaviour and citizenship, while POS was related to organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment. Furthermore, in a factor analysis, Kottke and Sharafinski (1988) found that PSS and POS loaded onto separate factors, thereby emphasizing that they are distinct constructs. The results of these studies indicate that subordinates view exchanges with their supervisor and with the organization as distinct interactions (Wayne et al., 1997). Various studies have confirmed that PSS and POS are related to different antecedents and outcomes, emphasizing that they are empirically distinct, and signifying the importance in examining both exchanges in the workplace.

While Wayne et al. (2002) found that POS and PSS were conceptually distinct; the results also indicated that POS is related to PSS. In fact, various

studies have reported a positive relationship of POS with PSS (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Rhoades et al., 2001). Eisenberger et al. (2002) suggested that a subordinate may view their supervisor as an agent acting on behalf of the whole organization and hence POS may also reflect a subordinate's perceived level of supervisor support. Supervisors have the ability to direct and evaluate subordinate performance, and also, convey their impressions of the subordinate to upper management (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Therefore, subordinates are likely to view their own supervisor's favourable or unfavourable orientation toward them as reflective of the views of the organization as a whole. Consequently, Eisenberger et al. (2002) suggested that supervisor support and POS may be related, thereby examining the direction of causality between PSS and POS in a study of 493 retail sales employees. The results indicated that PSS was related to temporal changes in POS, suggesting that PSS leads to POS. Furthermore, the results also indicated that POS mediated the negative relationship between PSS and voluntary turnover. In a later study, Ng and Sorensen (2008) also found that PSS was positively related to POS. This is consistent with OST, which suggests that beneficial treatment from supervisors should increase POS, which would create feelings of obligation to aid the organization, thus resulting in increased commitment and reduced turnover intentions (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

While PSS and POS are related, Maertz Jr et al. (2007) emphasized that both PSS and POS require individual examination. In a sample of 225 social services workers, it was found that PSS was positively related to POS, yet PSS had independent effects on a subordinate's turnover cognitions, which were not mediated through POS. These results highlight that PSS and POS are distinct concepts, thus warrant individual examination. Therefore Maertz Jr et al. (2007)

drew the conclusion that both POS and PSS should be included in future predictive models.

The results of these studies suggest that supervisor support and POS are distinct, yet related constructs. Thus, it seems subordinates develop separate relationships with their supervisor, and with the organization. This suggests that by combining POS and PSS, the effects of support may go above and beyond that of one form of support on its own. For this reason, I suggest that POS and PSS may produce a cumulative positive effect. This leads to the next set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 8c: PSS and POS will combine such that high PSS and POS will be positively related to life satisfaction, especially when compared to their unsupported counterparts.

Hypothesis 9c: PSS and POS will combine such that high PSS and POS will be positively related to job satisfaction, especially when compared to their unsupported counterparts.

Hypothesis 10c: PSS and POS will combine such that high PSS and POS will be negatively related to turnover intentions, especially when compared to their unsupported counterparts.

Hypothesis 11c: PSS and POS will combine such that high PSS and POS will be negatively related to anxiety, especially when compared to their unsupported counterparts.

Hypothesis 12c: PSS and POS will combine such that high PSS and POS will be negatively related to depression, especially when compared to their unsupported counterparts.

Hypothesis 13c: PSS and POS will combine such that high PSS and POS will be negatively related to insomnia, especially when compared to their unsupported counterparts.

Hypothesis 14c: PSS and POS will combine such that high PSS and POS will be positively related to OBSE, especially when compared to their unsupported counterparts.

1.5 Three-Way Interactions

Stinglhamber et al. (2006) found that POS and PSS were related to different types of justice. When this research is combined with the moderating effects of POS and PSS (presented in the above sections), this suggests that POS and PSS may interact with each other, thereby mitigating the damaging effects of abusive supervision altogether. In fact, various studies have examined POS and PSS as part of a trickle-down model.

Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) conducted a study which examined the role of a supervisor's POS, and PSS. In a study of 135 retail employees, the results indicated that supervisors POS was related to their subordinates PSS. Moreover, a subordinate's PSS was positively associated with their own POS, as well as their in-role and extra-role performance. A subordinate's PSS also moderated the relationship between a supervisors POS with their performance, and their own POS with performance. Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) suggested that when a supervisor feels supported by the organization, they reciprocate with increased supportive treatment for a subordinate, thereby resulting in increased

positive outcomes for a subordinate. Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) suggested that a subordinate views their PSS as representative of the organization's support as a whole, thus high PSS should lead a subordinate to also have increased POS.

These findings extend on the research of Tepper and Taylor (2003), who also examined a trickle-down model including POS. In a study of 373 National Guard members, the results found that when a supervisor believed they had received fair treatment (procedural justice perceptions), their subordinates reported their supervisor as exhibiting increased extra-role behaviours, such as helping them with difficult tasks (increased supervisor OCB), which was related to a subordinates perception of procedural justice and subordinates own OCB. This adds weight to a trickle-down model, as well as OST and social exchange theory. These results suggest that supervisors who feel treated fairly feel obliged to reciprocate the organization through better treatment toward their subordinates (Tepper & Taylor, 2003; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) stressed that these results suggest a supportive work environment starts with a supportive organization, as supportive treatment of subordinates may originate in the support the organization shows its supervisors.

Furthermore, Dawley, Andrews and Bucklew (2008) conducted a survey of 346 employees in a US manufacturing facility, examining the effects of POS, PSS, and mentoring. The results found that of the three variables, POS had the most significant effect on organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. Thus while the other variables were related to the outcomes, POS was the most powerful predictor of the three variables, thereby emphasizing that POS should not be overlooked. Dawley et al. (2008) emphasize that the intent of the study was

not to diminish the importance of PSS and mentoring; yet to emphasize to organizations that rather than largely investing resources in developing successful supervisor-subordinate relationships, they need to first examine the role and supportive nature of the whole organization. These results suggest that POS and PSS may be related such that combination and interaction of these terms may produce heightened results on organizational outcomes.

This study aims to gain a more thorough understanding of the relationship between abusive supervision, PSS, and POS - thus, three-way interactions shall be explored. Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, and Crouter (2000) emphasized that there is a need to embrace complexity, through the exploration of interaction effects. Often called for in the organizational behaviour literature, a three-way interaction examines the moderating, or buffering role of variables upon each other (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). In fact, a three-way interaction can be useful, as it “examine[s] the concerted interplay of several variables and can be used to test configurational theories, typologies, or more complex contingency theories” (Dawson & Richter, 2006, p.917).

While often rare in moderation studies to date, three-way interactions are increasingly being used because they can clarify our understanding of various constructs, as well as adding value in identifying relationships and effects. In fact, three-way interactions are increasingly being used to understand interactions between variables, and develop richer antecedent models (Duffy, Shaw, Scott, & Tepper, 2006). Moreover, Fedor, Caldwell, and Herold (2006) found that three-way interactions could explain a significant amount of variance toward outcomes, which went beyond those found for simple main effects, and two-way

interactions. In a study of 32 different organizations, Fedor et al. (2006) examined the effect of organizational changes on an individual's broader organizational commitment, as well as the individual's commitment to the specific changes. Therefore, they carried out three-way interactions between change fairness, work unit change, and job-level change. Interestingly, by simply conducting a two-way interaction (i.e. not including change favourableness), the results were interpreted to be statistically significant, and consistent with previous research. However, through conducting a three-way interaction, results were only marginally significant, failing to support prior research. Fedor et al. (2006) concluded that simply conducting a two-way interaction would have led to a "potentially misleading conclusion" (p.22). These results highlight the importance of conducting three-way interactions, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships at hand – and thus making it important to be included in the study of abusive supervision at hand.

In the abusive supervision domain, various studies have employed three-way interactions (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007). In fact, Bamberger and Bacharach (2006) suggested that abusive supervision may result in problem drinking, and that this relationship would be moderated by both conscientiousness, and agreeableness - thereby opting to conduct a three-way interaction. The results were significant, as subordinates were more likely to report problem drinking when they were less conscientious, and when their supervisor was more abusive (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006). Interestingly, the two-way interaction between abusive supervision and agreeableness was not significant, yet the three-way interaction indicated that the abuse-problem drinking-conscientious relationship was dependent on a

subordinate's level of agreeableness (significant at $p < 0.001$). Once again, this emphasizes that three-way interactions have the ability to describe a more accurate picture of the relationships at hand compared to simple two-way interactions - and is why Cohen and Cohen (1983) describe three-way interactions as the result which is most deserving of examination and interpretation.

Moreover, three-way interactions can be useful when we understand the direct effects of certain variables (such as abusive supervision on outcomes); however, we require a clearer understanding of the way the variables interact. In this study, conducting a three-way interaction would provide insight into the influence of both PSS and POS on abusive supervision and work outcomes. Thus a three-way interaction will enable examination of whether POS and PSS can combine to buffer the (potentially) negative effects of abusive supervision on outcomes. Most importantly, using a three-way interaction will enable an understanding over and above any two-way interactions – a method which may procure misleading results (Fedor et al., 2006).

Based on the results presented above, I suggest that the interaction of PSS and POS may improve the direct detrimental effects between abusive supervision and outcomes. Therefore, during times of abusive supervision, should the supervisor and organization engage in supportive behaviours, the subordinate may experience a reduction in the negative effects associated with abusive supervision, and an increase in the positive effects associated with support. This leads to the final set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 8d: Perceptions of support will interact with each other, such that PSS and POS will moderate the influence

of abusive supervision on life satisfaction, buffering the reduction towards life satisfaction when support from supervisor and organization are high.

Hypothesis 9d: Perceptions of support will interact with each other, such that PSS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on job satisfaction, buffering the reduction towards job satisfaction when support from supervisor and organization are high.

Hypothesis 10d: Perceptions of support will interact with each other, such that PSS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on turnover intentions, buffering the increase towards turnover intentions when support from supervisor and organization are high.

Hypothesis 11d: Perceptions of support will interact with each other, such that PSS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on anxiety, buffering the increase towards anxiety when support from supervisor and organization are high.

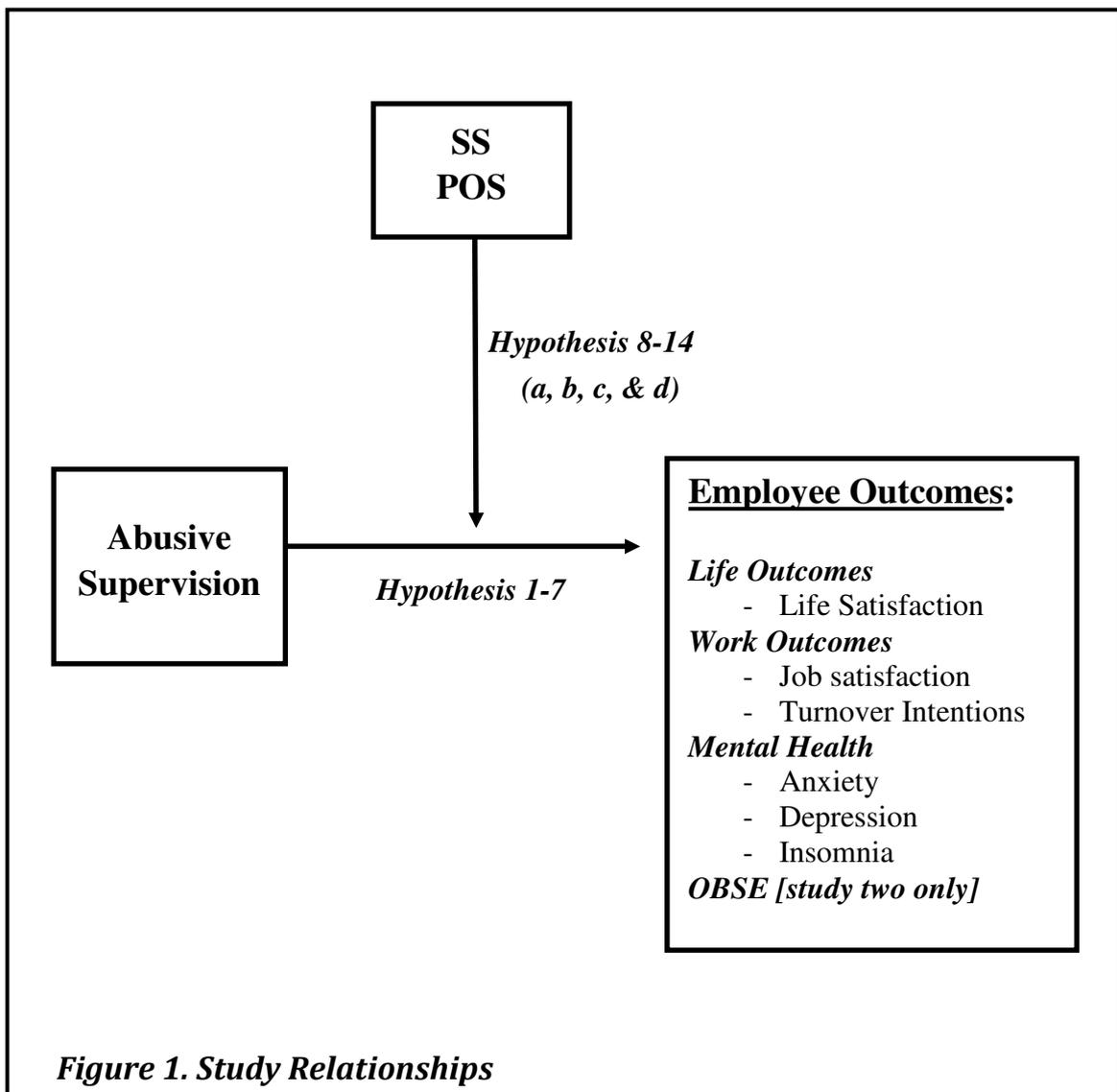
Hypothesis 12d: Perceptions of support will interact with each other, such that PSS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on depression, buffering the increase towards depression when support from supervisor and organization are high.

Hypothesis 13d: Perceptions of support will interact with each other, such that PSS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on insomnia, buffering the increase towards insomnia when support from supervisor and organization are high.

Hypothesis 14d: Perceptions of support will interact with each other, such that PSS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on OBSE, buffering the reduction towards OBSE when support from supervisor and organization are high.

The proposed study relationships can be seen in Figure one (below). I anticipate that abusive supervision will be detrimental to outcomes (Hypothesis 1-7), leading to lower life and job life satisfaction, and increased turnover and mental health outcomes. Furthermore, I propose that abusive supervision will lead to lower OBSE (study two only). Regarding hypothesis 8-14, I suggest a further four propositions. Firstly, I propose that (a) SS will buffer (moderate) the negative effects of abusive supervision on employee outcomes. Therefore, while abusive supervision may lead to increased anxiety, SS will act as a buffer to this abuse, thereby reducing the subordinate's increased levels of anxiety. Similarly, I suggest that (b) POS will buffer (reduce) the negative effects of abusive supervision on employee outcomes. Thirdly, I propose that (c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have beneficial employee outcomes. Therefore, a subordinate who experiences both

PSS and POS will experience greater life satisfaction than a subordinate without PSS or POS. And finally, under hypothesis (d), perceptions of support will interact with each other, such that SS and POS will buffer the negative influence of abusive supervision on employee outcomes. For example, under abusive supervision, a subordinate is likely to experience reduced job satisfaction. However the interaction of SS and POS will create an increase in the positive effects of support, thereby increasing the subordinate's job satisfaction, and creating a buffering effect to the negative effects of abusive supervision.



CHAPTER 2: Method

2.1 Sample and Procedure

In total, two studies were undertaken to test the effects of abusive supervision and support towards employee outcomes. While both studies were conducted in New Zealand, the first study consisted of a sample of blue-collar workers, while the second examined Maori employees.

2.1.1 *Study one*

The participants of the study were blue collar workers, who were recruited from a construction company situated in a large metropolitan city of New Zealand. The organization employed 180 workers, who were spread across multiple work sites. The organization was involved in a range of industries, including; primary products, construction, skilled labour, and other related work.

The senior managers of the various work sites of the organization were approached to gain their support for the study. Following this, a senior manager accompanied one of the researchers in personally approaching individual employees to participate in the study. All non-managerial employees were approached face-to-face in order to clearly explain and outline the purpose of the research, and to invite them to voluntarily participate in the short survey. All respondents were informed that the questionnaire was completely confidential.

Support was gained from approximately 140 employees, who agreed to

participate in the study. Surveys were then distributed to these employees using the organization's internal mail. In total, 112 responses were received, of which 12 were removed because of missing data.

All workers in the sample were blue-collar employees, who typically worked outside. Their jobs commonly included elements of both manual labour (such as lifting), as well as skilled labour (including forklift driving, and so forth). A response rate of 56% was gained ($n = 100$), based on the entire employee population. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 65 years, with an average of 41 years of age. The majority of respondents were male (89%), and the sample represented a wide range of ethnicities, including; 42% white, 28% Pacific Islanders, 22% Maori, 5% Indian, and 3% Chinese. In regard to the number of hours worked per week, a respondent's typical working week ranged between 38 and 50 hours. The number of overtime hours generally worked per week varied from zero, to 27.5 hours.

2.1.2 Study two

Indigenous Maori people were the focus of the second study. As Maori make up only 12% of the New Zealand workplace, purposive sampling was undertaken. As such, a large number of organizations in two geographical locations of New Zealand (which had a strong underlying Maori population) were chosen for data collection.

In total, more than fifty New Zealand organizations were approached to participate in the study. The research was explained to either the CEO, or a Senior

Manager within the organization, in order to gain support for the study. These managers subsequently sent all employees an email, or distributed physical notices regarding the research, which specifically encouraged Maori workers to participate in the study. All employees were informed that the questionnaire was completely voluntary and confidential. Following this, surveys were hand delivered by one of the researchers to all employees who agreed to participate in the study, and were collected from a secure drop box by the same researcher later that day.

Data collection was undertaken in two waves. The waves included a one-month gap between surveys, in order to eliminate concerns with common method variance. From a total pool of 400 Maori employees, support was gained from 230 participants (57.5% response rate), who responded to the first survey. The first survey contained measures for abusive supervision, and demographic variables. The second wave of surveys gained 218 responses, resulting in an overall response rate of 54.5% for surveys one and two from the original pool. Surveys were matched according to a unique employee code, thereby creating 218 matched-pairs of data. Survey two included POS, PSS, and all of the outcome measures, including; anxiety, emotional exhaustion (depression), insomnia, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, turnover intentions, and OBSE.

Respondents ranged across a variety of industries, with 18% involved in the private sector, 73% in the public sector, and 9% employed by not-for-profit organizations. Participants' age ranged from 16 to 60 years, with an average of 39.1 years of age (SD = 11.4 years). The majority of respondents were married (69%), parents (71%), and female (65%). All participants were of Maori ethnicity. On average, respondents worked an average of 40.3 hours per week (SD = 9.7

hours), with a job tenure of 5.3 years (SD = 6.8 years). Regarding education, 16% held a high school qualification, 12% had a polytechnic or technical college qualification, 47% had a university degree, and 26% had a postgraduate qualification.

2.2 Measures

The scales and items used in the surveys were identical for both study one and study two. However, one measure (OBSE) was used solely in study two, and was not included in study one. Regarding reliability, all scales gained acceptable coefficient alphas of at least 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). More specific details regarding each measure are provided below.

2.2.1 Independent variables

Abusive Supervision was measured using 6-items from Tepper's (2000) 15-item measure of abusive supervision. The items were coded on a five-point scaling ranging from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. Questions began with the phrase "My supervisor...", and the items used were; "Tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid", "Puts me down in front of others", "Blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment", "Is rude to me", "Does not allow me to interact with my co-workers", and "Tells me I'm incompetent".

While Tepper's original measure included 15-items, various other studies which examined abusive supervision have employed shorter items. Aryee

et al. (2007) included measures founded on a subset of 10-items, while other studies have used 8-items (Zellars et al., 2002), 5-items (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), 4-items (Burriss, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008), and 3-items (Detert et al., 2007). Similarly to Detert et al. (2007), the items included in the survey were those which were most relevant to our sample, and had the highest factor loadings on the original scale. This measure has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.98 (study one) and 0.95 (study two).

Perceived Organizational Support was measured using 5-items by Eisenberger et al. (1986), based on Lambert's (2000) short version. Items were coded from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. All questions followed the stem "My organization..." and the items included; "Considers my goals and values", "Values my contributions to its well-being", "Takes pride in my accomplishments at work", "Really cares about my well-being" and "Would take unfair advantage of me if they could" (reverse coded). This measure has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 (study one) and 0.89 (study two).

Supervisor Support was assessed using 3-items by Lambert (2000). The questions followed the stem "My supervisor...", and the items were "Is helpful when I have a family or personal emergency", "Feels each of us is important as an individual" and "Is concerned about how employees think and feel about things". Items were coded from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. This measure has a strong internal reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90 (study one) and 0.88 (study two).

To confirm the separate dimensions of all of the supervision and support constructs, items were tested by structural equation modelling (SEM) using

AMOS (Arbuckle, 1997), in order to assess the convergent and discriminate validity of the multiple-item measures (Gerbing & Anderson, 1993). Typically, SEM studies use a large number of goodness-of-fit indices. However, Williams, Vandenberg and Edwards (2009) have criticized the literature, suggesting that some of these indices are meaningless (e.g. chi-square goodness-of-fit statistic), and that others have become less popular (e.g. GFI). Williams et al. (2009) suggested the following three goodness-of-fit indices as superior ways of assessing model fit: the comparative fit index (CFI), the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean residual (SRMR). Overall, a good model is reflected in scores with CFI equal to or greater than 0.95, RMSEA below 0.08 and SRMR less than 0.10 (Williams et al., 2009). The hypothesized measurement model and three alternative models are shown in Table 1.

The measurement model did fit the data well for the expected three-factor solution for study one (CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.08 and SRMR = 0.05) and study two (CFI = .97, RMSEA = 0.07 and SRMR = 0.04). To check whether this was the best model based on the conceptualization of the study constructs, the model was re-run testing a number of alternative models. Overall, all of these models resulted in a poorer fit than the hypothesized model. Furthermore, SEM confirmed the study constructs were distinct from each other.

Table 1. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Support Measures

Model	Study 1 (N=100)			Study 2 (N=218)		
	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
1. Hypothesized 3-factor model: Abusive Supervision, Supervisor Support, and Perceived Organizational Support.	.96	.08	.05	.97	.07	.04
2. Alternative 2-factor model 1: Abusive Supervision and Supervisor Support Combined, and Perceived Organizational Support.	.92	.14	.06	.89	.13	.07
3. Alternative 2-factor model 2: Abusive Supervision, and Supervisor Support and Perceived Organizational Support Combined.	.90	.15	.09	.84	.16	.13
4. Alternative 2-factor model 3: Abusive Supervision and Perceived Organizational Support Combined, and Supervisor Support.	.84	.19	.12	.76	.19	.16

2.2.2 Dependent variables

2.2.2.1 Mental health outcomes:

Anxiety and Depression were assessed using a 12-item measure by Axtell, Wall, Stride, Pepper, Clegg, Gardner, and Bolden (2002). Using a five-point scale, responses were coded ranging from 1 = never, to 5 = all the time. Presented with six adjectives for each measure, respondents were asked to indicate how often each adjective applied to them while they were at work. Three items were reverse coded for each measure. Sample items for anxiety included “calm” and “relaxed” (both reverse coded), and “worried” and “anxious”. Sample items for depression included “optimistic” and “enthusiastic” (both reverse coded), and “miserable” and “depressed”. Therefore, heightened depression or anxiety would be indicated by a high score. For anxiety, this measure has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.87 (study one) and 0.93 (study two). This measure for depression has a strong internal reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.92 (study one) and 0.95 (study two).

Insomnia was measured using 4-items based on Greenberg (2006). Responses were coded according to 1 = not at all, and 5 = to a great extent. All questions followed the stem “Indicate the extent to which you have experienced each of the following symptoms over the past month”, with one sample item including “Difficulty falling asleep” and “Waking up feeling tired and worn out after one’s usual amount of sleep”. This measure of Insomnia has a strong internal reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.98 (study one), and 0.94 (study two).

2.2.2.2 Work and life outcomes:

Job satisfaction was measured using 5-items by Judge, Bono, Erez and Locke (2005). Items were coded on a five point scale from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. Sample items included “Most days I am enthusiastic about my work” and “Each day at work seems like it will never end” (reverse coded). This measure has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.88 (study one) and 0.80 (study two).

Life satisfaction was measured using 5-items from the satisfaction with life scale by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). Items were coded from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. Example sample items include “In most ways my life is close to ideal” and “The conditions of my life are excellent”. This measure has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.82 (study one) and 0.86 (study two).

Turnover intentions were measured using 4-items by Kelloway, Gottlieb, and Barham (1999), and items were coded from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. Sample questions included “I am planning to look for a new job” and “I am thinking about leaving my organization”. This measure has a strong internal reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.98 (study one) and 0.94 (study two).

Organizational-Based Self Esteem (OBSE) was measured using the 10-item measure by Pierce et al. (1989). Items were coded from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. All question items followed the stem “Around here...” and sample items included “I am trusted”, and “I am taken seriously”. This measure was only used in study two, and has a strong internal reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.95.

2.2.3 Control variables

Demographic variables were controlled for similarly to other abusive supervisor studies (Aryee et al., 2007; Burris et al., 2008). These demographic variables included; Age (in years), Gender (1 = female, 0 = male), and Hours Worked (per typical working week, including overtime).

2.3 Analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to analyze the data. Control variables (age, gender, and hours worked) were entered in Step 1, and abusive supervision was entered in Step 2 as the predictor variable (Hypotheses 1 to 7). To test for moderation, supervisor support and POS were entered in Step 3. Step 4 held the two-way interaction between: abusive supervision and supervisor support (Hypotheses 8a to 14a), between abusive supervision and POS (Hypotheses 8b to 14b), and between supervisor support and POS (Hypotheses 8c to 14c). Lastly, Step 5 held the three-way interaction between abusive supervision, supervisor support and POS. In total, six regression models were run for both study one and two – one model each for: life satisfaction, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, anxiety, depression and insomnia. A seventh model was run for OBSE, but only for study two. To address issues of multicollinearity, mean centring of the interaction terms was completed (Aiken & West, 1991).

CHAPTER 3: Results

Descriptive statistics for all of the variables in studies one and two are shown in Table 2. The mean score for abusive supervision is 2.0 (SD = 1.1) in study one and 1.8 (SD = .83) in study two. Both of these scores are below the mid-point of 3.0. Two sample t-test calculations confirmed that the mean scores for abusive supervision are not equal ($t = -1.7698$, $p = 0.07$), and that study one is significantly higher than study two ($p = 0.03$). Importantly, both of these scores for abusive supervision are higher than those found in other studies, with the majority of mean scores being low ($M < 1.7$, Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2004; Aryee et al, 2007; Burris et al., 2008; Detert et al., 2007; Zellars et al., 2002). Hence, for the present studies in New Zealand, by comparing abusive supervision levels from other studies shows that abusive supervision occurs more frequently in the present studies than that found in other studies. This is especially so within the single organizational setting of study one, compared to study two which examined the experiences of employed Maori at multiple workplaces.

Furthermore, the mean score for supervisor support is 3.6 (SD = 1.0) in study one, and 4.0 (SD = .83) in study two. Both of these scores are above the mid-point of 3.0. Two sample t-test calculations confirmed that the mean scores for supervisor support are not equal ($t = -3.0304$, $p = .003$), and that study one is significantly lower than study two ($p = 0.001$). Similarly, the mean score for perceived organizational support is 2.8 (SD = 1.0) in study one, and 3.6 (SD = .85) in study two. However, only the score from study two is above the mid-point of 3.0. Two sample t-test calculations confirmed that the mean scores for perceived organizational support are not equal ($t = -6.7763$, $p = .00001$), and that

study one is significantly lower than study two ($p = .00001$). Hence, for the present studies in New Zealand, positive perceptions of supervisor support and organizational support occurred less frequently within the single organizational setting (study one) compared to the experiences of employed Maori at multiple workplaces (study two). Furthermore, the significant differences amongst all three supervisor and support variables also confirms that the two studies should remain separate, rather than combining them together.

Regarding study one, Table 2 shows abusive supervision is significantly correlated with supervisor support ($r = -.77, p < .01$) and POS ($r = -.68, p < .01$), as well as life satisfaction ($r = -.69, p < .01$), job satisfaction ($r = -.58, p < .01$), turnover intentions ($r = .34, p < .01$), anxiety ($r = .47, p < .01$), depression ($r = .58, p < .01$), and insomnia ($r = .28, p < .01$). In study two, abusive supervision is also significantly correlated with supervisor support ($r = -.52, p < .01$) and perceived organizational support ($r = -.49, p < .01$), as well as life satisfaction ($r = -.25, p < .01$), job satisfaction ($r = -.49, p < .01$), turnover intentions ($r = .44, p < .01$), anxiety ($r = .36, p < .01$), depression ($r = .43, p < .01$), insomnia ($r = .20, p < .01$) and OBSE ($r = -.48, p < .01$). In study one, all outcome variables are significantly correlated with each other (all $p < .01$) except life satisfaction and turnover intentions ($r = -.17$, non-significant). Similarly, in study two, all outcome variables are significantly correlated with each other (all $p < .01$).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variables	Study One		Study Two		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	M	SD	M	SD												
1. Age	40.1	11.4	39.1	11.4	--	.23*	-.01	-.14	-.10	-.12	.01	.08	.15	.10	.03	--
2. HW	50.1	6.5	40.3	9.7	.26**	--	.35**	-.35**	-.34**	-.45**	-.18	-.05	.27**	.25*	.09	--
3. AS	2.0	1.1	1.8	.83	.03	.01	--	-.77**	-.68**	-.69**	-.58**	.34**	.47**	.58**	.28**	--
4. SS	3.6	1.0	4.0	.83	.01	-.03	-.52**	--	.77**	.56**	.45**	-.38**	-.52**	-.73**	-.22*	--
5. POS	2.8	1.0	3.6	.85	-.01	-.03	-.49**	.63**	--	.57**	.57**	-.47**	-.52**	-.57**	-.26**	--
6. LS	3.0	.79	3.6	.75	-.12	-.06	-.25**	.16*	.25**	--	.47**	-.17	-.68**	-.71**	-.50**	--
7. JS	3.6	.92	3.7	.66	.07	.03	-.49**	.43**	.53**	.44**	--	-.60**	-.39**	-.44**	-.29**	--
8. TI	3.0	1.4	2.9	1.1	-.04	-.01	.44**	-.43**	-.52**	-.32**	-.57**	--	.26**	.28**	.50**	--
9. AX	2.5	.86	1.9	.75	.02	.10	.36**	-.27**	-.40**	-.33**	-.39**	.38**	--	.75**	.59**	--
10. DP	2.4	.94	1.6	.74	-.05	.07	.43**	-.33**	-.47**	-.35**	-.51**	.43**	.79**	--	.45**	--
11. IN	3.3	1.1	2.4	1.1	-.07	.14*	.20**	-.20**	-.30**	-.26**	-.36**	.32**	.62**	.61**	--	--
12. OBSE ^a	--	--	4.1	.64	.04	.04	-.48**	.49**	.70**	.25**	.46**	-.44**	-.32**	-.37**	-.22**	--

N = 100 (study one, above the diagonal line), N = 218 (study two, below the diagonal line)

*p < .05, **p < .01

^a= included in study two only, and not study one.

HW=Hours Worked, AS=Abusive Supervision, SS=Supervisor Support, POS=Perceived Organizational Support, LS=Life Satisfaction, JS=Job Satisfaction, TI=Turnover Intentions, AX=Anxiety, DP=Depression, IN=Insomnia, OBSE=Organizational-Based Self-Esteem

3.1 Direct Effects of Abusive Supervision

The results of the hierarchical regressions for Hypotheses 1 to 7 are shown in Tables 3 to 15. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate that abusive supervision is significantly and negatively associated with life satisfaction in both study one ($\beta = -.62, p < 0.001$), and study two ($\beta = -.26, p < 0.001$). From the R^2 Change figures in Step 2, we see abusive supervision accounts for a huge amount of variance (32%, $p < 0.001$) in study one, and a more modest amount of variance (7%, $p < 0.001$) in study two. Therefore, these results provide strong support for Hypothesis 1.

Furthermore, the results tables also show that abusive supervision is significantly and negatively associated with job satisfaction. This can be seen in Table 5 for study one ($\beta = -.58, p < 0.001$) and Table 6 for study two ($\beta = -.50, p < 0.001$). From the R^2 Change figures in Step 2, it can be seen that abusive supervision accounts for a huge amount of variance toward job satisfaction in study one (29%, $p < 0.001$), and similarly in study two (25%, $p < 0.001$). This provides strong support for Hypothesis 2.

Tables 7 and 8 indicate that abusive supervision is significantly associated with turnover intentions in study one ($\beta = .42, p < 0.001$) and study two ($\beta = .44, p < 0.001$). From the R^2 Change figures in Step 2, we see abusive supervision accounts for large amounts of variance in study one (15%, $p < 0.001$) and study two (20%, $p < 0.001$), thereby providing strong support for Hypothesis 3.

Table 3. Regression Coefficients for Life Satisfaction (Study 1)

Variables	Life Satisfaction (Study 1)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	.02	-.06	-.05	-.08	-.08
Gender	.03	-.04	-.06	-.03	-.04
Hours Worked	-.46***	-.21*	-.19*	-.23**	-.24**
Abusive Supervision		-.62***	-.57***	-.40*	-.49**
SS			-.10	-.06	-.01
POS			.19†	.19†	.44**
Abusive Supervision x SS				.26	.54**
Abusive Supervision x POS				-.35*	-.06
PSS x POS				-.34**	-.24*
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					.79**
R ² change	.20***	.32***	.01	.06*	.04**
Total R ²	.20	.52	.54	.59	.63
Adjusted R ²	.17	.50	.50	.55	.58
F Statistic	7.400***	23.904***	16.345***	13.284***	13.774***

†p < .1, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 4. Regression Coefficients for Life Satisfaction (Study 2)

Variables	Life Satisfaction (Study 2)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	-.11	-.10	-.10	-.10	-.10
Gender	.03	.04	.05	.05	.04
Hours Worked	-.02	-.03	-.02	-.02	-.02
Abusive Supervision		-.26***	-.18*	-.20*	-.18*
SS			-.09	-.08	-.11
POS			.25**	.25**	.21*
Abusive Supervision x SS				-.04	-.08
Abusive Supervision x POS				-.01	.00
PSS x POS				-.03	-.07
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					-.16
R ² change	.01	.07***	.04*	.00	.01
Total R ²	.01	.08	.12	.12	.13
Adjusted R ²	.00	.06	.09	.08	.08
F Statistic	.972	4.411**	4.370***	2.948**	2.791**

†p < .1, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients for Job Satisfaction (Study 1)

Variables	Job Satisfaction (Study 1)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	.08	.02	.02	.05	.05
Gender	.17	.11	.10	.03	.03
Hours Worked	-.22*	.01	.04	-.04	-.05
Abusive Supervision		-.58***	-.50***	-.12	-.15
SS			-.23	.01	.04
POS			.40**	.20	.29*
Abusive Supervision x SS				.68**	.79**
Abusive Supervision x POS				.07	.17
PSS x POS				.50***	.53***
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					.30
R ² change	.07†	.29***	.06*	.10**	.01
Total R ²	.07	.36	.42	.52	.53
Adjusted R ²	.04	.33	.38	.47	.47
F Statistic	2.233†	12.624***	10.681***	10.333***	9.401***

†p < .1, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 6. Regression Coefficients for Job Satisfaction (Study 2)

Variables	Job Satisfaction (Study 2)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	.09	.10	.09	.09	.08
Gender	-.01	.02	.04	.04	.04
Hours Worked	-.01	-.01	.01	.02	.02
Abusive Supervision		-.50***	-.30***	-.31***	-.33***
SS			.05	.06	.09
POS			.35***	.35***	.39***
Abusive Supervision x SS				-.06	-.02
Abusive Supervision x POS				.01	.01
PSS x POS				.04	.08
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					.16†
R ² change	.01	.25***	.11***	.00	.01
Total R ²	.01	.26	.36	.37	.37
Adjusted R ²	.00	.24	.34	.34	.34
F Statistic	.466	17.123***	18.463***	12.258***	11.279***

†p < .1, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 7. Regression Coefficients for Turnover Intentions (Study 1)

Variables	Turnover Intentions (Study 1)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	.08	.13	.10	.06	.06
Gender	-.07	-.03	-.00	.06	.06
Hours Worked	-.06	-.22*	-.27**	-.22*	-.22*
Abusive Supervision		.42***	.12	-.07	-.09
SS			.00	-.19	-.17
POS			-.47**	-.27*	-.22
Abusive Supervision x SS				-.69**	-.63*
Abusive Supervision x POS				.16	.23
PSS x POS				-.45**	-.43**
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					.18
R ² change	.01	.15***	.12**	.09**	.00
Total R ²	.01	.16	.28	.37	.38
Adjusted R ²	.00	.13	.23	.31	.30
F Statistic	.434	4.379**	5.650***	5.608***	5.031***

†p< .1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p< .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 8. Regression Coefficients for Turnover Intentions (Study 2)

Variables	Turnover Intentions (Study 2)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	-.04	-.06	-.05	-.03	-.03
Gender	-.03	-.04	-.07	-.06	-.06
Hours Worked	-.00	-.00	-.03	-.04	-.04
Abusive Supervision		.44***	.22**	.19**	.19**
SS			-.08	-.10	-.10
POS			-.38***	-.41***	-.40***
Abusive Supervision x SS				-.08	-.08
Abusive Supervision x POS				-.02	-.01
PSS x POS				-.15*	-.15*
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					.01
R ² change	.00	.20***	.14***	.01	.00
Total R ²	.00	.20	.33	.35	.35
Adjusted R ²	.00	.18	.31	.32	.31
F Statistic	.169	12.670***	16.851***	11.690***	10.496***

†p< .1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p< .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

The results in Tables 9 and 10 show that abusive supervision is also significantly associated with anxiety in study one ($\beta = .44$, $p < 0.001$) and study two ($\beta = .37$, $p < 0.001$). From the R^2 Change figures in Step 2, we see abusive supervision accounts for a large amounts of variance (17%, $p < 0.001$) in study one and similarly in study two (13%, $p < 0.001$), thereby providing strong support for Hypothesis 4.

Tables 11 and 12 show that abusive supervision is also significantly associated with depression in study one ($\beta = .57$, $p < 0.001$) and study two ($\beta = .44$, $p < 0.001$). From the R^2 Change figures in Step 2, it is evident that abusive supervision accounts for a huge amount of variance in study one (28%, $p < 0.001$), and similarly large amount of variance in study two (19%, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, this provides strong support for Hypothesis 5.

The results tables also show that abusive supervision is also significantly associated with insomnia. This can be seen in Table 13 for study one ($\beta = .31$, $p < 0.01$), and in Table 14 for study two ($\beta = .21$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, through observing the R^2 Change figures in Step 2, we see abusive supervision accounts for modest amounts of variance (8%, $p < 0.01$) in study one and similarly in study two (4%, $p < 0.01$). This provides support for Hypothesis 6.

Finally, Table 15 shows that abusive supervision is significantly and negatively related to OBSE in study two ($\beta = -.49$, $p < 0.001$). From the R^2 Change figures in Step 2, we see abusive supervision accounts for a huge amount of variance (24%, $p < 0.001$). As OBSE was only tested in study two, it provides strong support for Hypothesis 7. A summary of the results for Hypotheses 1-7 regarding the direct effects of abusive supervision can be seen in Table 16.

Table 9. Regression Coefficients for Anxiety (Study 1)

Variables	Anxiety (Study 1)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	.07	.12	.08	.07	.06
Gender	.06	.10	.13	.12	.10
Hours Worked	.25*	.08	.04	.01	.03
Abusive Supervision		.44***	.12	.36†	.44*
SS			-.21	-.14	-.20
POS			-.27*	-.26*	-.48**
Abusive Supervision x SS				-.02	-.31
Abusive Supervision x POS				.27	-.01
PSS x POS				.03	-.06
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					-.76*
R ² change	.08*	.17***	.08**	.02	.04*
Total R ²	.08	.25	.33	.35	.39
Adjusted R ²	.05	.22	.29	.28	.31
F Statistic	2.760*	7.583***	7.367***	5.131***	5.341***

†p < .1, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 10. Regression Coefficients for Anxiety (Study 2)

Variables	Anxiety (Study 2)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	-.02	-.04	-.04	-.02	-.02
Gender	.06	.05	.03	.02	.01
Hours Worked	.13	.13	.13	.12	.12
Abusive Supervision		.37***	.24**	.18**	.19*
SS			.08	.09	.07
POS			-.34***	-.35***	-.38***
Abusive Supervision x SS				-.22*	-.25*
Abusive Supervision x POS				-.05	-.04
PSS x POS				.02	-.01
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					-.12
R ² change	.02	.13***	.07***	.03*	.00
Total R ²	.02	.15	.22	.25	.25
Adjusted R ²	.00	.13	.20	.21	.21
F Statistic	1.109	8.836***	9.324***	7.180***	6.547***

†p< .1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p< .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 11. Regression Coefficients for Depression (Study 1)

Variables	Depression (Study 1)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	.02	.09	.00	.01	.00
Gender	.00	.06	.10	.08	.07
Hours Worked	.25*	.03	-.02	-.06	-.04
Abusive Supervision		.57***	.07	.24	.31†
SS			-.67***	-.59***	-.64***
POS			-.02	-.01	-.25*
Abusive Supervision x SS				.35†	.12
Abusive Supervision x POS				-.14	-.36†
PSS x POS				.05	-.02
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					-.61*
R ² change	.07	.28***	.19***	.02	.02*
Total R ²	.07	.35	.53	.55	.57
Adjusted R ²	.03	.32	.50	.50	.52
F Statistic	2.131	12.007***	16.872***	11.548***	11.296***

†p< .1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p< .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 12. Regression Coefficients for Depression (Study 2)

Variables	Depression (Study 2)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	-.07	-.09	-.09	-.09	-.08
Gender	.05	.02	.00	-.01	-.02
Hours Worked	.10	.11	.11	.11	.10
Abusive Supervision		.44***	.29***	.25***	.28***
SS			.05	.06	.03
POS			-.36***	-.34***	-.39***
Abusive Supervision x SS				-.06	-.11
Abusive Supervision x POS				.03	.05
PSS x POS				-.07	-.12
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					-.19†
R ² change	.01	.19***	.09***	.02	.01
Total R ²	.01	.20	.29	.31	.32
Adjusted R ²	.00	.19	.27	.28	.28
F Statistic	.860	12.673***	13.520***	9.555***	8.903***

†p< .1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p< .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 13. Regression Coefficients for Insomnia (Study 1)

Variables	Insomnia (Study 1)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	-.01	.03	.02	.03	.03
Gender	.17	.20*	.21*	.19	.19
Hours Worked	.07	-.05	-.07	-.04	-.04
Abusive Supervision		.31**	.24†	.31	.31
SS			.07	.11	.11
POS			-.19	-.19	-.20
Abusive Supervision x SS				-.51*	-.52†
Abusive Supervision x POS				.85**	.84**
PSS x POS				.38*	.37*
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					-.03
R ² change	.04	.08**	.01	.10*	.00
Total R ²	.04	.12	.13	.23	.23
Adjusted R ²	.00	.08	.07	.15	.14
F Statistic	1.143	2.990*	2.232*	2.826**	2.515*

†p< .1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p< .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 14. Regression Coefficients for Insomnia (Study 2)

Variables	Insomnia (Study 2)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	-.12	-.13	-.13	-.14*	-.14*
Gender	.05	.05	.03	.04	.04
Hours Worked	.19*	.20**	.19**	.19**	.19**
Abusive Supervision		.21**	.08	.13†	.14†
SS			.05	.03	.02
POS			-.30***	-.29***	-.30**
Abusive Supervision x SS				.17*	.16†
Abusive Supervision x POS				-.00	-.00
PSS x POS				-.01	-.02
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					-.02
R ² change	.04	.04**	.06**	.02	.00
Total R ²	.04	.08	.14	.16	.16
Adjusted R ²	.02	.06	.11	.12	.12
F Statistic	2.617	4.314**	5.247***	4.084***	3.658***

†p< .1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p< .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 15. Regression Coefficients for OBSE (Study 2)

Variables	OBSE (Study 2)				
	Step 1 Controls	Step 2 Predictor	Step 3 Moderators	Step 4 2-Way Interactions	Step 5 3-Way Interactions
Age	.04	.06	.05	.04	.05
Gender	-.07	-.04	-.00	.01	.00
Hours Worked	.01	.00	.03	.03	.03
Abusive Supervision		-.49***	-.19***	-.15*	-.13*
SS			.02	.02	-.00
POS			.59***	.58***	.54***
Abusive Supervision x SS				.07	.03
Abusive Supervision x POS				.08	.04
PSS x POS				-.00	.01
Abusive Supervision x SS x POS					-.14†
R ² change	.01	.24***	.28***	.02	.01
Total R ²	.01	.25	.52	.54	.54
Adjusted R ²	.00	.23	.51	.52	.52
F Statistic	.481	16.528***	36.539***	25.445***	23.211***

†p< .1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p< .001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were single-tailed.

Table 16. Summary of direct effects of abusive supervision

Summary of direct effects of abusive supervision			
Hypothesis	Relationship	Study 1	Study 2
Hypothesis 1	Abusive supervision negatively associated with <i>life satisfaction</i>	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 2	Abusive supervision negatively associated with <i>job satisfaction</i>	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 3	Abusive supervision positively associated with <i>turnover intentions</i>	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 4	Abusive supervision positively associated with <i>anxiety</i>	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 5	Abusive supervision positively associated with <i>depression</i>	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 6	Abusive supervision positively associated with <i>insomnia</i>	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 7	Abusive supervision negatively associated with <i>OBSE</i>	Not examined	Supported

3.2 Interaction Effects towards Outcomes

The Tables provided show that there are also a number of two-way interaction effects between; abusive supervision and supervisor support, abusive supervision and perceived organizational support, and supervisor support and perceived organizational support. There are also a number of three-way interactions between abusive supervision, supervisor support, and perceived organizational support. Due to the large number of interactions, these are grouped by outcome.

3.2.1 Interaction Effects towards Life Satisfaction

Table 3 shows there are two significant interactions towards life satisfaction in study one. The first is between abusive supervision and perceived organizational support ($\beta = -0.35$, $p < 0.05$), and the second is between supervisor support and perceived organizational support ($\beta = -0.34$, $p < 0.01$). The R^2 Change figures found in Step 4 shows that the two-way interaction effects account for an additional 6% ($p < 0.05$) of the variance towards life satisfaction in study one. Furthermore, Table 3 also shows there is a significant three-way interaction towards life satisfaction - although again, this effect is only found in study one. As seen in Step 5 of Table 3 (study one), the interaction between abusive supervision, supervisor support, and perceived organizational support ($\beta = 0.79$, $p < 0.01$) accounts for an additional 4% ($p < 0.01$) of the variance towards life satisfaction. In regard to study two, Table 4 indicates that there are no significant two-way or three-way interactions towards life satisfaction.

To facilitate interpretation of these significant moderator effects, two-way interactions are presented in Figures 2 and 3, and the three-way interaction can be seen in Figure 4. Plotting the two-way interaction terms (Figure 2) illustrates that when POS is low, there is little difference in life satisfaction amongst respondents regardless of the level of abuse from supervisors, though abused subordinates report slightly lower levels of life satisfaction. However, when there is high POS, respondents with low levels of abusive supervision report a significant increase in life satisfaction, while respondents with high abusive supervision report a slight drop in life satisfaction. Overall, there is a significant difference between levels of life satisfaction when respondents report high support but varying levels of abuse. Consequently, respondents with an abusive supervisor report lower levels of life satisfaction, although high levels of POS significantly offset this effect, providing support for Hypothesis 8b.

Figure 3 shows the plotted two-way interaction between supervisor support and POS (study one). The figure illustrates that there is some difference in life satisfaction amongst respondents when POS is low, with respondents who reported high supervisor support reporting greater life satisfaction compared to those with low supervisor support. However, when POS is high, respondents reporting high supervisor support report a slight reduction in life satisfaction, while those with low supervisor support report a strong increase in life satisfaction. Overall, the effects towards life satisfaction are not exactly as expected, as the combination of high POS and low supervisor support were the best combination, not high POS and high supervisor support. Thus this finding is counter to that hypothesized, and provides no support for Hypothesis 8c.

Plotting the three-way interaction terms for life satisfaction (Figure 4)

illustrates that when abusive supervision is low, the highest level of life satisfaction is achieved by respondents with high POS but low supervisor support. This reinforces the two-way interaction effects from Figure 3. However, when abusive supervision increases to high, all respondents report a reduction in life satisfaction except those with high POS and high supervisor support. This supports the notion that support can provide additional and cumulative benefits to employees even when they are being abused. This provides support for Hypothesis 8d. A summary of the intervening effects toward life satisfaction can be seen in Table 17.

Table 17. Summary of intervening effects toward life satisfaction

Summary of intervening effects toward life satisfaction		
Hypothesis	Relationship	Supported?
Hypothesis 8 (<i>Life satisfaction</i>)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>life satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>life satisfaction</i> .	Not supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>life satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>life satisfaction</i> .	Supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have greater <i>life satisfaction</i> compared to their unsupported counterparts.	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>life satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>life satisfaction</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Supported

Figure 2. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Life Satisfaction (Study 1) as Dependent Variable

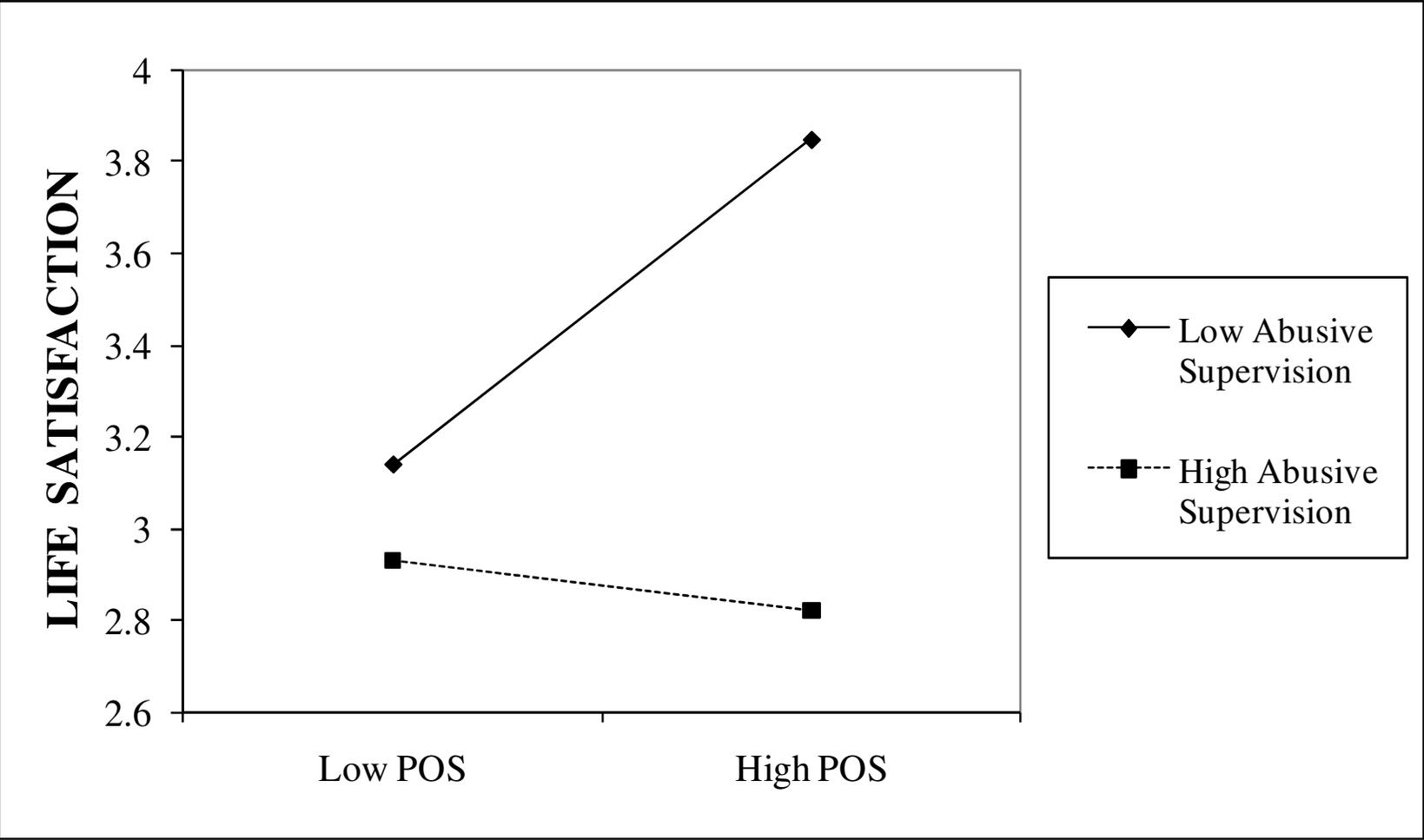


Figure 3. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Life Satisfaction (Study 1) as Dependent Variable

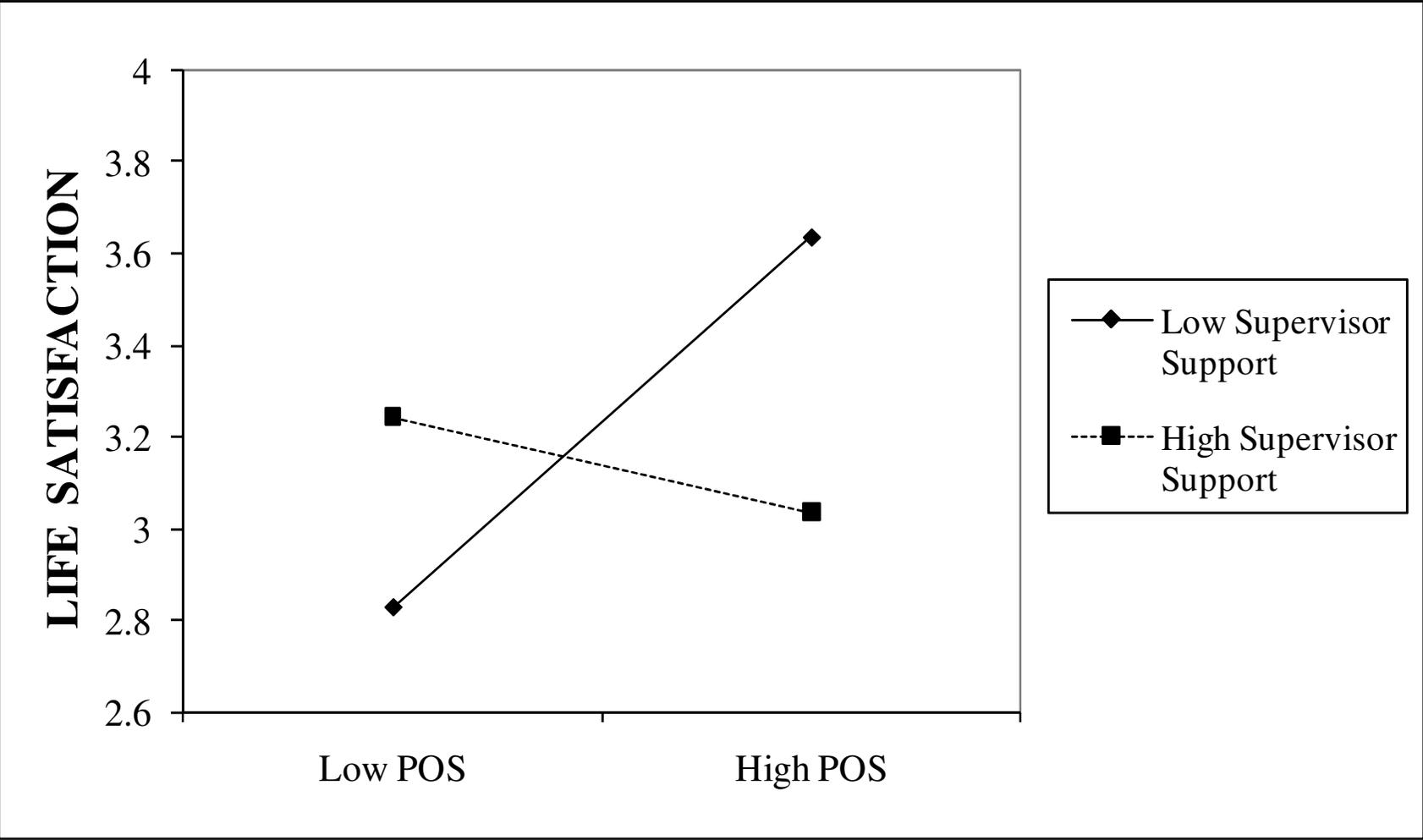
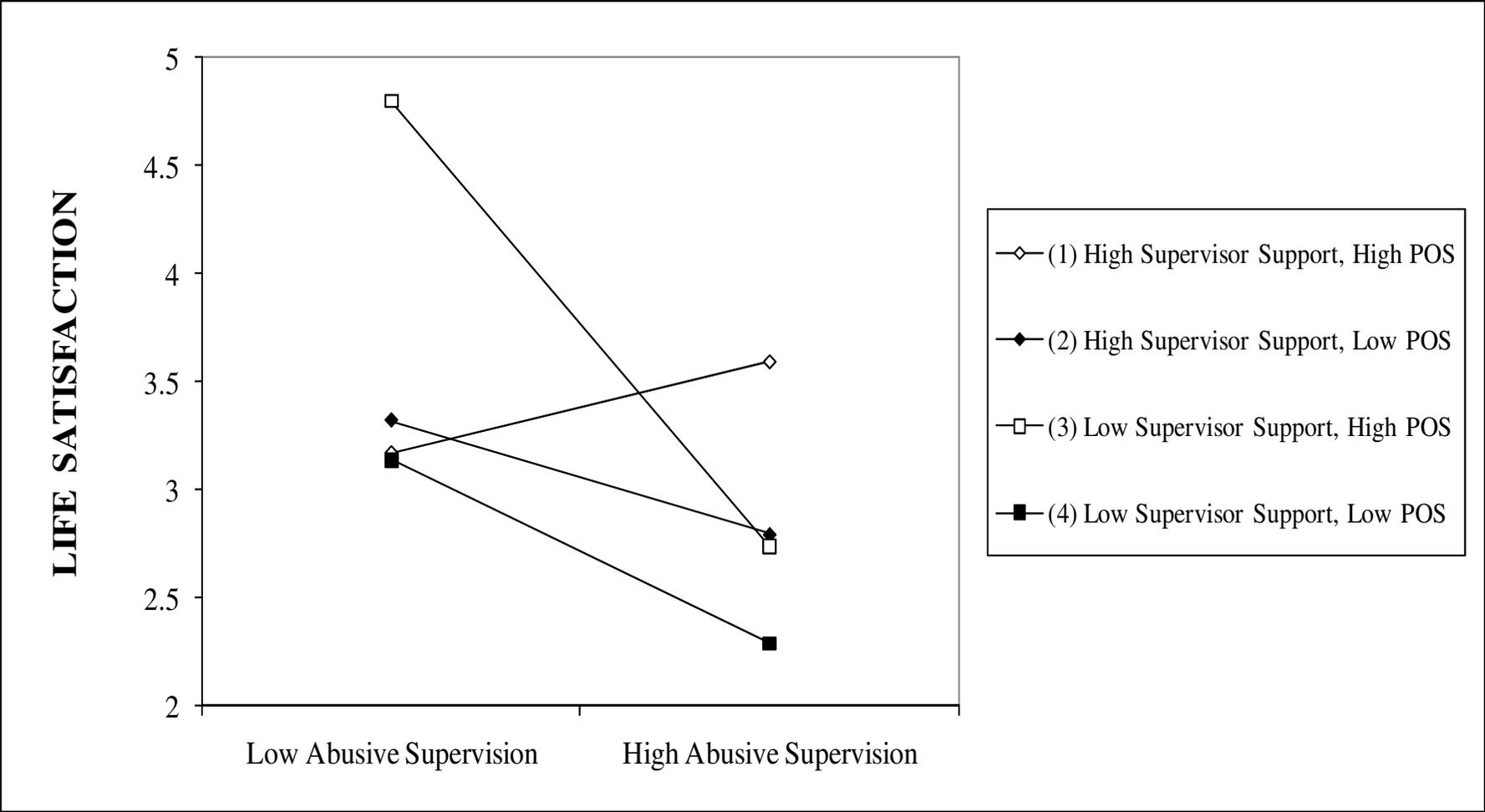


Figure 4. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with Life Satisfaction (Study 1) as Dependent Variable



3.2.2 Interaction Effects towards Job Satisfaction

Table 5 shows that there are two significant interactions towards job satisfaction in study one. The first is between abusive supervision and supervisor support ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), and the second is between supervisor support and perceived organizational support ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$). The R^2 Change figures in Step 4 shows that the two-way interaction effects account for an additional and sizeable 10% ($p < 0.01$) of the variance towards job satisfaction in study one. However, regarding study two, Table 6 does not support any significant two-way interactions, but shows that there is a significant three-way interaction towards job satisfaction. The interaction between abusive supervision, supervisor support, and perceived organizational support ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.1$) accounts for a modest 1% additional variance [from Step 5].

To facilitate interpretation of these significant moderator effects, two-way interactions are presented in Figures 5 and 6, and the three-way interaction can be seen in Figure 7. Upon plotting the two-way interaction terms (Figure 5), it can be seen that there is a significant difference in job satisfaction amongst respondents when abusive supervision is low, with respondents experiencing low PSS reporting higher job satisfaction than respondents with high PSS. However, when abusive supervision is high, respondents who reported low PSS report a significant decrease in job satisfaction, while respondents with high PSS report a significant increase in job satisfaction. Overall, there is a significant difference between levels of job satisfaction when respondents report high levels of abusive supervision, with high levels of supervisor support nullifying the effects of abusive supervision, thereby providing support for Hypothesis 9b.

Figure 5. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Job Satisfaction (Study 1) as Dependent Variable

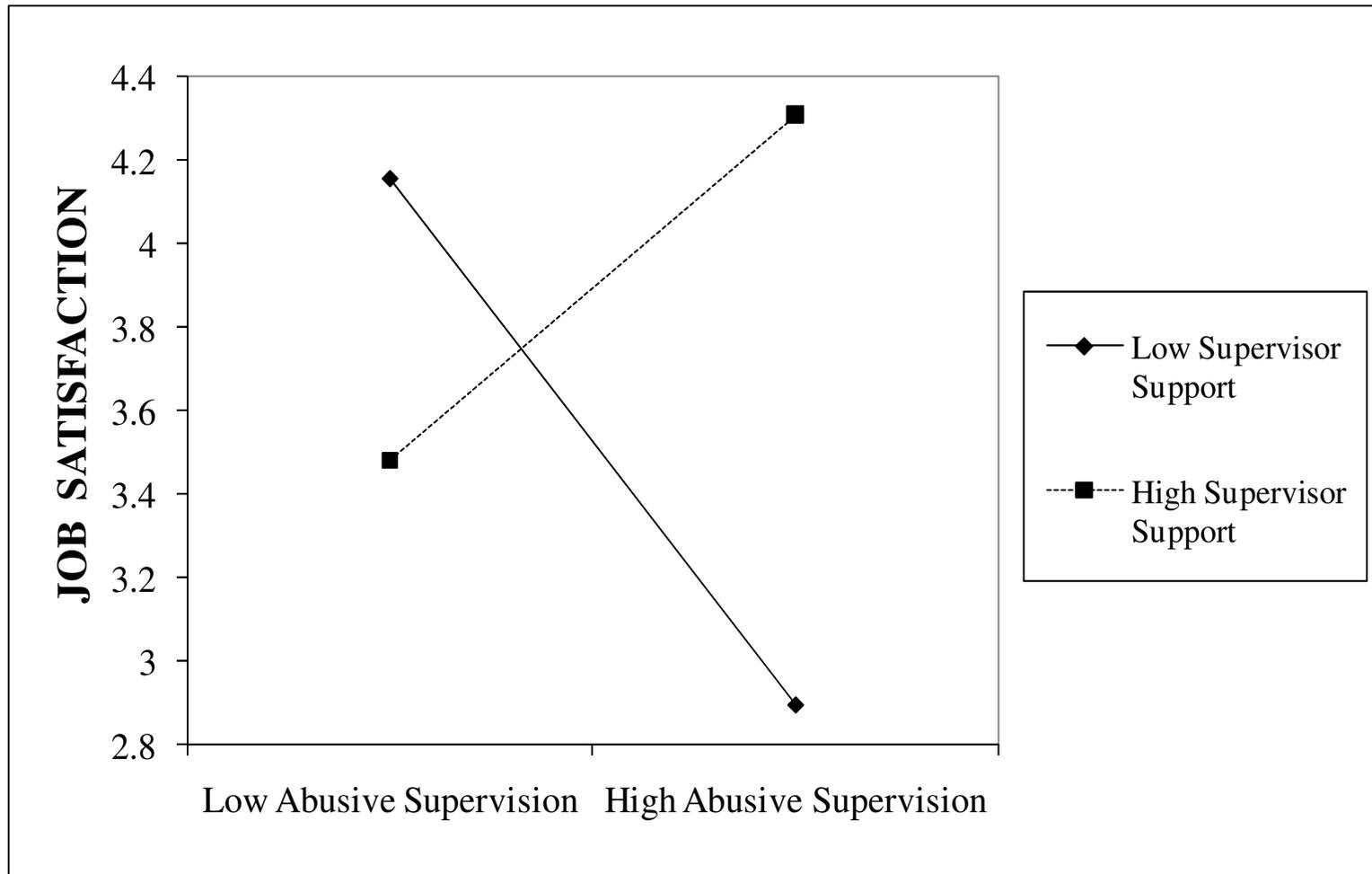


Figure 6 shows the two-way interaction between POS and supervisor support on job satisfaction. Specifically, it illustrates that there is some difference in job satisfaction amongst respondents when POS is low, with respondents who experienced low levels of supervisor support reporting greater job satisfaction compared to those who had high supervisor support. However, when organizational support increase to high POS, respondents reporting low supervisor support report a reduction in job satisfaction, while those with high supervisor support reported a strong increase in job satisfaction. Overall, the effect towards job satisfaction is as expected, with the combination of high POS and high supervisor support being the best combination. Therefore, this finding is as hypothesized, and provides support for Hypothesis 9c.

A plot of the three-way interaction terms from study two regarding job satisfaction can be seen in Figure 7. The graph illustrates that when abusive supervision is low, the highest level of job satisfaction is achieved by respondents with high POS, irrespective of whether they have high or low supervisor support. When abusive supervision increases to high, all respondents report a reduction in job satisfaction - however, there is a clear distinction between respondents with high POS and low POS. Overall; respondents with high POS report the highest job satisfaction, whether or not they experienced high or low supervisor support. Conversely, respondents with low POS (and either low or high supervisor support) reported significantly lower job satisfaction. Overall, at both high and low levels of abusive supervision, the highest job satisfaction was achieved by respondents with high POS and high supervisor support. These findings provide support for Hypothesis 9d. A summary of the intervening effects toward job satisfaction can be seen in Table 18.

Figure 6. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Job Satisfaction (Study 1) as Dependent Variable

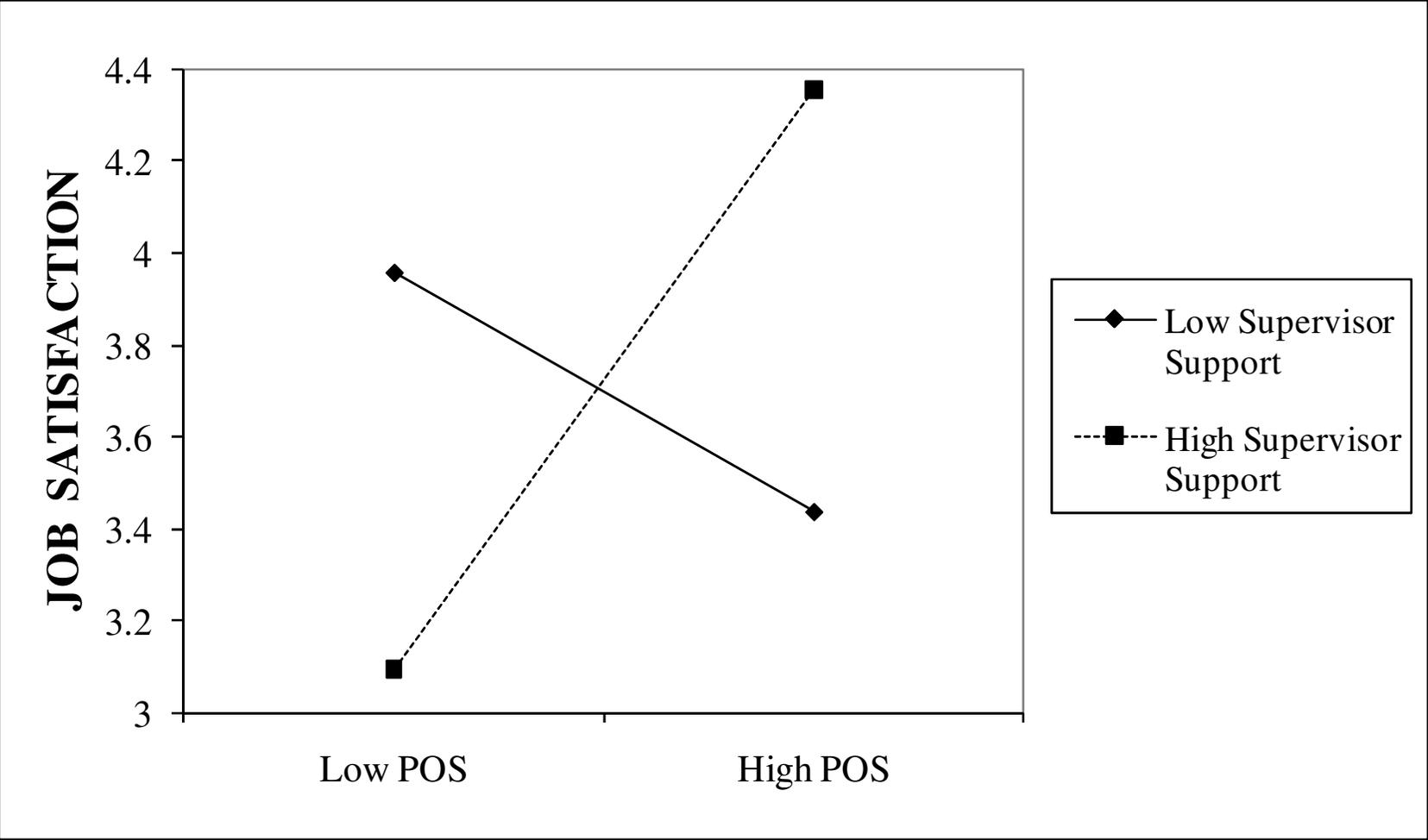


Figure 7. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with Job Satisfaction (Study 2) as Dependent Variable

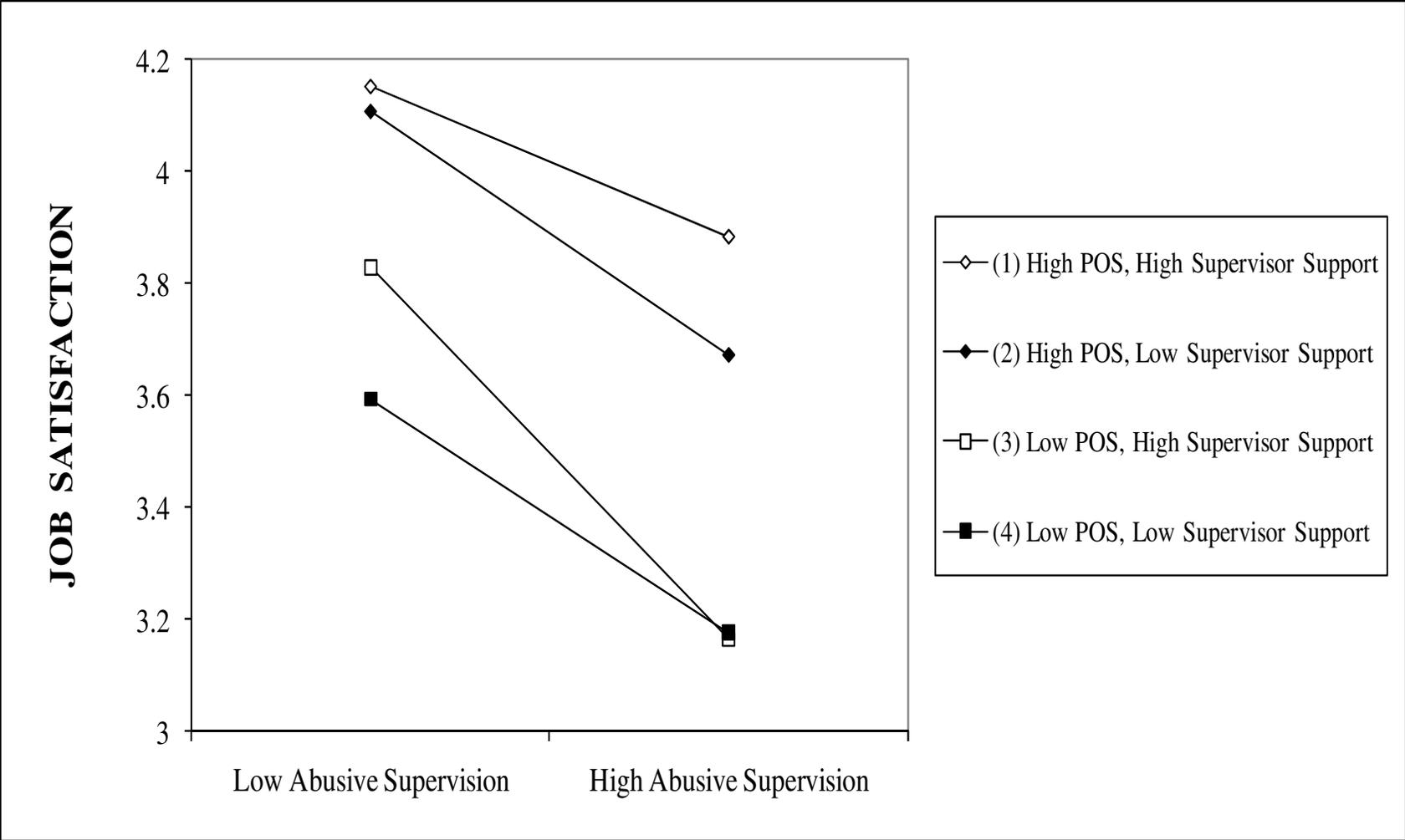


Table 18. Summary of intervening effects toward job satisfaction

Summary of intervening effects toward job satisfaction		
Hypothesis	Relationship	Supported?
Hypothesis 9 (Job satisfaction)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>job satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>job satisfaction</i> .	Supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>job satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>job satisfaction</i> .	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have greater <i>job satisfaction</i> when compared with their unsupported counterparts.	Supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>job satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>job satisfaction</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Supported

3.2.3 Interaction Effects towards Turnover Intentions

Regarding study one, Table 7 shows that there are two significant interactions towards turnover intentions. Firstly, there is a significant interaction between abusive supervision and supervisor support ($\beta = -0.69$, $p < 0.01$), and secondly, an interaction between supervisor support and perceived organizational support ($\beta = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$). The R^2 Change figures in Step 4 shows that the two-way interaction effects account for an additional and sizeable 9% ($p < 0.01$) of the variance towards turnover intentions in study one. Furthermore, Table 8 also shows a significant two-way interaction between perceived organizational support and supervisor support ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < 0.05$) for study two, accounting for a

modest 1% additional variance [from Step 5]. To facilitate interpretation of these significant moderator effects, two-way interactions are presented in Figures 8 to 10.

Plotting the two-way interaction terms (Figure 8) illustrates that there is a significant difference in turnover intentions amongst respondents when abusive supervision is low. Under low levels of abusive supervision, respondents with low supervisor support reported lower turnover intentions compared to respondents with high supervisor support. However, under high levels of abusive supervision, respondents reporting low supervisor support reported a significant increase in turnover intentions, while respondents with high supervisor support reported a significant decrease in turnover intentions. Overall, there is a significant difference between levels of turnover intentions when respondents report high levels of abuse, with high levels of supervisor support nullifying the effects of abusive, thereby providing support for Hypothesis 10a.

Upon plotting the two-way interaction terms, Figure 9 shows that there are some differences in turnover intentions amongst respondents when POS is low. Specifically, under low levels of POS, respondents with low supervisor support reported lower turnover intentions than those with high supervisor support. However, when POS is high, respondents reporting low supervisor support report an increase in turnover intentions, while those with high supervisor support reported a strong decrease in turnover intentions. Overall, the effect towards turnover intentions is as expected, with the combination of high POS and high supervisor support being the best combination. This finding is as hypothesized, thus provides support for Hypothesis 10c.

Figure 8. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Turnover Intentions (Study 1) as Dependent Variable

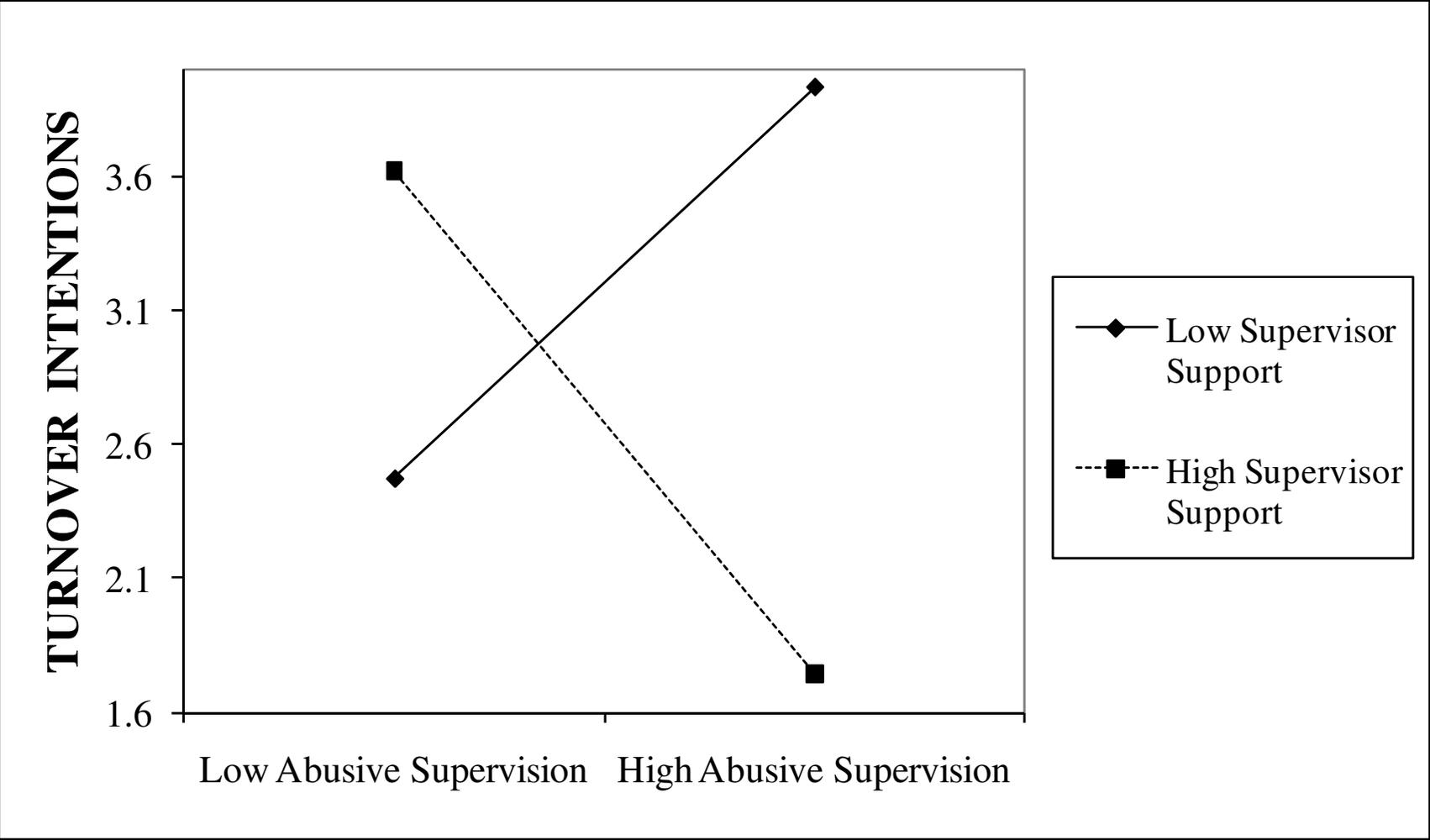
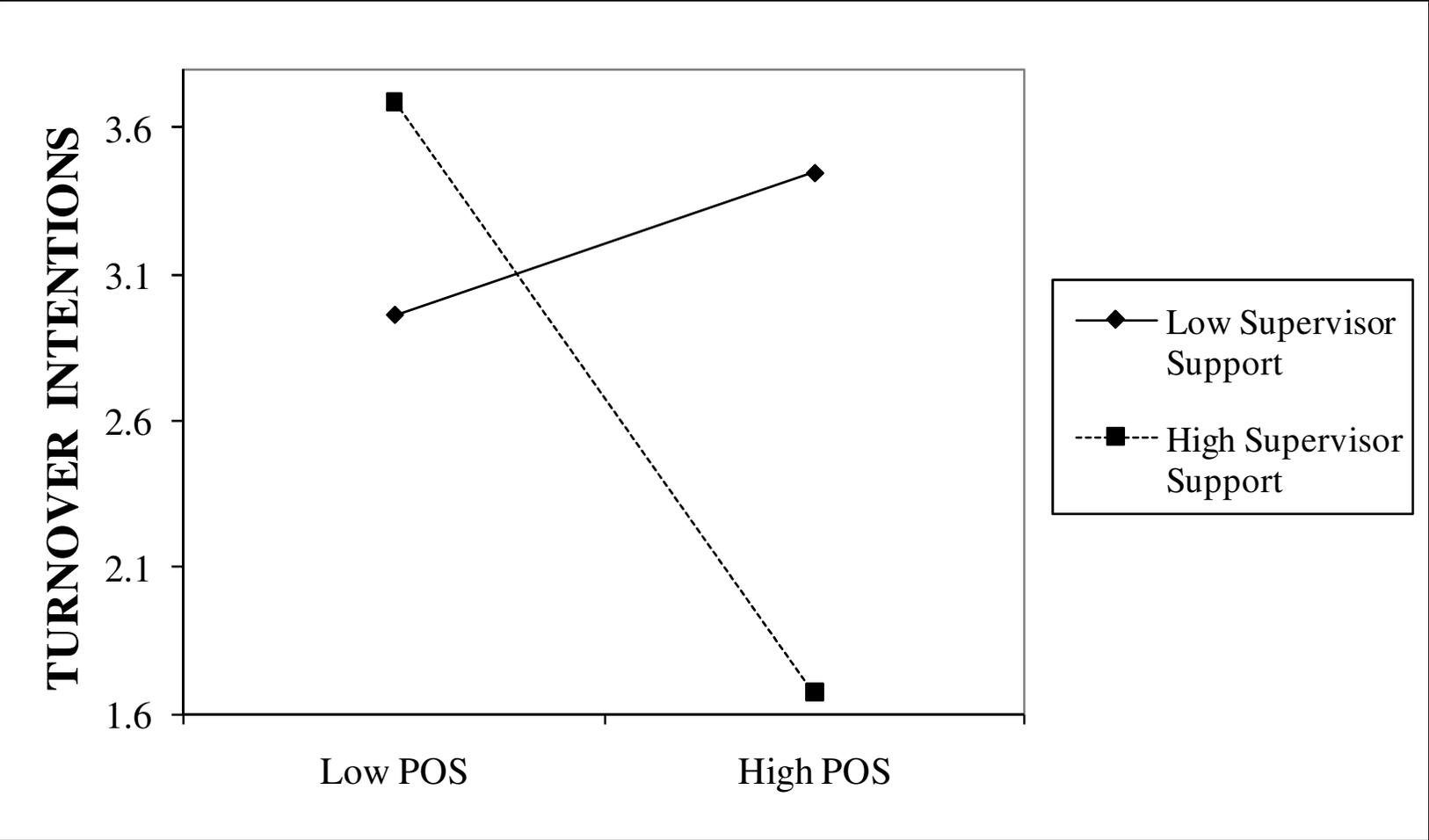


Figure 9. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Turnover Intentions (Study 1) as Dependent Variable

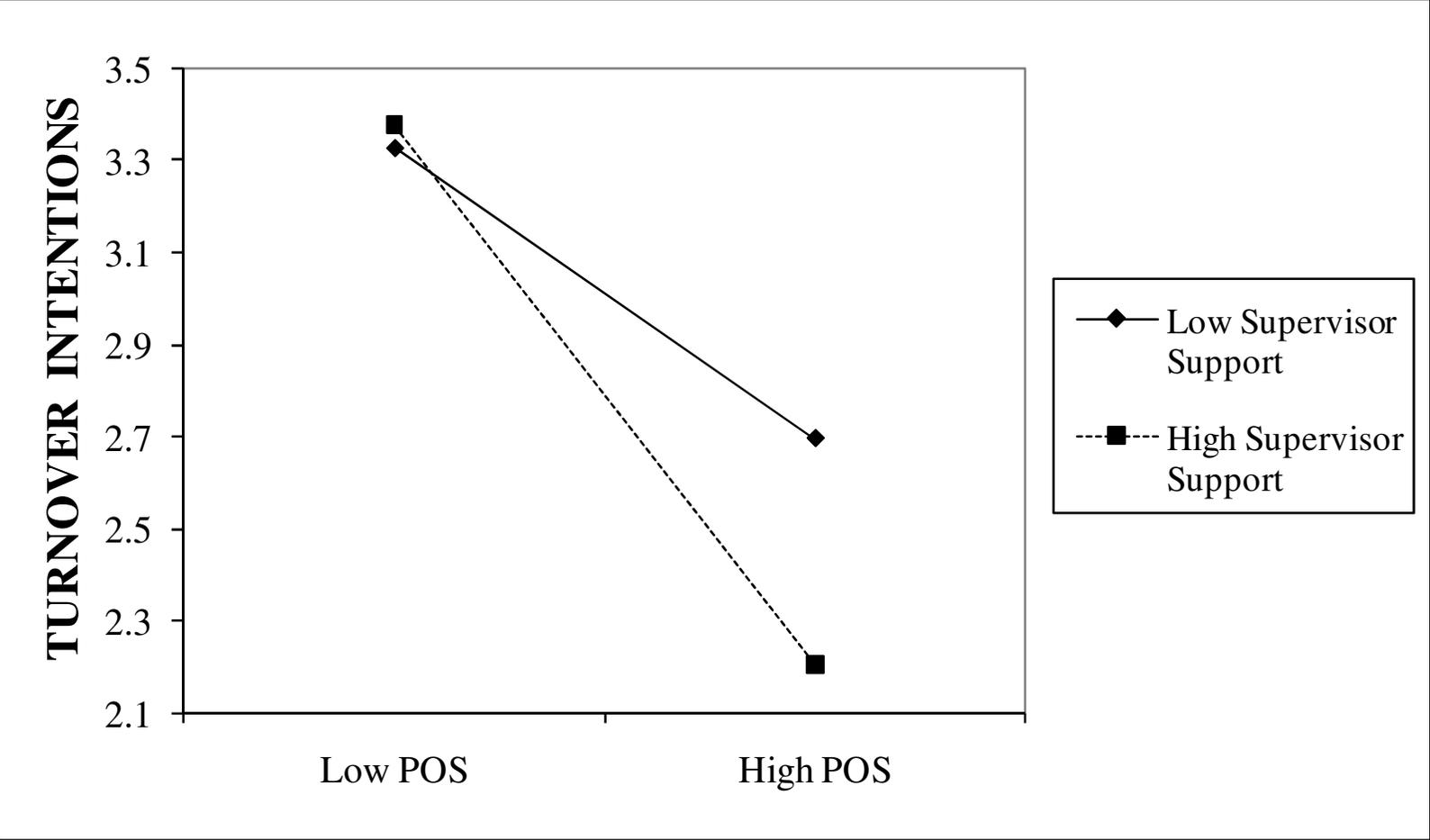


Plotting the two-way interaction terms toward turnover intentions for study two (Figure 10) illustrates that there is no difference in turnover intentions amongst respondents when POS is low, as respondents reported similar levels of turnover intentions with either low or high supervisor support. However, under high levels of POS, all respondents report a significant reduction in turnover intentions. Furthermore, respondents with high supervisor support report a steeper decrease in turnover intentions than respondents with low supervisor support. Thus overall, there is a significant difference between levels of turnover intentions when respondents report high levels of POS, with high levels of supervisor support further enhancing the effects of POS, thereby providing support for Hypothesis 10c. A summary of the intervening effects toward turnover intentions can be seen in Table 19.

Table 19. Summary of intervening effects for turnover intentions

Summary of intervening effects toward turnover intentions		
Hypothesis	Relationship	Supported?
Hypothesis 10 (<i>Turnover Intentions</i>)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>turnover intentions</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>turnover intentions</i> .	Supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>turnover intentions</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>turnover intentions</i> .	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have lower <i>turnover intentions</i> when compared with their unsupported counterparts.	Supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>turnover intentions</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>turnover intentions</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Not supported

Figure 10. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Turnover Intentions (Study 2) as Dependent Variable



3.2.4 Interaction Effects towards Anxiety

Regarding study one, Table 9 shows that there is a significant three-way interaction towards anxiety, between abusive supervision, supervisor support, and perceived organizational support ($\beta = -0.76$, $p < 0.05$). This interaction accounts for an additional 4% ($p < 0.05$) of the variance [from Step 5]. In study two, there is a significant two-way interaction between abusive supervision and supervisor support ($\beta = -0.22$, $p < 0.05$). The R^2 Change figure [from Step 4] indicates that this two-way interaction effect accounts for an additional 3% ($p < 0.05$) of the variance towards anxiety. To facilitate interpretation of these significant moderator effects, Figure 11 illustrates the three-way interaction, while Figure 12 presents the two-way interaction.

Plotting the three-way interaction terms for anxiety from study one (Figure 11) illustrates that when abusive supervision is low, the lowest levels of anxiety are achieved by respondents with high POS, varying somewhat by low or high supervisor support. However, when abusive supervision becomes high, all respondents report an increase in anxiety except for respondents with high POS and high supervisor support, who report a slight decrease in anxiety. Overall, there is a significant difference between levels of anxiety when respondents report high levels of abuse, with high levels of POS and supervisor support nullify the effects of abusive supervision. Furthermore, the lowest levels of anxiety are achieved by respondents with high POS and high supervisor support at high abusive supervision. This provides support for Hypothesis 11d.

Figure 11. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with Anxiety (Study 1) as Dependent Variable

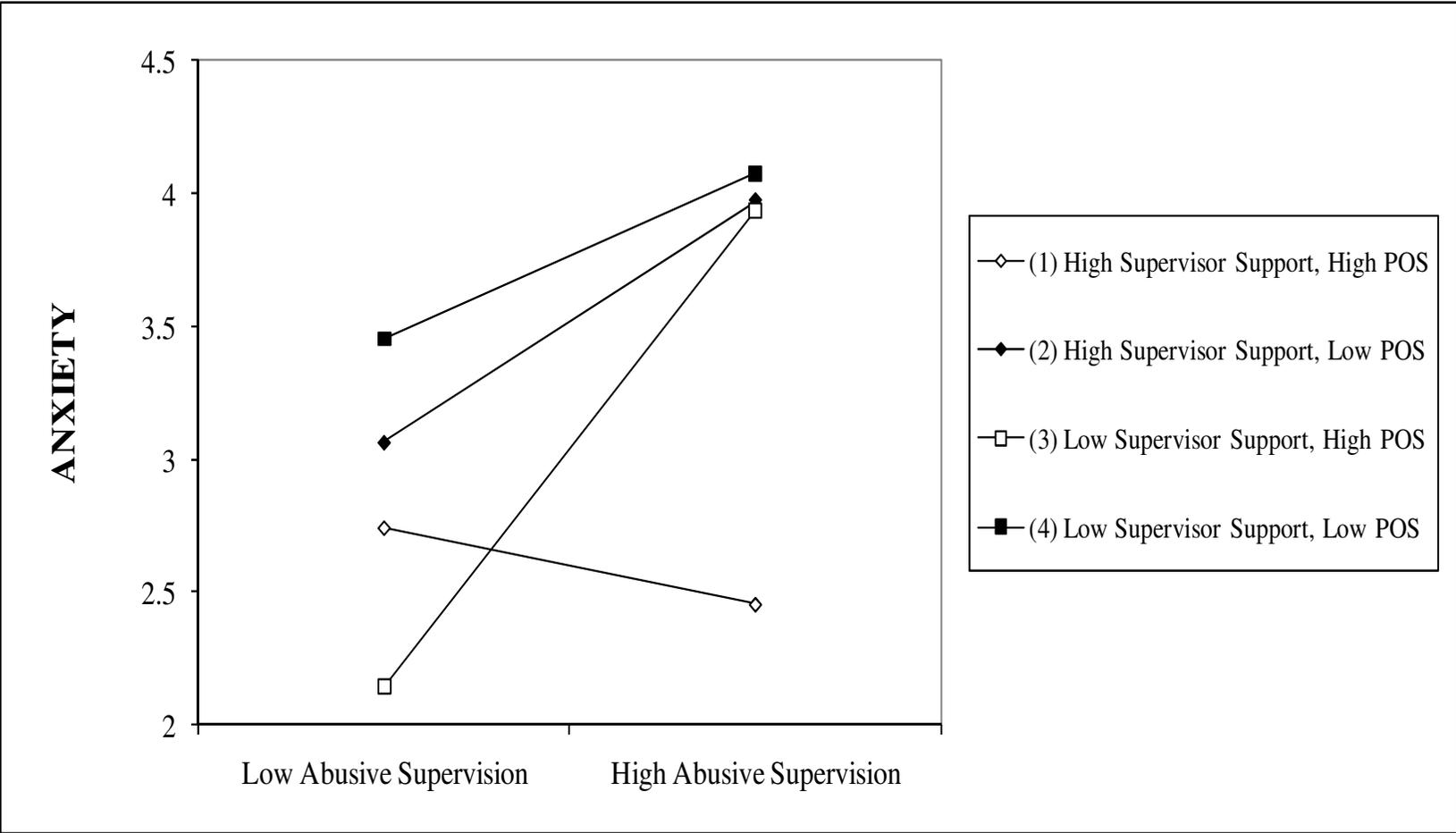
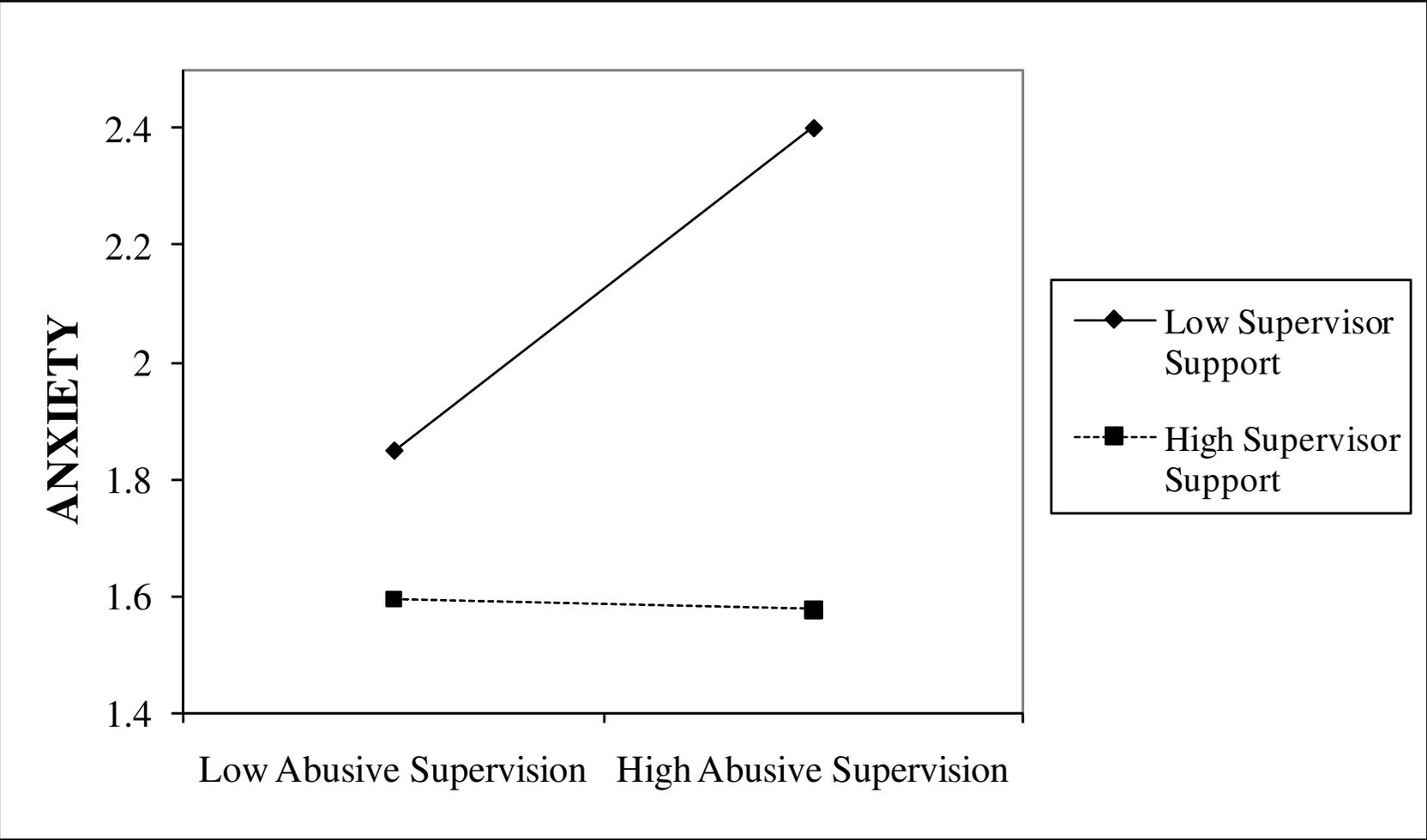


Figure 12. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Anxiety (Study 2) as Dependent Variable



Upon plotting the two-way interaction terms for anxiety from study two (Figure 12), it is evident that there is some difference in anxiety amongst respondents at low levels of abusive supervision. Specifically, under low abusive supervision, respondents who received high supervisor support reported lower levels of anxiety than respondents with low levels of supervisor support. When abusive supervision becomes high, respondents reporting low supervisor support report a significant increase in anxiety, while those with high supervisor support reported the same level of anxiety as experienced under low levels of abusive supervision. Overall, the effect towards anxiety is as expected, with high supervisor support buffering the effects of high abusive supervision towards anxiety. This finding is as hypothesized, and provides support for Hypothesis 11a. A summary of the intervening effects toward anxiety can be seen in Table 20.

Table 20. Summary of intervening effects toward anxiety

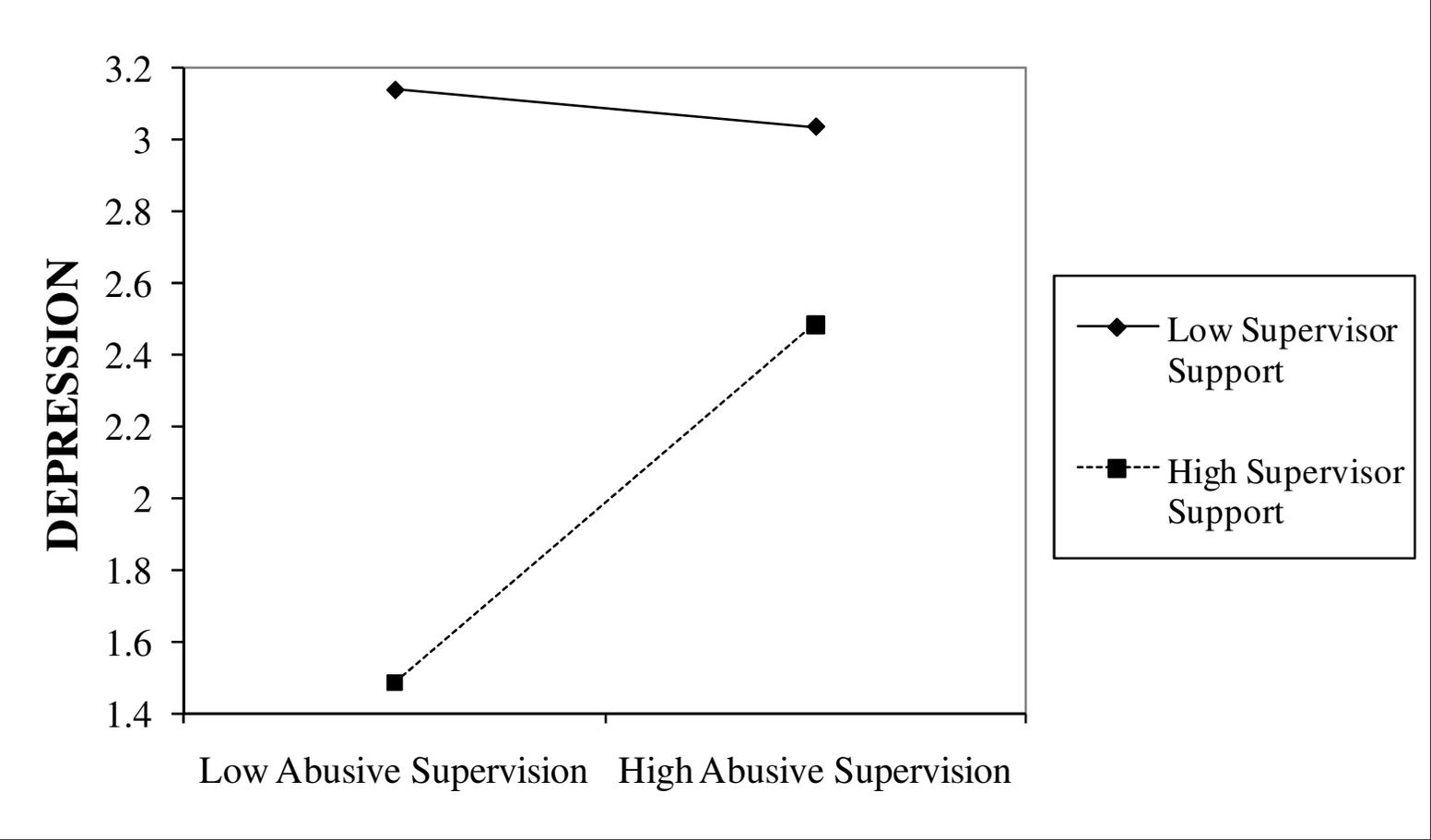
Summary of intervening effects toward anxiety		
Hypothesis	Relationship	Supported?
Hypothesis 11 <i>(Anxiety)</i>	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>anxiety</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>anxiety</i> .	Supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>anxiety</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>anxiety</i> .	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have lower <i>anxiety</i> when compared with their unsupported counterparts.	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>anxiety</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>anxiety</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Supported

3.2.5 Interaction Effects towards Depression

Regarding depression, Table 11 shows there is a significant two-way interaction between abusive supervision and supervisor support in study one ($\beta = 0.35, p < 0.1$). Furthermore, the R^2 Change figures in Step 4 indicate that the two-way interaction effect accounts for an additional 2% of the variance towards depression. In addition, there is a significant three-way interaction towards depression in study one, between abusive supervision, supervisor support, and POS ($\beta = -0.61, p < 0.05$), thereby accounting for 2% ($p < 0.05$) additional variance [from Step 5]. In study two, there is also a significant three-way interaction between abusive supervision, supervisor support, and POS ($\beta = -0.19, p < 0.1$), accounting for an additional 1% of the variance toward depression [from Step 5]. To facilitate interpretation of these significant moderator effects, interactions are presented in Figures 13 to 15.

Plotting the two-way interaction terms from study one (Figure 13) illustrates that there is a major difference in depression amongst respondents at low levels of abusive supervision, with respondents with high supervisor support reporting significantly lower levels of depression than respondents with low supervisor support. When abusive supervision is high, respondents reporting low supervisor support report similarly high levels of depression, while those with high supervisor support report a significant increase in depression, but ultimately, to a level which is still well below respondents with low supervisor support. Overall, the effect towards depression is as expected, with high supervisor support buffering the effects of high abusive supervision towards depression. This finding is as hypothesized, and provides support for Hypothesis 12a.

Figure 13. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Depression (Study 1) as Dependent Variable



Plotting the three-way interaction terms for depression from study one (Figure 14) illustrates that when abusive supervision is low, the lowest level of depression is achieved by respondents who have high levels of supervisor support, varying somewhat by whether they have high or low POS. However, when abusive supervision increases to high levels of abuse, all respondents report an increase in depression, except for respondents who have high POS and high supervisor support, who report a decrease in depression. Overall, the lowest levels of depression are achieved by respondents with high POS and high supervisor support under high levels of abusive supervision. This provides support for Hypothesis 12d.

Furthermore, plotting the three-way interaction terms for depression from study two (Figure 15) illustrates that when abusive supervision is low, the lowest levels of depression are achieved by respondents who experience high levels of POS, yet varying somewhat by whether supervisor support is high or low. Nevertheless, when abusive supervision increases to high, all respondents report an increase in depression, except for respondents with high POS and high supervisor support, who report stable (and low) levels of depression. Overall, under high levels of abusive supervision, the lowest levels of depression are achieved by respondents with high POS and high supervisor support. Therefore, these findings provide further support for Hypothesis 12d. A summary of the intervening effects toward depression can be seen in Table 21.

Figure 14. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with Depression (Study 1) as Dependent Variable

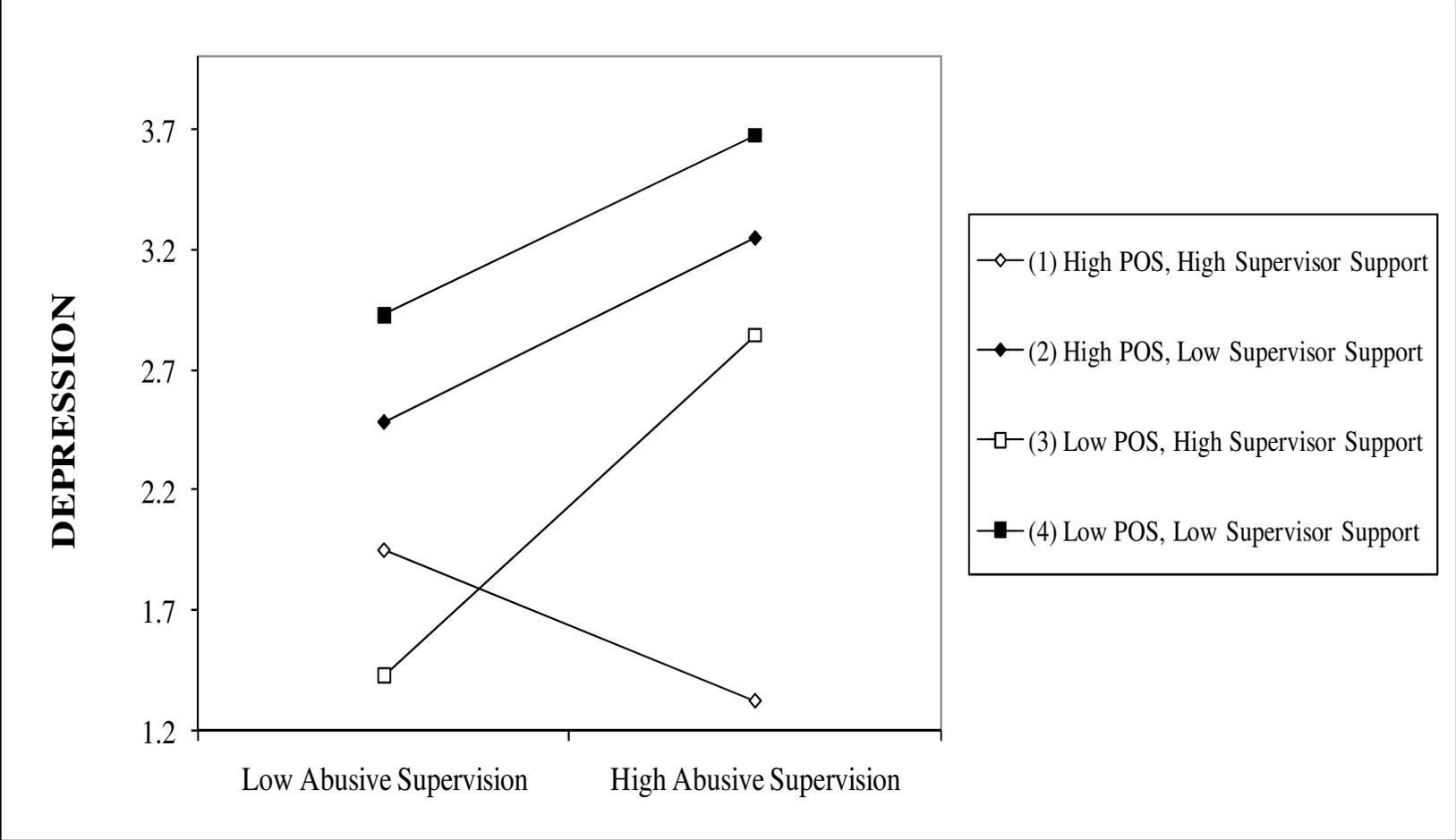


Figure 15. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with Depression (Study 2) as Dependent Variable

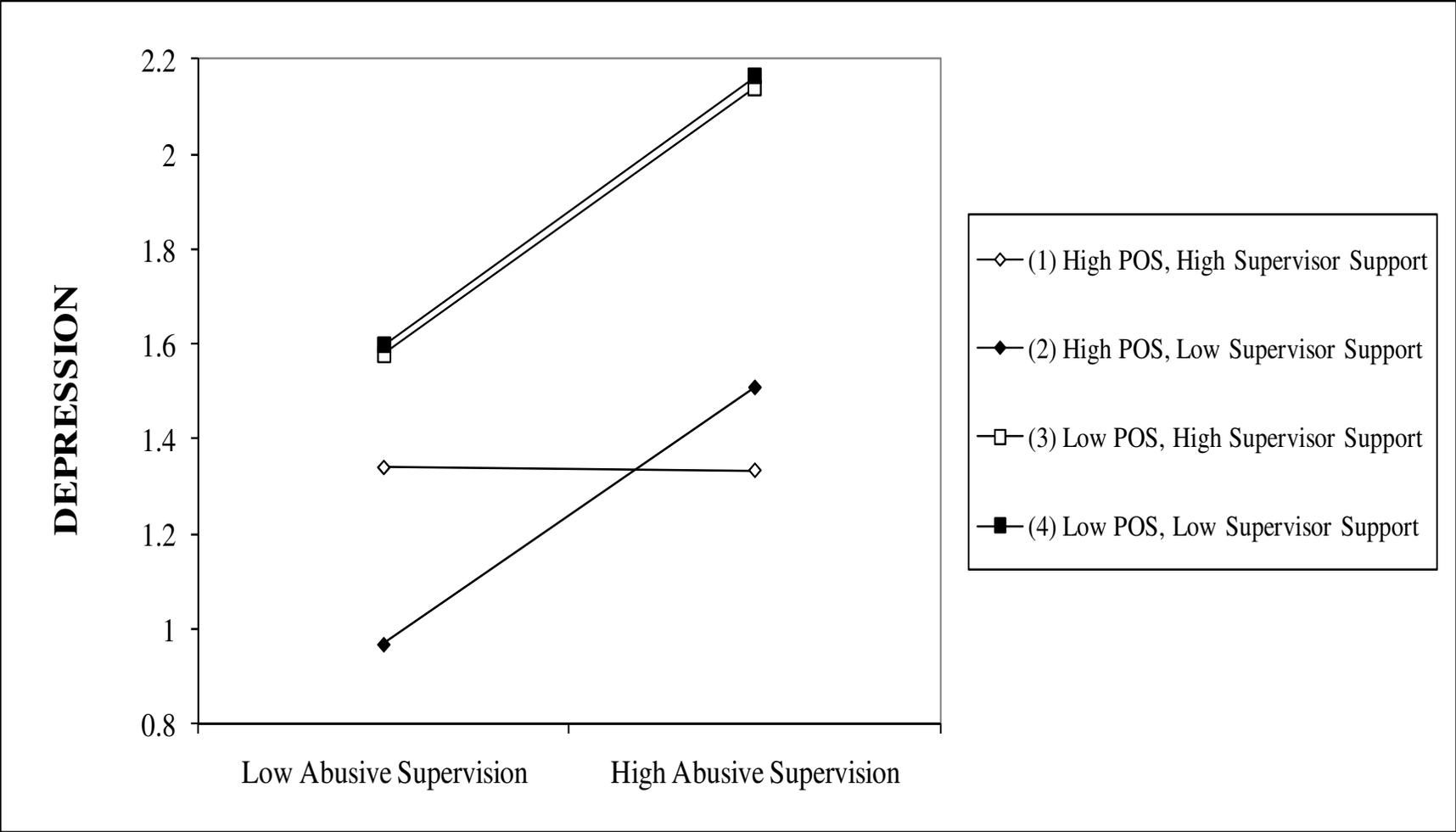


Table 21. Summary of intervening effects toward depression

Summary of intervening effects toward depression		
Hypothesis	Relationship	Supported?
Hypothesis 12 (Depression)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>depression</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>depression</i> .	Supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>depression</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>depression</i> .	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have lower <i>depression</i> when compared with their unsupported counterparts.	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>depression</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>depression</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Supported

3.2.6 Interaction Effects towards Insomnia

There are a number of significant two-way interactions towards insomnia from study one, as seen in Table 13. This includes two-way interactions between; abusive supervision and supervisor support ($\beta = -0.51$, $p < 0.05$), abusive supervision and POS ($\beta = 0.85$, $p < 0.01$), and between supervisor support and POS ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$). The R^2 Change figures calculated in Step 4 indicate that the two-way interaction effects account for an additional and large 10% ($p < 0.05$) additional variance towards insomnia. Furthermore, in study two, there is a significant two-way interaction between abusive supervision and supervisor support ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$), accounting for an additional 2% of the variance [from Step 4]. To facilitate interpretation of these significant two-way moderator effects, interactions are presented in Figures 16 to 19.

Upon plotting the two-way interaction terms from study one (Figure 16), it is evident that there is a major difference in insomnia amongst respondents at low levels of abusive supervision. Under low abuse, respondents that experienced low supervisor support reported significantly lower levels of insomnia than respondents with high levels of supervisor support. However, under high levels of abusive supervision, respondents with low supervisor support had a significant increase in insomnia, while those with high supervisor support reported a slight decrease in insomnia, thereby taking their insomnia levels well below those of respondents with low supervisor support. Overall, the effect towards insomnia is as expected, with high supervisor support buffering the effects of high abusive supervision towards insomnia. This finding is as hypothesized, and provides support for Hypothesis 13a.

Plotting the two-way interaction between abusive supervision and POS from study one (Figure 17) illustrates that there is a major difference in insomnia amongst respondents at low levels of abusive supervision. Under low abuse, respondents with high POS reported significantly lower levels of insomnia than respondents with low levels of POS. However, when abusive supervision increased to high abuse, respondents reporting low POS report a significant decrease in insomnia, while those with high POS report a significant increase in insomnia - taking them to levels of insomnia far greater than respondents with low POS. Overall, this fails to support the predicted effect towards insomnia. Although the results are as expected at low levels of abusive supervision, high POS does not buffer the effects of high abusive supervision towards insomnia. Thus, these findings fail to support Hypothesis 13b.

Figure 16. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Insomnia (Study 1) as Dependent Variable

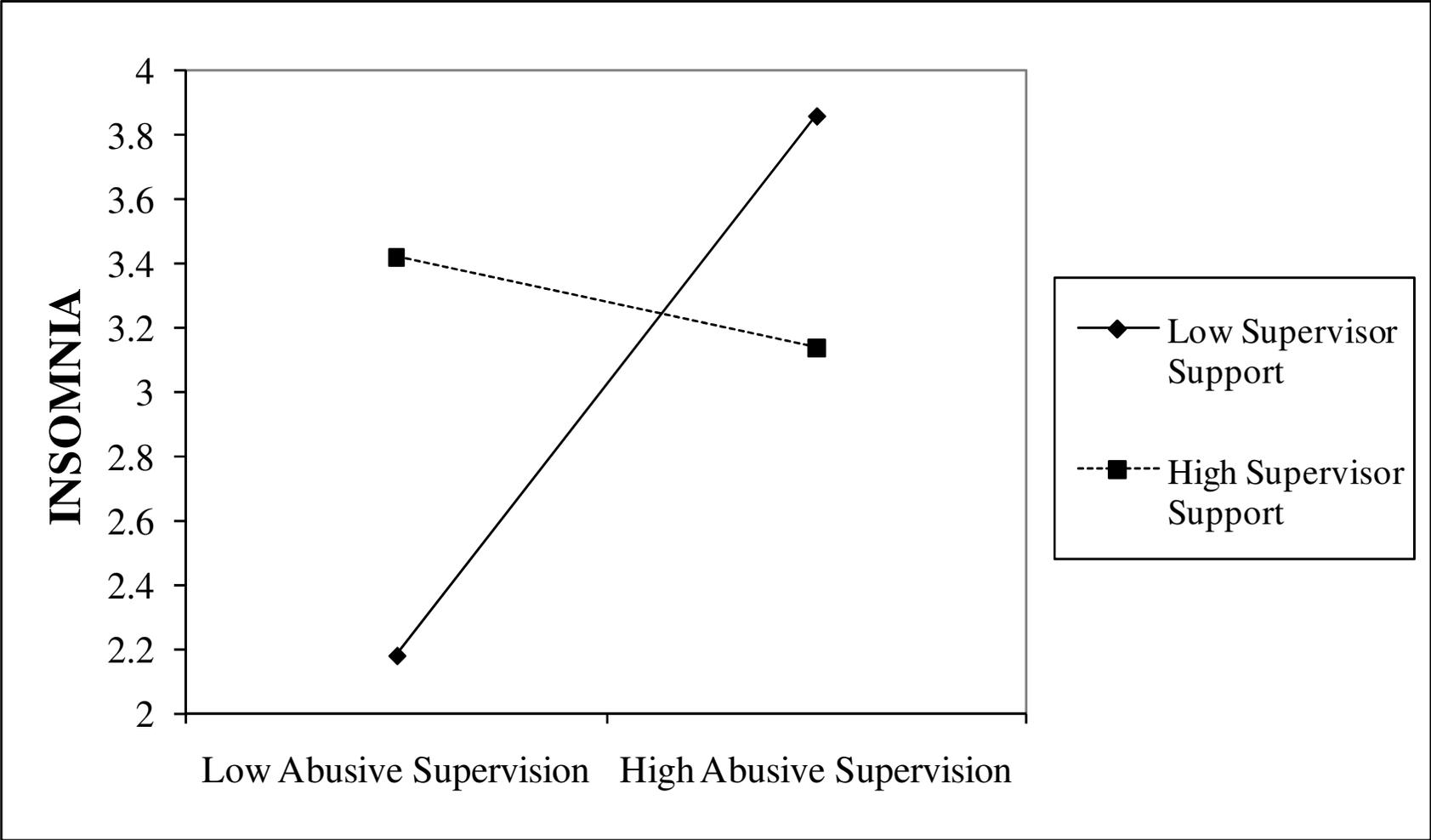
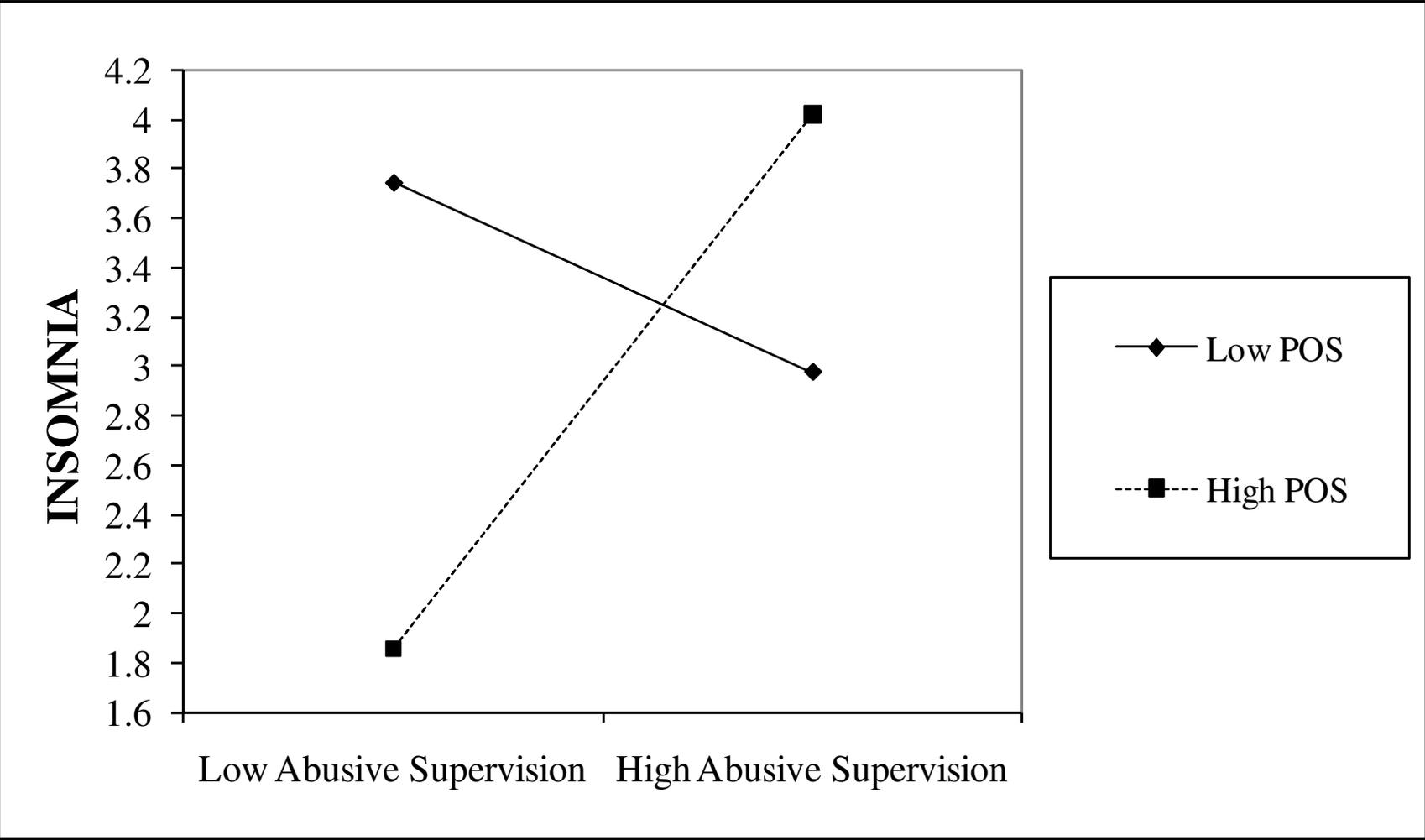


Figure 17. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Insomnia (Study 1) as Dependent Variable



The plot of the two-way interaction between POS and supervisor support can be seen in Figure 18 (study one). The plot illustrates that at low levels of supervisor support, there is a major difference in insomnia amongst respondents. Under low supervisor support, respondents with high POS reported significantly lower levels of insomnia than respondents with low levels of POS. However, when supervisor support is high, respondents with low POS had a significant decrease in insomnia, while those with high POS reported a significant increase in insomnia, taking them to levels slightly higher than respondents with low POS. Overall, the effect towards insomnia is not supported, as although the effects are as expected at low levels of abusive supervision, high POS does not buffer the effects of high abusive supervision towards insomnia. This fails to support Hypothesis 13c.

In addition, plotting the two-way interaction for study two between abusive supervision and PSS (Figure 19) illustrates that under low levels of abusive supervision, subordinates with high PSS experience lower levels of insomnia compared to their unsupported counterparts, as hypothesized. However, as abusive supervision becomes high, respondents with low PSS experience a decrease in insomnia, while those with high PSS reported an increase in insomnia – thereby taking respondents with high PSS to levels of insomnia significantly higher than respondents with low PSS. Overall, the effects towards insomnia are opposite to those expected, as high PSS did not buffer the effect of abusive supervision towards insomnia. In fact, while these findings were significant, they were counter to that hypothesized, thus provide no support for Hypothesis 13a. A summary of the intervening effects toward insomnia can be seen in Table 22.

Figure 18. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Insomnia (Study 1) as Dependent Variable

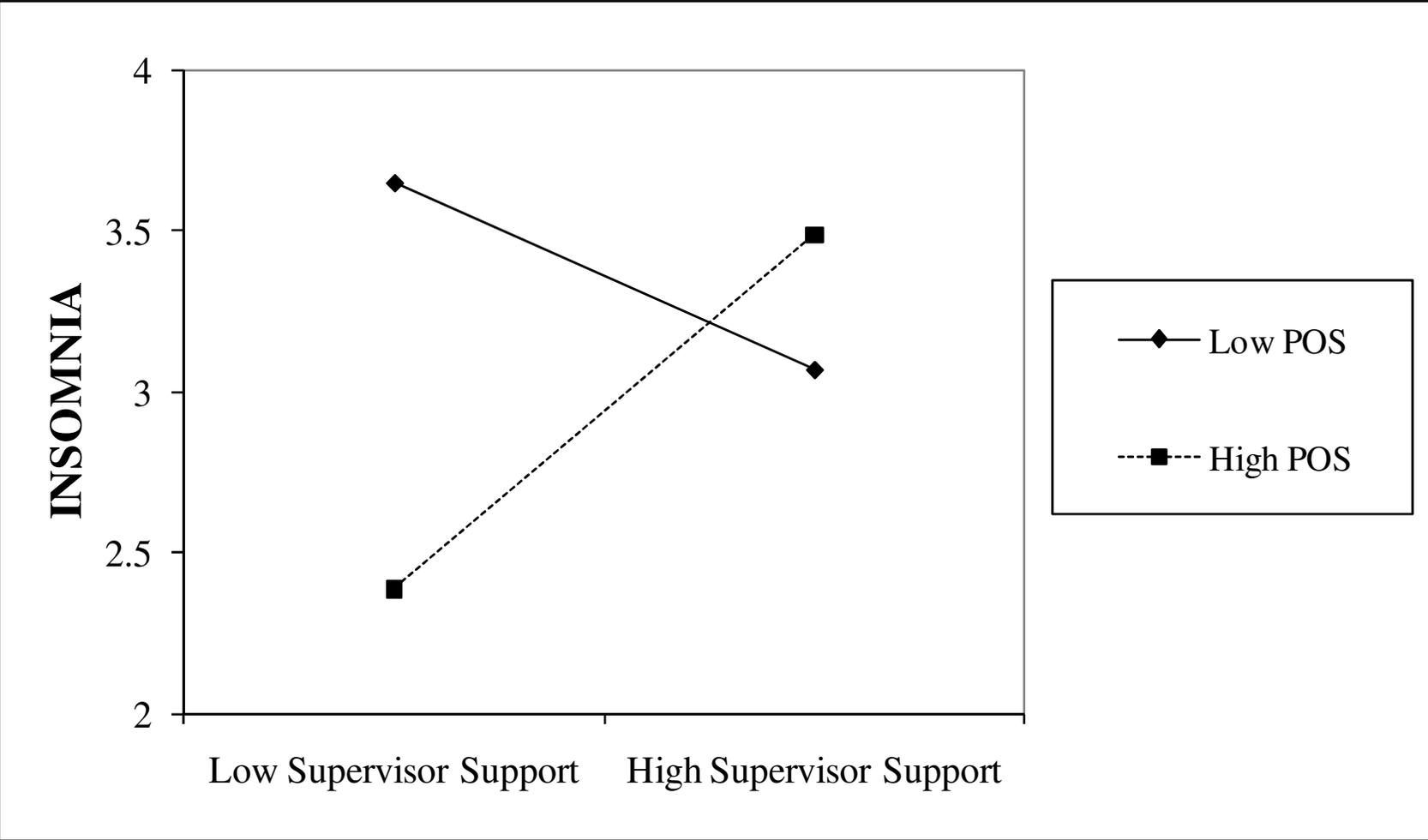


Figure 19. Interaction Plot of Two-Way Interaction with Insomnia (Study 2) as Dependent Variable

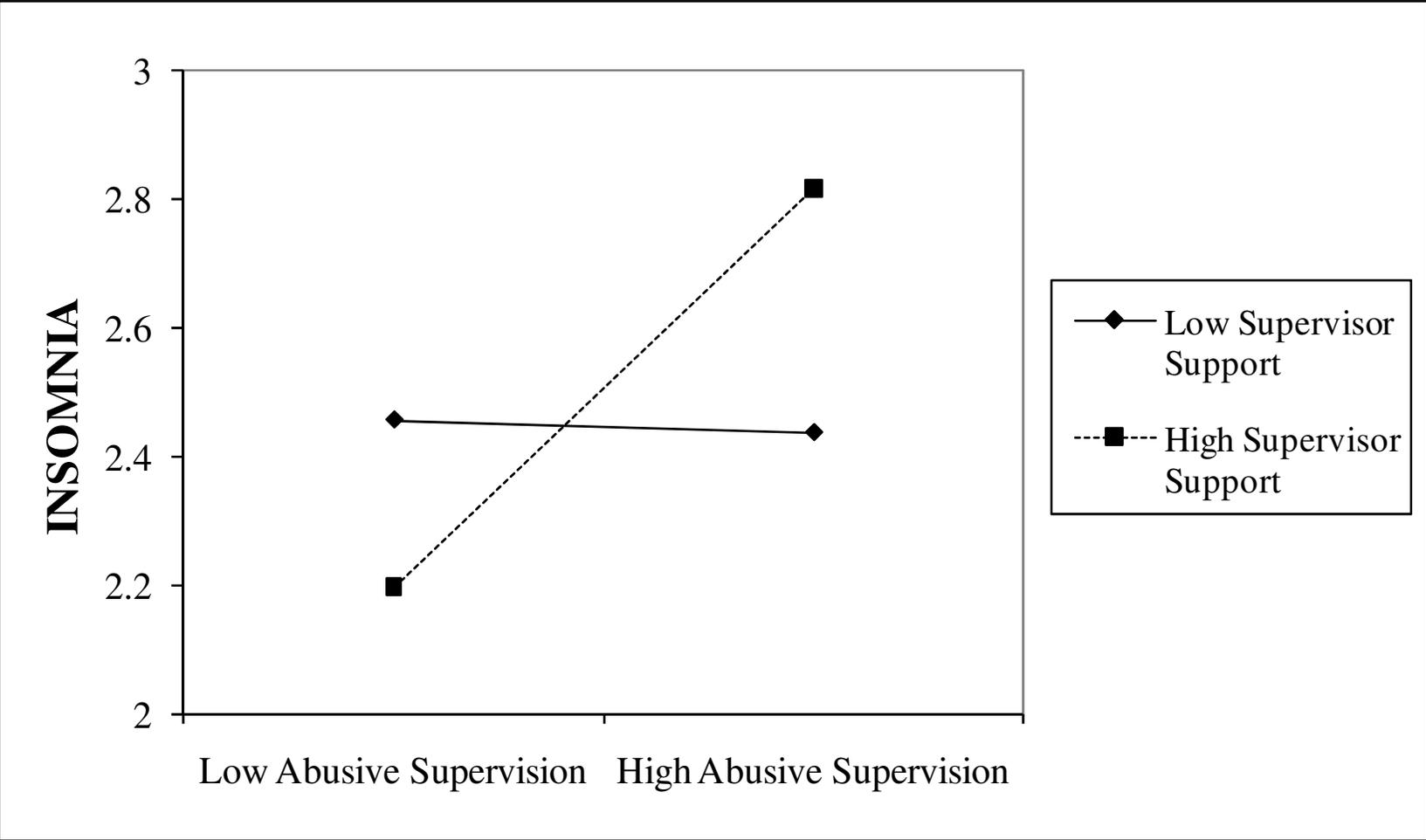


Table 22. Summary of intervening effects toward insomnia

Summary of intervening effects toward insomnia		
Hypothesis	Relationship	Supported?
Hypothesis 13 <i>(Insomnia)</i>	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>insomnia</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>insomnia</i> .	Partially Supported*
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>insomnia</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>insomnia</i> .	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have lower <i>insomnia</i> when compared with their unsupported counterparts.	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>insomnia</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>insomnia</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Not supported

3.2.7 Interaction Effects towards OBSE

Finally, Table 15 shows a significant three-way interaction towards OBSE in study two, between abusive supervision, supervisor support, and perceived organizational support ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.1$), accounting for an additional 1% of the variance toward OBSE [from Step 5]. To facilitate interpretation of this significant three-way moderator effect, the interaction is presented in Figure 20.

Plotting the three-way interaction terms for OBSE from study two (Figure 20) shows that when abusive supervision is low, the highest levels of OBSE are

* Hypothesis 13a is only partially supported, as there was support for the hypothesis in study one, however while the results were significant for study two, they were counter to that hypothesized.

achieved by respondents who have high levels of POS, which only slightly varies depending on whether their supervisor is low or high in support. Furthermore, at high levels of abusive supervision, all respondents report a decrease in OBSE; however respondents with high POS still maintain superior and significantly higher levels of OBSE than respondents with low POS. Overall, under high abusive supervision, the highest levels of OBSE are achieved by respondents with high POS, irrespective of whether they have low or high supervisor support. This provides support for Hypothesis 14d. A summary of the intervening effects toward OBSE can be seen in Table 23. Furthermore, a complete list of the results for hypotheses 8-14 regarding the intervening effects of POS, supervisor support, and abusive supervision can be seen in Table 24.

Table 23. Summary of intervening effects toward OBSE

Summary of intervening effects toward OBSE		
Hypothesis	Relationship	Supported?
Hypothesis 14 (OBSE)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>OBSE</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>OBSE</i> .	Not supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>OBSE</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>OBSE</i> .	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have increased <i>OBSE</i> when compared with their unsupported counterparts.	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>OBSE</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>OBSE</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Supported

Figure 20. Interaction Plot of Three-Way Interaction with OBSE (Study 2) as Dependent Variable

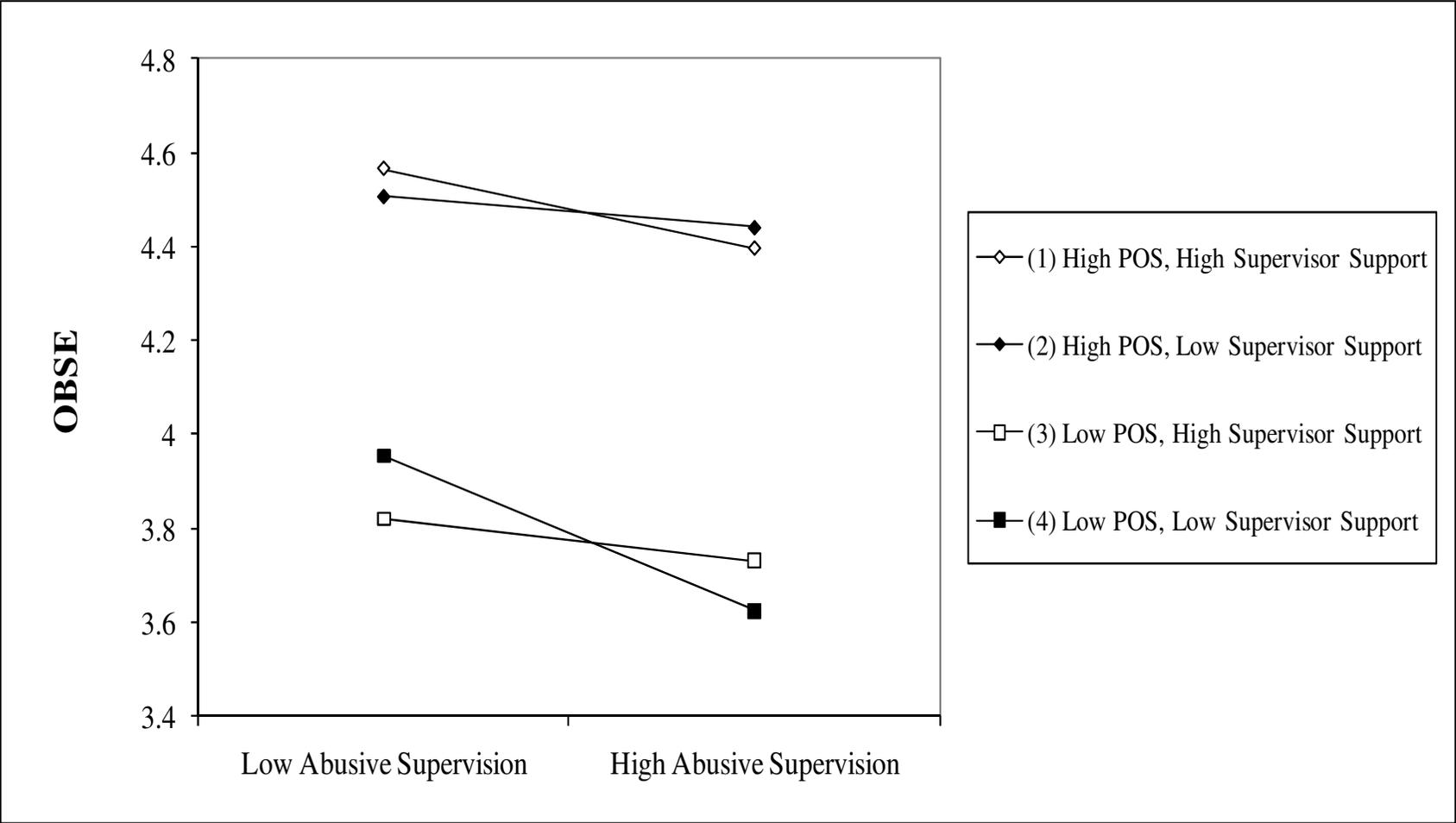


Table 24. Intervening effects of POS, supervisor support, and abusive supervision on outcomes.

Intervening effects of POS, supervisor support, and abusive supervision on outcomes			
Hypothesis	Relationship	Study one	Study two
Hypothesis 8 (Life satisfaction)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>life satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>life satisfaction</i> .	Not supported	Not supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>life satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>life satisfaction</i> .	Supported	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have higher <i>life satisfaction</i> compared to their unsupported counterparts.	Supported	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>life satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>life satisfaction</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Supported	Not supported
Hypothesis 9 (Job satisfaction)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>job satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>job satisfaction</i> .	Supported	Not supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>job satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>job satisfaction</i> .	Not supported	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have higher <i>job satisfaction</i> compared to their unsupported counterparts.	Supported	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>job satisfaction</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>job satisfaction</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Not supported	Supported

Hypothesis 10 (<i>Turnover Intentions</i>)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>turnover intentions</i> , buffering the increase toward <i>turnover intentions</i> .	Supported	Not supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>turnover intentions</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>turnover intentions</i> .	Not supported	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have lower <i>turnover intentions</i> compared to their unsupported counterparts.	Supported	Supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>turnover intentions</i> , buffering the increase in <i>turnover intentions</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Not supported	Not supported
Hypothesis 11 (<i>Anxiety</i>)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>anxiety</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>anxiety</i> .	Not supported	Supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>anxiety</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>anxiety</i> .	Not supported	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have lower <i>anxiety</i> compared to their unsupported counterparts.	Not supported	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>anxiety</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>anxiety</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Supported	Not supported
Hypothesis 12 (<i>Depression</i>)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>depression</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>depression</i> .	Supported	Not supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>depression</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>depression</i> .	Not supported	Not supported

Hypothesis 12 cont.	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have lower <i>depression</i> compared to their unsupported counterparts.	Not supported	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>depression</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>depression</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 13 (<i>Insomnia</i>)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>insomnia</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>insomnia</i> .	Supported	Not supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>insomnia</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>insomnia</i> .	Not supported	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have lower <i>insomnia</i> compared to their unsupported counterparts.	Not supported	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>insomnia</i> , buffering the increase towards <i>insomnia</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Not supported	Not supported
Hypothesis 14 (<i>OBSE</i>)	(a) Perceptions of SS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>OBSE</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>OBSE</i> .	Not examined	Not supported
	(b) POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>OBSE</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>OBSE</i> .	Not examined	Not supported
	(c) PSS and POS will have a cumulative effect, such that subordinates with high PSS and POS will have higher <i>OBSE</i> compared to their unsupported counterparts.	Not examined	Not supported
	(d) Perceptions of support interact with each other, such that SS and POS will moderate the influence of abusive supervision on <i>OBSE</i> , buffering the reduction towards <i>OBSE</i> when support from supervisor and organization are high.	Not examined	Supported

3.3 Overall Model Strengths

Data collection was more advanced in study two compared to study one, as predictor and outcome variables were collected at separate times. Thus, it may be unsurprising that the overall model strengths also show some major differences in overall size (R^2), with study two models being lower in overall strength than study one models. I compare the models from study one and two towards each outcome together below, in order to highlight the similarities and differences where applicable.

Specifically, towards life satisfaction, the model is very large in study one ($R^2 = 0.63$, $F = 13.774$, $p < .001$), but much smaller in study two ($R^2 = 0.13$, $F = 2.791$, $p < .01$). The models towards job satisfaction are more closely related, being very large in study one ($R^2 = 0.53$, $F = 9.401$, $p < .001$), yet still sizeable in study two ($R^2 = 0.37$, $F = 11.279$, $p < .001$). Similarly, the models towards turnover intentions are closely related, being sizeable in study one ($R^2 = 0.38$, $F = 5.031$, $p < .001$), and comparable in study two ($R^2 = 0.35$, $F = 10.496$, $p < .001$).

Furthermore, while the models towards anxiety are related, study one is quite large ($R^2 = 0.39$, $F = 5.341$, $p < .001$), when compared to the study two model ($R^2 = 0.25$, $F = 6.547$, $p < 0.001$). Regarding depression, the model is very large in study one ($R^2 = 0.57$, $F = 11.296$, $p < .001$), and more modest in study two ($R^2 = 0.32$, $F = 8.903$, $p < .001$). The models towards insomnia are both modest in comparison to the majority of the other models, being quite modest in study one ($R^2 = 0.23$, $F = 2.515$, $p < .05$), and smaller in study two ($R^2 = 0.16$, $F = 3.658$, $p < .001$). Finally, the model for OBSE is large ($R^2 = 0.54$, $F = 23.211$, $p < .001$).

In addition, the variance inflation factors (VIF) were examined for evidence of multi-collinearity, which can be detected when the VIF values equal 10 or higher (Ryan, 1997). However, all the scores for the regressions were below 3.0, indicating no evidence of multi-collinearity unduly influencing the regression estimates.

CHAPTER 4: Discussion

Abusive supervision in the workplace is a prevalent problem with damaging effects (Tepper, 2000; Tepper, 2007). While the outcomes associated with abusive supervision have been well examined, research has largely overlooked finding ways to reduce abuse so far. As organizations strive to utilize their human resources as a means of setting their business apart from the rest, it seems that finding ways to reduce stress and increase employee well-being may be crucial for organizational success, and thus, reducing abuse may be vital. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to examine the effects of abusive supervision on mental health and work outcomes, as well as the potentially buffering role of different sources of support.

The results showed that abusive supervision is prevalent in New Zealand, as abusive supervision occurred (on average) more often than in other studies regarding abusive supervision. The results of this study were largely as expected, as abusive supervision was found to be negatively related to job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and OBSE, and positively related to turnover intentions, anxiety, depression, and insomnia. Moreover, support was found to moderate the abusive supervision-outcome relationships, with both PSS and POS reducing the harmful effects of abusive supervision. The significance of these findings shall be discussed further below.

4.1 Direct effects

The direct effects of both study one and two indicated that abusive

supervision was negatively related to support perceptions, including PSS, and POS. Thus, as a supervisor becomes increasingly abusive, subordinates perceive the organization and their supervisor to be less supportive. As abusive supervision signals a negative social exchange, and PSS a positive exchange, it is logical that abusive supervision and PSS would be negatively related. Furthermore, as a subordinate may view their supervisor as representative of the whole organization (Eisenberger et al., 2002), abuse from a supervisor not only signals their supervisor does not care, but may also suggest that the organization does not care about them. Consequently, abusive supervisors have the ability to affect both individual and organizational outcomes, as exemplified by the present findings.

In addition, the direct effects for abusive supervision toward individual and organizational outcomes were all as expected, and support was found for Hypothesis 1-7. More specifically, both study one and two found that abusive supervision was negatively related to life satisfaction, and job satisfaction, and positively related to turnover intentions, anxiety, depression, and insomnia – thereby supporting Hypothesis 1-6. These results are congruent with the abusive supervision literature, as, abusive supervision has already shown direct relationships with decreased job dissatisfaction (Keashly et al., 1994; Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2004), decreased life dissatisfaction (Tepper, 2000), increased intention to quit (Keashly et al., 1994; Tepper, 2000), and increased depression and anxiety (Tepper, 2000). Furthermore, in study two, abusive supervision was also negatively related to OBSE (supporting hypothesis 7). This relationship seems logically intuitive, as being yelled at and told you are worthless by a supervisor is likely to diminish a subordinates' belief that they 'count' or matter around the organization – which is directly reflective of their OBSE (Pierce et al.,

1989; Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Moreover, as OBSE has not been studied through the lens of abusive supervision, these results make a valuable contribution to the content domain, adding a further outcome negatively associated with abusive supervision in the workplace.

Overall, the results also indicated that abusive supervision accounted for large amounts of variance towards all outcomes, with the exception of life satisfaction in study two (7%), and insomnia (8% in study one, and 4% in study two), ranging from 13%-32% variance. In contrast to study two findings, abusive supervision explained large amounts of variance toward life satisfaction in study one, accounting for 32% of the variance. Abusive supervision also explained large amounts of variance toward job satisfaction (29% in study one, and 25% in study two), turnover (15% in study one, and 20% in study two), anxiety (17% in study one, and 13% in study two), depression (28% in study one, and 19% in study two), and OBSE (24% in study two). These results emphasize the heavily damaging effects of abusive supervision on outcomes. When these results are examined alongside those which have linked abusive supervision to decreased job performance (Harris et al., 2007), decreased OCB (Zellars et al., 2002), increased deviant behaviour (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), and increased counter-productivity (Duffy et al., 2002; Detert et al., 2007), it seems abusive supervision may have strong detrimental effects on many employee and organizational outcomes, and thus, is an issue that cannot afford to be ignored.

Moreover, as the results of the study at hand shows congruence with research conducted thus far, it indicates that subordinates view abusive supervision as a form of injustice that affects their work attitudes and well-being

(Tepper, 2000; Tepper, 2007). This confirms the research of Tepper (2000), who suggested the notion that abusive supervision signals a negative or inequitable social exchange, which has damaging effects on employee outcomes. In fact, for a long time, the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964, as cited in Emerson, 1976) have been used as platforms for describing an employee's motivation, attitudes, and as explanation for their specific behaviours. Social exchange theory states that a subordinate is likely to reciprocate good behaviour with good and bad with bad – thus abusive supervision is reciprocated with negative work and mental health outcomes (Walumbwa et al., 2009). Therefore, if a supervisor yells at an employee, it is logical to assume that a subordinate will view the relationship as unfair, and have thoughts such as 'I'm not going to bother working hard as my supervisor does not appreciate me'. Thus, inequitable exchanges experienced under abusive supervision are likely to reduce a subordinate's satisfaction, making them more inclined to want to leave the organization, and making them more anxious to deal with their supervisor in the future.

4.2 Moderating role of PSS

In general, the results indicated that PSS can buffer the impact of abusive supervision on outcomes, and supported the notion that abusive supervision and PSS can co-exist (Duffy et al., 2002; Yagil, 2006). While there were no uniform findings for moderating effects across *both* studies, the results showed that PSS moderates the effects of abusive supervision on: job satisfaction (study one), turnover intentions (study one), anxiety (study two), depression (study one), and

insomnia (study one). More specifically, as supervision moves to high abusive, subordinates with low PSS reported a large decrease in job satisfaction, while those with high PSS reported a significant increase in job satisfaction (study one). Moreover, as abusive supervision increased, those with high PSS experience a large decrease in turnover intentions; while those with low PSS experience a significant increase in turnover intentions (study one). Regarding anxiety, under high PSS, anxiety levels remained at a low level, irrespective of the level of abuse. While under low PSS, anxiety levels rose considerably under high abusive supervision (study two). Results for depression were similar, as under low PSS, levels of depression remained high, irrespective of the level of abusive supervision. However, under high PSS, while depression levels increased as abusive supervision increased, the level of depression remained considerably lower than subordinates with low PSS (study one). Finally, regarding insomnia, as abusive supervision moves from low to high, subordinates with low levels of PSS experienced a significant increase in insomnia, while those with high PSS experienced a decrease in the level of insomnia, thereby reducing their level of insomnia to significantly lower levels than their unsupported counterparts (study one). All of these results show strong support for the buffering theory, which is suggested by social exchange theory, as PSS nullifies the effect of abusive supervision.

Overall, these findings provide support with various studies, which have also found that PSS can have a buffering role between work conflict and outcomes (Russell et al., 1987; Kirmeyer & Dougherty, 1988; Cummins, 1990; Babin & Boles, 1996; Wong et al., 2000; O'Driscoll et al., 2003; Chen & Chiu, 2008; Karatepe & Uludag, 2008; Gibson et al., 2009; Thanacoody et al., 2009).

However, this is the first time such effects have been specifically tested and found directly within the abusive supervision domain. Chen and Chiu (2008) suggested reasons for this effect may be that supervisor support can aid in satisfying a subordinate's socio-emotional needs, thus according to social exchange theory, PSS can buffer a subordinate from the frustration and interactional injustice experienced under abusive supervision (Cropanzano et al., 2002), creating a more balanced social exchange.

Karatepe and Uludag (2008) gave additional reasons for the buffering effect, suggesting that supervisor support may provide a subordinate with coping mechanisms for dealing with workplace difficulties more easily, thereby eliminating the effects associated with stress and conflict in the workplace and contributing to lower strain levels than that which would occur in the absence of the stressor. More specifically, Kirmeyer and Dougherty (1988) suggested that supervisor support may encourage coping mechanisms that were more problem focussed, while Wong et al. (2000) indicated that informational support from a supervisor may enable an employee to identify appropriate strategies to deal with job difficulties. Thanacoody et al. (2009) described supervisor support as a way of improving a subordinate's adaptive competence to help them deal with short-term and long-term crises and challenges. Thus, in relation to abusive supervision, it seems supervisor support can provide functional coping mechanisms to enable a subordinate to better deal with abuse in the workplace. These results highlight that although supervisors may engage in both abusive and supportive behaviours, the supportive nature of the supervisor may be able to triumph over the abusive actions. Further research is required to aid in the generalizability of these results.

While these results all show support for the buffering effect of PSS, there was one interesting finding counter to that hypothesized regarding insomnia. The results of study two showed that insomnia was higher for subordinates who were abused. However, according to this buffering theory, subordinates should experience a decrease in insomnia as supervisors become more supportive. Those with low abuse experience a decrease in insomnia as support increased, supporting the buffering role of PSS. However, subordinates with high abusive supervision actually experienced a significant increase in insomnia as support increased. This suggests that under high abuse, support may not be able to nullify the effects of abusive supervision at least towards insomnia (in study two).

Until now, this study has focused on the *buffering* role of PSS on abusive supervision. However, the results presented regarding insomnia in study two were contrary to those expected, suggesting that PSS may not always reduce the effects of abusive supervision. The literature on *supervisor undermining* has indicated that when a supervisor is intermittently both supportive and undermining, it can confuse a subordinate such that it will exacerbate personal distress and magnify the negative effects of the abuse on the subordinate (Duffy et al., 2002). Interestingly, the results for insomnia in study two matched this theory, as high PSS during times of high abusive supervision actually provided increased negative effects – thus conflicting messages received from a supervisor may actually heighten the effects of an abusive supervisor.

Also referred to as a ‘within-domain exacerbation interaction’, this effect suggests that inconsistent responses from a supervisor may result in insecurity and confusion, thereby increasing the amount of energy required to deal with the

supervisor, as a subordinate may be unsure in which mood they will find their supervisor, and it can be difficult for a subordinate to deal with erratic behaviour (Duffy et al., 2002). This makes sense according to uncertainty management theory, which suggests that individuals like predictability because it gives them a feeling of control, thereby making certain situations more cognitively manageable (Thau, Bennett, Mitchell, & Marrs, 2009). Furthermore, Duffy et al. (2002) found support for the within-domain exacerbation effect, as the combination of high PSS and high supervisor undermining were related to negative employee outcomes. More specifically, employees who experienced both high support and high undermining reported lower commitment, lower mental well-being, decreased job-related self-efficacy, and were more counterproductive. In contrast, when undermining was high and support was low, subordinates experienced lower levels of negative mental health outcomes. Duffy et al. (2002) suggested that the effects of the undermining may be further amplified when the subordinate perceives they are engaging in a more relational (rather than transactional) exchange, or when they are dependent on their supervisor as their main source of support in the workplace. Thus, it seems that PSS may not always provide a buffering effect against abusive supervision in the workplace.

Moreover, this 'within-domain exacerbation interaction' may occur due to cognitive dissonance. If a subordinate has a supervisor who is supportive one minute and abusive the next, it may be that they become unsure what mood they will next find their supervisor, thereby increasing their apprehension as they worry over how to prepare for following interactions with their supervisor. Consequently, the two conflicting supervisor moods may lead to more difficulties for subordinates than if their supervisor were always positive, or always negative.

If their supervisor were always in one mood, the subordinate may be able to better prepare themselves for their interactions with their supervisor. Therefore, if a subordinate knows their supervisor has the potential to be abusive and supportive at different times, it may create a logical inconsistency in their beliefs – or cognitive dissonance. This dissonance may, in turn, create increased unease above those which are created when abusive supervision is high, and PSS is low. Further research is required to investigate this theory.

While this effect was only found for the insomnia outcome in study two (and no other outcomes of either study), it seems important to highlight the potentially volatile nature of the subordinate-supervisor relationship. Indeed, we find support for the within-domain exacerbation interaction towards insomnia, potentially due to cognitive dissonance within subordinates. However, the present study did find support for high PSS moderating the detrimental effects of abusive supervision towards job satisfaction, turnover intentions, anxiety, and depression. Therefore, these results find strong support for the buffering hypothesis, thereby emphasizing the importance of reciprocity and social exchange theory, and suggesting that perhaps ‘good’ can outweigh ‘bad’ behaviour.

4.3 Moderating role of POS

In total, POS only moderated one relationship - between abusive supervision and life satisfaction (study one). Under high POS, respondents with low levels of abusive supervision reported a significant increase in life satisfaction, while respondents with high abusive supervision reported a slight

drop. This shows uniformity with various studies which have found support for the buffering role of POS on work outcomes (Lynch, Eisenberger and Armeli, 1999; Masterson et al., 2000; Rhoades et al., 2001; Allen et al., 2003; Riggle et al., 2009).

Eisenberger et al. (1990) stated that POS should enable an employee to feel incorporated as a member of the organization, thereby contributing to their role status and self-identity. In fact, POS assesses a subordinate's perception of the level of care and concern an organization has for their well-being, and recognition of their contributions (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2002). Thus, high POS may help to fulfil an employee's socio-emotional needs (Armeli et al., 1998). This may explain why under abusive supervision, high POS is linked to increased life satisfaction - as POS buffers subordinates from the deleterious effects associated with abusive supervision. However, as POS only moderated this one relationship between abusive supervision and life satisfaction, it suggests that the organization may play a lesser role in buffering abusive supervision – especially when compared to the supportive nature of a supervisor. This shall be discussed further later.

Interestingly, the results regarding the moderating role of POS on the relationship between abusive supervision and insomnia (study one) were counter to that hypothesized. Under low abusive supervision, subordinates with high POS had significantly lower levels of insomnia compared to subordinates with low POS. However, as abusive supervision increased, subordinates with low levels of POS experienced a significant decrease in insomnia, while those with high POS experienced an increase in the level of insomnia, thereby increasing their level of

insomnia to significantly higher levels than their unsupported counterparts. These results are contrary to those hypothesized. A potential reason for this may be that subordinates that feel unsupported by their organization *and* abused by their supervisor may start to distance themselves and behave in a withdrawn manner - thus they no longer concern themselves with organizational outcomes. According to social exchange theory, subordinates would have no obligation to provide beneficial outcomes, as they believe the organization does not care about them. Thus, subordinates with high abuse and low POS may have reduced insomnia as they tell themselves not to lose sleep over an organization that doesn't care about them. In contrast, a subordinate with high levels of POS may feel obligated to reciprocate to the organization with good performance - however they lose sleep worrying about interacting with their abusive supervisor.

4.4 Cumulative effect of PSS and POS

Various studies have confirmed that PSS and POS are conceptually distinct (Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 1997; Masterson et al., 2000; Wayne et al., 2002). Thus, while a supervisor may be viewed as an agent of the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2002), it seems exchanges with a supervisor are viewed as distinct interactions from those with the organization (Wayne et al., 1997; Hopkins, 2005). Therefore, it was suggested that POS and PSS would combine to create a cumulative effect, providing increased benefits above the role of just one form of support on individual and work outcomes. This hypothesis was supported, as the combination of PSS and POS was linked to increase life satisfaction (study one), job satisfaction (study one), and decreased turnover intentions (study one)

and two).

More specifically, the highest levels of job satisfaction were found under high POS and high PSS. Moreover, subordinates who had high POS and high PSS had the lowest turnover intentions by a large margin in both study one and two. In study two, as POS increased, turnover intentions dropped at a much faster rate for those with high PSS compared to those with low PSS. In fact, in study one, under high POS, those with low PSS experienced an increase in turnover intentions. These results reinforce research which emphasizes the important influence that different forms of support can have on individual and work outcomes (Dawley et al., 2008). In fact, various studies have suggested that support can provide both emotional and informational resources to enable a subordinate to better deal with work challenges, thus increasing their satisfaction levels and reducing their intent to leave the organization when compared to their unsupported counterparts (Quick & Quick, 1984; Wong et al., 2000; Karatepe & Uludag, 2008; Thanacoody et al., 2009).

Interestingly, there was no support for the cumulative effect of PSS and POS towards life satisfaction in study two, and insomnia (study one), with results being counter to that hypothesized. Regarding life satisfaction (study two), under high PSS, there was little difference in levels of life satisfaction, regardless of POS. In fact, the highest levels of life satisfaction were achieved when PSS was low and POS was high. Similar results were found regarding insomnia, as the lowest levels of insomnia were achieved under low PSS and high POS. Furthermore, as PSS increased from low to high, those with low POS experienced a decrease in insomnia, while those with high POS experienced an increase in

insomnia. This supports the findings of Dawley et al. (2008), who found that of three variables (POS, PSS and mentoring), POS had the most significant effect on organizational outcomes, and was the most powerful predictor of the organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. Dawley et al. (2008) suggested that while the point of the study was not to diminish the importance the role of a supervisor plays, it seems that PSS may not be as important as POS in determining organizational outcomes.

Moreover, upon further examination of the literature, it seems that PSS and POS may be compensatory (Maertz Jr et al., 2007). In fact, Maertz Jr et al. (2007) found that the relationship between POS and turnover was stronger under conditions of low PSS, rather than high PSS. Thus, they proposed that PSS and POS are part of a compensatory model. When PSS is high, POS is a less important predictor of outcomes. However, when PSS is low, POS becomes significantly more important, because subordinates must seek out support from the organization itself. Therefore, it seems that employees may require a certain amount of support, which could be provided from; their supervisor, the organization, or a combination of the two (Maertz Jr et al., 2007). This compensatory model may apply to the outcomes in the present study towards life satisfaction (study two) and insomnia (study one), where high POS and low PSS were predictive of the best levels of each outcome.

4.5 Three-way interaction effects

In total, significant three-way interaction effects were found for five of the seven outcomes examined. More specifically, significant three-way interaction

effects were found for: life satisfaction (study one), job satisfaction (study two), anxiety (study one), depression (both study one and two), and OBSE (study two). Overall, the results highlighted that the most desirable levels of all five significant outcomes were achieved under low abusive supervision and high POS. Meanwhile, the most undesirable levels of each outcome were experienced under high abusive supervision, with low PSS, and low POS. This reinforces the power of high levels of abusive supervision and low levels of support.

In particular, the lowest levels of anxiety and depression were achieved under low abusive supervision and high PSS and high POS. Moreover, throughout all significant 3-way interactions of this study, there were increasingly adverse effects for each outcome (including work and mental health outcomes) as abusive supervision increased. Nevertheless, there were some interesting findings. For example, under life satisfaction, all groups indicated a decrease in life satisfaction as abusive supervision increased – this was as expected. However, there was one condition (the individuals who experienced high POS and high PSS) who actually reported an *increase* in life satisfaction, thereby giving them the highest levels of life satisfaction of all the surveyed individuals. Similar results occurred for depression, whereby all subordinates reported an increase in depression as supervision became more abusive - except for the condition which included high POS and high PSS, whereby subordinates reported a decrease in depression. Furthermore, a similar relationship was found for anxiety. These results show strong support for the buffering hypothesis, and also highlight the importance of support in the workplace. Thus, high POS and PSS nullify the effects of abusive supervision, emphasizing the importance of positive social exchanges, and supporting research which has suggested a moderating role of support (Shanock &

Eisenberger, 2006; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

In other three-way interactions, the highest levels of life satisfaction were achieved under low abuse, low PSS and high POS. In contrast, the highest levels of job satisfaction and OBSE were achieved when abuse was low, and POS was high, irrespective of the level of PSS. This supports the negative effect that abusive supervision has on outcomes and highlights that the presence of high POS can buffer a subordinate's outcomes, thereby enabling them to appreciate better outcomes in comparison to their unsupported counterparts. These results also emphasize that the most beneficial level of each significant outcome were always achieved under high POS, often irrespective of the level of PSS. This extends on the research of Dawley et al. (2008), who suggested that POS was the most powerful predictor of outcomes.

The results of the two-way interactions found that PSS buffers abusive supervision more than POS - indeed, five significant interactions versus one. Therefore, based solely on the results of the two-way interactions, we may draw provisional inferences which suggest that PSS is a better predictor of employee outcomes than POS – potentially because of the closer proximity of a supervisor's support (when compared to a whole organization), which may enable more direct and significant effects on an employee's outcomes. However, in the three-way interactions, we were able to test the effects of all three variables *simultaneously*. It has been argued and supported that three-way interactions can be superior to two-way interactions because they uncover effects that would not normally be found (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Fedor et al., 2006). This is certainly true of this study. In fact, the three-way interactions reveal that

when POS and PSS are compared together, it is **POS** which is the dominant support variable - and not PSS. Therefore, this study shows strong support for the research of Fedor et al. (2006), who found that solely conducting two-way interactions would have gained misleading results. Moreover, this study reinforces the importance of conducting three-way interactions, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships at hand.

In fact, POS may be more powerful than PSS, because a subordinate's POS is indicative of how the *whole* organization feels about them, while PSS is simply a representation of one individual. If a subordinate experiences conflict from one individual (their supervisor), it may be easier to mentally manage, as a subordinate can put their abuse down to "one mean employee"; whereas, a lack of support from the whole organization may create deeper feelings of worthlessness. Both POS and PSS have been discussed within the context of reciprocity, and social exchange theory – however, POS goes beyond basic feelings of obligation, as it also helps to fulfil an individual's socio-emotional needs (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Thus in accordance with organizational justice theories, POS may create more long lasting, detrimental effects on employee outcomes. Moreover, should the organization remove their support, it is likely that all employees will feel uncared for, and worthless – both subordinate and supervisors alike. These widespread feelings of insignificance and worthlessness are likely to create a destructive work environment which goes beyond that created under one abusive supervisor.

4.6 Practical Implications

The results of this study emphasize both the deleterious effects associated with abusive supervision in the workplace, and the importance of justice, positive social exchanges, and the norm of reciprocity. As abusive supervision continues to be shown to be a prevalent problem (Tepper, 2007), research has shifted its focus to antecedents, in order to examine whether triggers to abusive supervision could be removed. However, abusive supervision has often been observed as part of a trickle-down model (Tepper et al., 2006; Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Aryee et al., 2007). Thus, rather than being viewed as a single event, the system of social interactions can be likened to a ‘kick-the-dog’ metaphor, using ‘displaced aggression’ as an explanation for the occurrence of abusive supervision (Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Tepper et al., 2006; Aryee et al., 2007). Furthermore, antecedents to abusive supervision include a supervisor’s perception of justice and psychological contract violation (Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Tepper et al., 2006), supervisor disposition (Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Aryee et al., 2007), and subordinate disposition (Tepper et al., 2006). This emphasizes that abusive supervision is made up of a complex web of interactions, thus pinpointing just one specific antecedent may never be possible. As organizations have little control over some of these antecedents (such as an individual’s disposition), it suggests they may need to discover other strategies to reduce abuse.

One could suppose that a solution to this problem would be for an organization to simply dismiss the abusive offender. However, as stated earlier, abusive supervision is characterised by non-physical hostility. Thus it may be hard for high end managers to catch a supervisor engaging in verbal and non-verbal

abuse with their subordinate. Furthermore, abusive supervisors may be in high level positions. From a New Zealand perspective, firing an employee with a lack of proof that such abuse is occurring could be cause for a personal grievance (PG) - or a case with the Employment Relations Authority (ERA) for unjustified dismissal. Furthermore, the Employers and Manufacturers Association (EMA) released a report which stated that employees are more likely to “try their luck” during recessionary times (Employers and Manufacturers Association [EMA], 2010). This suggests firing an alleged abusive supervisor may not be the answer – particularly during the current economic climate.

In fact, based on their annual analysis of decisions made by the ERA, the EMA issued a statement which indicated that the rate of PG cases in New Zealand had risen by 11% last year, in comparison to 2008 (EMA, 2010). Furthermore, the EMA’s analysis found that claims based on unjustified disadvantage were the main reason for the increase – with an increase of 26%, making them nearly half of all PG cases. In New Zealand, the chance of an employer successfully winning a PG case is 41 per cent. Successfully defending a claim cost (on average) almost \$10,000, while the total average cost of unsuccessfully defending a personal grievance claim was \$33,406 (EMA, 2010). Moreover, in 2009, the average award in cases where it was deemed an employee’s feelings had been hurt was a payout of \$5,204. The EMA (2010) stated that PGs were a major headache for employers, and the costs shown above emphasize the high importance for an employer to “get it right” (EMA, 2010). Thus, employers must assess whether the costs of a PG outweigh the costs of an abusive supervisor, as simply firing a ‘suspected’ abusive supervisor may seem out of the question.

Additionally, the 2008 recession saw unemployment sky-rocket, peaking around 17.3% in the U.S. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010), and 7.1% in New Zealand (Department of Labour, 2010). Thus, the nature of the current economic climate means that although subordinates may face abusive supervision, any economic dependence on the organization means they are unlikely to voluntarily leave. When this is combined with literature regarding a subordinates behavioural responses to abusive supervision, this suggests the potential for workplace deviance (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), and counter-productivity (Duffy et al., 2002; Detert et al., 2007) may be high, as according to the norm of reciprocity, subordinates may wish to punish their supervisor for their misconduct in order to restore a balanced social exchange (Tepper et al., 2001; Zellars et al., 2002; Tepper et al., 2006).

The EMA's analysis reveals the high costs associated with an unjustified dismissal, while the high rate of unemployment emphasizes that abused subordinates are likely to feel trapped within an organization. Therefore, organizations must look for other methods of reducing abusive supervision in the workplace. This highlights the importance of the results at hand, whereby support was found for the buffering role of POS and PSS on abusive supervision and outcomes.

Moreover, the results of this study highlights the buffering effect of PSS and POS, the cumulative effect of multiple sources of support, and highlight that the most effective means of support is POS when we are considering the detrimental influence of abusive supervision on a variety of outcomes. These results also show parallels to Dawley et al. (2008), who found that POS was the

most powerful predictor of organizational outcomes - as well as supporting meta-analyses of POS (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). This signals the importance of POS in reducing the harmful effects of abusive supervision in the workplace, and emphasizes that a productive workplace must start with a supportive organization. Various studies have reported a positive relationship of PSS with POS (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Rhoades et al., 2001), thus suggesting that support from the organization and supervisor play a part of a trickle down model (Tepper & Taylor, 2003; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). For example, Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) found a supervisor's POS was related to their subordinate's PSS.

In addition, Tepper and Taylor (2003) found that supervisors who feel treated fairly (procedural justice) feel obliged to reciprocate the organization through better treatment toward their subordinates (Tepper & Taylor, 2003; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). Tepper et al. (2006) suggested that organizations may need to start with the examination and fair treatment of their *supervisors*, in order to reduce hostility in the workplace. Thus, Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) stressed that gaining a supportive work environment and positive co-worker interactions begins with creating a supportive organization; as a subordinate's PSS and POS originates from the support the organization shows its supervisors.

From a practical standpoint, this suggests that organizations should examine the level of POS experienced by subordinates within their firm, and that they should invest in resources which would increase *all* employees' POS. Antecedents of POS include procedural justice (Moorman et al., 1998; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), development of supportive organizational policies, practices, and workplace norms (Stamper & Johlke, 2003; Wayne et al., 1997; Eisenberger

et al., 1997), distribution of discretionary resources and assistance (Shore & Shore, 1995; Eisenberger et al., 1997), favourable job conditions (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), employee characteristics (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), and supervisor support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Therefore, organizations may wish to consider providing such *discretionary* benefits such as competitive pay, training and development opportunities, task variety, promotion and advancement, flexible work schedule, work-family benefits, and other practices that may enhance an employee's POS.

Finally, human resource practitioners need to understand that managers may be viewed as both supportive and abusive (at times) by their subordinates. This highlights the importance of training and performance management and review of supervisors. Continual evaluation (e.g. 360° feedback) may provide clearer evidence of abusive supervision, and provide HR with more timely information, in order to conduct an intervention. Finally, as this study has emphasized the destructive nature of abusive supervision, it suggests the HR managers must pay greater attention to this phenomenon in the New Zealand workplace.

4.7 Strengths

Previous research into abusive supervision has left the potentially mitigating variables (such as PSS and POS) left unexamined. Therefore, this study builds on the developing research field by examining a relationship that has not been studied before. Furthermore, as most research has been conducted in the

United States to date, Tepper (2007) suggested research should be carried out in other countries, in order to build on the generalizability of the research domain. National culture and power distance may also impact the frequency and intensity of abusive supervision, thus indicating that abusive supervision may be experienced differently amongst different cultures. Therefore, as this research has been conducted in a New Zealand context across two samples (both a blue-collar *and* an indigenous group), it provides diversity in its sample, thereby indicating findings in the abusive supervision literature are universally applicable and adding value to the research domain. Moreover, this is the first time indigenous Maori people have been studied in this content domain, further enhancing the contributions of the paper.

In addition, this research may be particularly relevant for the Small-Medium Enterprises (SME's) that dominate much of the NZ business environment. The effects of an abusive supervisor may be amplified in smaller organizations with fewer employees, as the harmful effects of an abusive supervisor may become diluted amongst a larger employee pool. Eisenberger et al. (2002) stated that smaller organizations may have flatter structures, and thus, have less hierarchical levels. They suggested that in these smaller organizations, subordinates may more closely identify with their supervisor and organization as a whole, thus resulting in stronger PSS-POS relationships. Collectivist cultures, such as the indigenous Maori group of this study (Tassell, 2004), may also feel stronger ties to the PSS-POS relationship, as they feel more closely aligned with the organization, treating it more like a family structure. This close identification with the organization may also strengthen the PSS-POS relationship, as a subordinate is more likely to view the supervisor as an agent of the organization

(Eisenberger et al., 2002). Therefore, the findings at hand may be especially important in smaller, collectivist organizations of NZ, however this requires further investigation.

In addition, a further strength of this study is the use of structural equation modelling (SEM). SEM is superior to other data analysis techniques such as multiple regression analysis because all predictor and outcome variables can be tested at the same time. Using this method of analysis enables reassurance that each of the construct items used to measure each variable is unique. Furthermore, the use of SEM aids in showing that abusive supervision, and PSS are related yet distinct constructs. Similarly, these are both distinct from POS. Thus, while it may initially seem counterintuitive to think a supervisor can be both supportive and abusive, the use of SEM enables us to see that both variables can co-exist. This supports Duffy et al. (2002) who examined supervisor undermining (a closely related field to abusive supervision) and supervisor support. As this is the first study to directly examine abusive supervision with PSS, this illustrates a further contribution of the research at hand.

The results of the present study help to show that abusive supervision and PSS are not polar opposites of the spectrum. The mean scores for abusive supervision was below the mid-point of 3.0 for both studies (study one = 2.0, and study two = 1.8), however was higher than those found in other studies ($M < 1.7$, Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2004; Aryee et al, 2007; Burrell et al., 2008; Detert et al., 2007; Zellars et al., 2002), indicating that abusive supervision is a prevalent issue in NZ. The higher rate of abuse may also be due to the occupational group studied, as research conducted thus far has largely focused on a managerial

profession and few studies such as this one have focused on blue-collared workers. Furthermore, regarding PSS, the mean score was above the mid-point of 3.0 for both study one (3.6) and two (4.0), and similarly for POS, where both studies had a mean around the midpoint (study one = 2.8, and study two = 3.6). Therefore, these results suggest that in NZ, supervisors have the ability to be slightly abusive and somewhat supportive. This reinforces the research of Duffy et al. (2002) which suggested that abuse and support could co-exist, particularly when in their mild forms, and this is supported in the present studies.

4.8 Limitations

One limitation of any research conducted based upon self-report data collection is that caution must be taken when interpreting findings. Although confidentiality was ensured, with a subjective and sensitive topic such as abusive supervision, there is a possibility responses could be distorted for fear of being 'found out' by the organization. Furthermore, another problem with solely using self-report data is the potential for common-method variance, thus correlation cannot be asserted as being the equivalent of causation. However, the research at hand involved two studies, and study two also involved a two-wave survey which separated the collection of abusive supervision (survey 1) and outcomes (survey 2), thus reducing the chance of common method variance. We modified the data collection methodology in study two to address this issue somewhat. This suggests that the resulting interaction effects are due to differences in the data, rather than common method variance.

A further limitation of this study is that the samples were relatively small for both study one (N = 100) and study two (N = 218). Therefore, while the results shed light on abusive supervision in a NZ context, the small sample may prevent the results from being totally representative of the underlying population. The research was conducted across two studies with a variety of ethnic groups, and study two includes numerous occupations and organizations. Furthermore, as the results found largely supported those found in the Western-based abusive supervisor content domain thus far, it seems the results of this study are still valuable. Nevertheless, further research is required to assess the generalizability of the findings.

In addition, while the research at hand is beneficial for occupations which often encounter abuse, the literature regarding support in occupations which experience less conflict has remained largely unexamined. Indirectly, the buffering hypothesis suggests that support may be less beneficial for employees who are working in a job that is not comprised of any conflict - as without conflict, there would be nothing for the support to mitigate. This begs the question whether support would be beneficial in organizations which do not require buffering from such effects. While this study examined high and low abuse, the fact is, the research did not examine employees with *no* abuse. It may be that all employees experience some form of abuse. However, up till now, most of the research conducted regarding PSS and POS has focussed on utilizing support as a buffer from negative effects in the workplace.

Therefore, adopting this approach in an organization would be similar to having an 'ambulance at the bottom of the cliff' – thereby only providing support once employees are experiencing high anxiety, no longer enjoying their jobs, and

wanting to leave the organization. This suggests that it may be beneficial for *future* research to examine the role of support in organizations which are not dominated by stress, conflict, or abuse. This would encourage a shift from the current mindset of using support in a reflexive manner, to one of prevention. This means changing the focus to one more aligned with that of positive psychology, where one promotes good mental health, rather than just treating mental illness. Should supervisor and organization support create further additional beneficial outcomes, it would suggest that support is important in all organizations, irrespective of the amount of conflict subordinates experience.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

Organizational justice theories have been presented as a framework for illustrating the occurrence of abusive supervision in the workplace. Direct effects of abusive supervision were significant for all seven examined outcomes, thereby emphasizing the deleterious effects associated with abusive supervision in the workplace, and illustrates that abusive supervision signals an inequitable social exchange. Moreover, the NZ sample consisted of two studies, with study two involving a two-wave survey of an indigenous group. As the effects of abusive supervision have been studied almost exclusively in the USA thus far, these results illustrate that they are generalizable to a NZ context. Furthermore, the broad types of outcomes studied here, including job and life satisfaction, turnover intentions, mental health, and OBSE (study two only), highlight the insidious nature of abusive supervision.

The main focus of the study involved examining the moderating role of both PSS and POS on abusive supervision in the workplace, in order to observe whether support could act as a buffer to abuse in the workplace. As this relationship has been unexamined to date, this highlights a useful contribution of this study to the research domain. Vast amounts of literature have focussed on the potentially buffering role of support perceptions between work difficulties and organizational outcomes. Support from an organization enables employees to feel cared about, increasing their general sense of well-being, and thus, reducing the harmful effects of individual abusive supervisors. Moreover, support from a supervisor restores a balanced social exchange, as support may provide a subordinate with coping mechanisms which enables them to better deal with

workplace difficulties. This would suggest that PSS and POS may aid in restoring the balance under a negative social exchange experienced under abusive supervision.

The results found significant three-way interaction effects between abusive supervision, PSS, POS for five of the seven observed outcomes. Under high abusive supervision, the most beneficial levels of life satisfaction, depression, and anxiety, were achieved when PSS and POS were both high, signalling the cumulative benefits of multiple sources of support. Moreover, under high abusive supervision, the best levels of job satisfaction and OBSE were achieved when POS was high, irrespective of the level of PSS. Therefore, these results support research which has indicated that when compared to other support variables, POS is the most powerful predictor of organizational outcomes (Dawley et al., 2008). Thus, it seems that POS may be most instrumental in reducing the harmful effects of abusive supervision in the workplace when tested in combination with PSS. In addition, as abusive supervision, PSS and POS have all been linked to trickle-down models, the results highlight that organizations should implement strategies for increasing *all* employees POS – as a productive workplace must start with a supportive organization.

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