

Abusive Leadership and Employee Silence: Interactional Justice as a Mediator

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the associations between interactional justice and two forms of silence such as acquiescent and deviant and the mediating role of interactional justice on the relationship between abusive leadership and silence (such as acquiescent and deviant). We gathered replies from 615 full time employees working in manufacturing industry. We utilized the structural equation modeling method to test the hypotheses. We advise use of suitable punishment methods to reduce the mistreatment of supervisors and treat employees with respect and fairness to enhance employees' perceived interactional justice. Moreover, we suggest companies encourage employees to take part in decision-making processes and create communication methods to increase communication quality. The findings suggested that abusive leadership mitigates employees' perception of interactional justice and interactional justice reduces acquiescent silence. Moreover, the results revealed that interactional justice mediated the link between abusive leadership and acquiescent silence. Further, the findings indicated an insignificant association between interactional justice and deviant silence. This study aimed to examine the link between interactional justice and two forms of silence such as acquiescent and deviant and the mediating role of interactional justice on the link between abusive leadership and acquiescent and deviant silence.

Keywords: Leadership, Abusive Leadership, Interactional Justice, Acquiescent silence, Deviant Silence

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INTRODUCTION

Employee silence is defined as “the intentionally withholding of work-related ideas, information and opinions” (Van Dyne et al., 2003, p. 1363). It is about withholding any sincere expression of the person’s behavioral, cognitive, and/or emotive assessments of one’s situation (Kassandrinou et al., 2023). Employees’ intentional silence can be a big risk for organization’s success and hinder the process of development and change (Morrison and Milliken, 2000) because silence negatively influences innovation and exploration (Milliken and Lam, 2009) and can trigger corruption (Ashforth and Anand, 2003). Therefore, it is significant to figure out the factors that encourage employees’ silence in organizations.

Leadership style is perceived to be one of the crucial predictors of employee silence. Specifically, abusive leadership has a critical role in fostering silence (Park et al., 2016; Tariq, Amad and Inayat, 2021; Montgomery et al., 2023). When supervisors are abusive, rude to employees and do not treat them fairly, employees are less likely to perceive interactional justice by believing that supervisors do not treat them with consideration and kindness (Wang and Jiang, 2015). According to the perspectives of the Social Exchange Theory, individuals reciprocate the treatment that they receive from others accordingly (Blau, 1964). Actually, employees search for interactional justice in their relationship with their leaders and reciprocate accordingly (Köksal and Mert, 2024). Therefore, we believe that when individuals do not experience interactional justice because of abusive supervisors’ behavior, individuals are more likely to engage in deviant silence by intentionally withholding information to harm other individuals or their organization. Thus, we believe that interactional justice can be a significant mechanism that explains the link between abusive leadership and employees’ deviant silence.

Not all employees who are mistreated engage in deviance behavior or retaliate (Tepper et al., 2001). According to Whiteside and Barclay (2013) individuals who experience injustice may perceive that they cannot make meaningful difference in their organization because their efforts are not effectively caught by others, and therefore; they are more likely to have acquiescent silence that refers to withholding relevant opinions and suggestions based on the resignation and submission (Pinder and Harlos,

2001; Van Dyne et al., 2003). Hence, the relationship between abusive leadership and acquiescent silence can be also explained by interactional justice.

Despite the fact that several studies have examined silence, very little is known on the relationship between interactional justice and acquiescent silence; the association between interactional justice and deviant silence and the mediating role of interactional justice on the link between abusive leadership and acquiescent and deviant silence. For example, Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008) studied the relationship between procedural justice and employee silence. They focused on the role of procedural justice in influencing the unitary construct of silence which assess the silence behavior itself and evaluates the frequency of being silent rather than the intentions of individuals in remaining silent. According to Brinsfield, (2013) investigating the silence behavior itself is not sufficient because it does not express the motives of individuals in refraining themselves from information sharing. Wang and Jiang (2015) investigated the relationships among abusive leadership, interactional justice and prosocial silence and voice. Despite the fact that Wang and Jiang (2015) investigated the link between interactional justice and prosocial silence, they did not examine the association between interactional justice and acquiescent and deviant silence. Rafferty and Restubog (2011) examined the link between abusive leadership, meaning of work, interactional justice, organizational based self-esteem, prosocial voice and silence. Later, Oyewunmi and Oyewunmi (2022); Lee, Kang and Choi (2022); Khalid, Malik and Atta (2024) empirically confirmed the negative effect of abusive leadership on silence behaviors of employees. While these researchers add valuable contribution to the literature, they also overlooked the role interactional justice in impacting on acquiescent and deviant silence.

Thus, this work targeted the existing gaps in the related literature by investigating the relationship between interactional justice and acquiescent silence; examining the association between interactional justice and deviant silence; and exploring the role of interactional justice in explaining the link between abusive leadership and two forms of silence namely acquiescent and deviant silence. We believe that our study will enable managers to create and in-depth understanding for reasons of people in withholding information when they experience interactional injustice and provides knowledge on the form of silence that is fostered by abusive leadership via interactional justice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological safety has been identified as a critical factor influencing silence/voice behaviors because it reflects the idea that an employee's participation in "risky" behaviors, such as raising concerns, will not hurt them and will, hopefully, benefit the organization and their own well-being (Kassandrinou et al., 2023). The reasons why individuals refrain themselves from sharing ideas and work-related concerns are related with expected response by other members. For example, individuals who do not want to be blamed as a conveyer of negative news hesitate to share bad news with others (Conlee and Tesser, 1973). Additionally, employees who have a fear from superiors' negative reaction for sharing information may withhold information. Moreover, when individuals perceive that managers do not value shared ideas, they tend to refrain themselves from information sharing (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Thus, we assumed that managers' behaviour influences individual's decisions to withhold information or to share information.

Silence behaviour itself does not express the intention to remain silent per se; thus to have a comprehensive knowledge about silence, it is not sufficient to assess silence behaviour based on observation (Brinsfield, 2013). Hence, previous studies suggested a multidimensional construct of silence that explain the motives of individuals to remain silent (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Van Dyne et al., 2003; Brinsfield, 2013). Pinder and Harlos (2001) introduced two forms of silence such as acquiescent and quiescent. Dyne et al. (2003) extended Pinder and Harlos's study by suggesting acquiescent, prosocial and defensive silence. Brinsfield (2013) also extended the study of Pinder and Harlos by defining five forms of silence such as deviant, acquiescent, relational, ineffectual, diffident and disengaged silence. Deviant silence is related with intentionally withholding necessary information to harm other individuals or organization; acquiescent silence is associated with withholding information based on resignation; relational silence is related with remaining silent not to harm the relationship with others; defensive silence can be explained as the situation when individuals conceal information, thoughts and feelings when they fear; diffident silence refers to refraining from information sharing because of a lack of confidence; ineffectual silence occurs when individuals refrain from explaining themselves with the belief that explaining themselves does not

change anything; disengaged silence is withholding information because of uncoupling from work roles. In our study we investigated acquiescent and deviant silence as the consequences of interactional justice because interactional justice gives individuals an impression that they can make a meaningful difference in their organization by reducing acquiescent silence (Whiteside and Barclay, 2013) and it negatively influences deviant behavior (Thau et al., 2009).

There are three dimensions to the justice construct: Distributive justice that refers to the inequality in rewards; procedural justice that is described as the fairness during the decision making process (Colquitt, 2001) and interactional justice that refers to the perceived fairness of interpersonal treatment at workplace (Reb et al., 2006; Leineweber et al., 2020). In the daily work environment, the elements of interactional justice are more common than the elements of distributive and procedural justice dimensions and therefore individuals assess organizational exchanges based on interactional justice (Roy et al., 2012). Hence, interactional justice plays critical role in shaping employee behaviour (Skarlicki and Folger, 2004; Khan, Bell and Quratulain, 2022). In the extant literature there are considerable amount of empirical proof revealing negative attitudes of leaders on greater employee silence behaviour (Ahmad et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2023).

Employees at the workplace are involved in various interpersonal dynamics with their coworkers, supervisors, and subordinates for informational and relational needs, and unfavourable treatment that cannot satisfy these needs through interaction can lead to perceived interactional injustice by employees (Rupp and Spencer, 2006). Previous studies have shown that when individuals feel that they are not treated with dignity and respect, when their personal needs are overlooked, when a necessary information to conduct a task is conveyed or withheld in an unreasonable manner, a perceived interpersonal unfairness rises (Bies and Moag, 1986; Colquitt, 2001; Lamertz, 2002; Rupp and Spencer, 2006). For instance, inflicting personal attacks or reproaching an individual without specific reason can lead to perceived injustice by a victim. Injustice perception from unfavourable treatment can be predicted when a relationship involves hierarchical difference between an inflictor and a victim. In case in which an inflictor is in the higher position, a victim is more likely to be power-

dependent, and the power-asymmetry makes a victim difficult to negate or neutralize the unfavourable treatment by an inflictor (Wang and Jiang, 2015).

HYPOTHESES

We believe that abusive leadership can significantly affect employee's interactional injustice perception. The power-dependence and power-asymmetry between supervisor and employee provide an environment where an employee becomes vulnerable to a supervisor who exert hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours. At the workplace, employees rely on their supervisors not only for informational needs such as task guidance but also for relational needs such as a sense of affiliation and an appropriate treatment as human beings (Bies and Moag, 1986; Wang and Jiang, 2015). Abusive leadership involves rudeness, hostility, public criticism, and loud and angry tantrum (Wang et al., 2012). The sustained display of such hostile behaviours makes subordinates feel that he or she is not appropriately treated with dignity and respect and makes it difficult for a victim to form a sense of belonging with a supervisor. Moreover, because abusive supervisors often lacks honesty, adequacy, or justification for hostile communication and are less likely to provide feedback or support to their subordinates, informational injustice by subordinates rises (Colquitt, 2001; Rupp and Spencer, 2006; Alajhar, Bajaba and Yaqub, 2024). Because both interpersonal and informational justices are not met, perceived interactional injustice is expected from subordinates experiencing abusive leadership. Thus, we proposed that;

H₁: There is a negative relationship between abusive leadership and interactional justice

As noted earlier, where there is interactional justice, individuals are treated with dignity, respect and politeness (Colquitt, 2001). When the members of organizations feel interactional justice in their workplace, they perceive that they are respected and become stimulated to identify with their organization (Huang and Huang, 2016). Similarly, Patel et al. (2012) stated that interactional justice increases individuals' identification with their organization. When individuals identify themselves with their organization, they tend to perceive the problems of organization as their

own and to realize that employees concern on organizational issues will be considered seriously (Huang and Huang, 2016). Moreover, individuals who experience justice believe that they can make a change in their workplace and therefore, they tend to have a lower level of acquiescent silence (Whiteside and Barclay, 2013). Hence, when there is interactional justice, individuals are less prone to refrain themselves from disclosure of information with the belief that they cannot make a change in their workplace.

On the contrary, individuals experience interactional injustice when they are not treated with respect and dignity and when their personal needs are ignored by other members (Lamertz, 2002). According to Demiralay and Lorcú (2015) individuals who work in an unjust environment, are more likely to refrain themselves from sharing information. We believe that experiencing injustice leads individuals to remain silent based on the belief that making efforts to make change is futile. In other words, when managers do not treat employees with kindness and consideration and are not sensitive to employees' personal needs, individuals tend to withhold themselves from disclosure of information based on the belief that they cannot change a situation and make difference in their workplace. Thus, we believed that interactional justice reduces employee acquiescent silence and proposed following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a negative relationship between interactional justice and acquiescent silence.

According to the perspective of the Social Exchange Theory, individuals reciprocate the treatment (bad or good) that they receive from others (Blau, 1964). More specifically, individuals respond to the treatment that they received from others accordingly – for unfavourable treatment individuals reciprocate unfavourably and for favourable treatment respond favourably (Tepper et al., 2009).

When managers do not treat individuals with respect and fairly individual's belief in fair treatment reduces (Tepper, 2000) and subordinates react negatively to compensate the mistreatment (Thau et al., 2009). Eventually, individuals who believe that there is unfairness tend to experience a feeling of resentment and outrage (Liu and Ding, 2012) and are more likely to enact deviance behavior (Aquino et al., 2001). Previous

studies (Wang and Jiang, 2015; Rafferty and Restubog, 2011) have indicated that interactional injustice fosters employee silence. We believed that the silence that is fostered by interactional injustice can be a deviant silence. We assumed that individuals experiencing interactional injustice are more likely to retaliate by performing acts which are unlikely to be punished and judged by others by withholding information (Tepper et al., 2009). In other words, when superiors do not treat their subordinates fairly and with respect, individuals tend to retaliate by remaining silent to purposefully harm their organization or another individual. Thus, we believed that interactional injustice fosters deviant silence and proposed the following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a negative relationship between interactional justice and deviant silence.

Abusive leadership fosters employee silence (Park et al., 2016). We believed that this link between abusive leadership and employee silence is explained by interactional justice.

When supervisors ridicule employees and are rude to them, employees are less likely to feel interactional justice by perceiving that their supervisors do not treat them with kindness and consideration. Consequently, individuals who experience interactional injustice tend to refrain themselves from information sharing because superiors are not open for concerns and proposals. Thus, interactional injustice that is triggered by abusive leadership can foster acquiescent silence. Hence, interactional justice can be a significant mechanism that explains the links between abusive leadership and employees' acquiescent silence.

Moreover, individuals who perceive that they are mistreated because of supervisor's abusive behavior, tend to experience frustration (Tepper et al., 2009) and engage in deviant silence by withholding information that might hurt other individuals or organizations. Hence, we believed that when a supervisor puts employees down in front of others and makes negative comments about employees to others, employees are more likely feel resentment and mistreatment which encourage them to retaliate against the organization by withholding information. Hence, we assumed that interactional justice mediated the links between abusive leadership and employee silence such as acquiescent and deviant and proposed the following hypotheses:

- H₄:** Interactional justice mediates the relationship between abusive leadership and acquiescent silence.
- H₅:** Interactional justice mediates the relationship between abusive leadership and deviant silence.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted among 615 highly skilled full-time employees of manufacturing companies in South Korea. Researchers randomly selected survey participants among the employees of companies and requested the management of organizations to invite selected employees to take part in the survey. The surveys were conducted in small group sessions in each company. Researchers provided verbal and written assurances of the confidentiality of responses. Moreover, to ensure confidentiality of responses, participants were not asked to identify themselves in the survey forms. Survey participants answered the questions pertaining to abusive leadership, interactional justice, acquiescent and deviant silence. We had 615 responses, but we had to exclude 162 of them because of incomplete data; thus, we received 453 usable responses. The aggregate proportion of replies was 73.6%. Men comprised 63.6 percent of the 453 those who responded, whereas women brought up 36.4 percent. 19 percent of the general population was between the ages of 25 and 35, 35.8 percent was between the years of 36 and 45, 30.7 percent was between the years of 46 and 55, and 14.5 percent was between the ages of 56 and 65.

Measures

Professional translators translated the questionnaire from English into Korean language. To ensure the accuracy of the translation, we backtranslated the items into English as recommended by Brislin (1993). In addition, bilingual experts repeated the assessment process until they discovered no further mistakes in translation so as to assess the semantic suitability and comparability of measures (Schwab, 2005). A five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 meaning "strongly agree," was used to score each item on the scale in this study.

To measure abusive leadership, 13 items were adapted from Tepper (2000). Example items from this scale included “My leader ridicules me,” “My leader tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid” and “My leader expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason”.

Interactional Justice was assessed using 9 items (e.g. “When decisions are made about my job, my leader treats me with respect and dignity”, “When decisions are made about my job, my leader treats me with kindness and consideration” and “When decisions are made about my job, my leader shows concern for my rights as an employee”) from Niehoff and Moorman (1993).

The acquiescent silence (e.g. “I remain silent at work because I will not find a sympathetic ear, anyway”, “I remain silent at work because my leaders are not open to proposals, concerns, or the like” and “I remain silent at work because nothing will change, anyway”) was measured using Knoll and Van Dick (2013) three-item scale.

Deviant silence was measured using 5 items from Brinsfield, (2013). Example items from this scale included “I remained silent to purposefully harm another individual”, “I remained silent to retaliate against the organization” and “I remained silent to make management look bad”

In this study, given the potential impact on information sharing, participants' gender, age, and work experience were controlled for as in previous studies (Chan, 2014; Dedahanov et al., 2016). Thus, we also controlled for respondents' age, work experience, and gender (that was encoded as a dummy variable with values of 0 for women and 1 for male).

Common method bias test

To evaluate the common method bias effect, we employed Harman's one-factor test as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003). All continuous variables were included in order to do an exploratory factor analysis. The presumptions of Harman's one-factor test suggested that either just one variable will come up in the outcomes or an arbitrary factor will account for the vast majority of the covariance. No single component jumped out in the results, neither was there a general factor that accounted most of the

variance. Unrotated factor analysis yielded four parts, the greatest of which made up 29.406 percent of the variance. Moreover, we assessed common method bias effect by conducting confirmatory factor analysis. In conducting confirmatory factor analysis, we combined all items into a single factor. The results revealed a poor model for a single factor. Comparative fit index (CFI) = .305; the Tucker Lewis index (TLI) = .256; the Goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.298; and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.210.

RESULTS

To assess the measurement model and the viability of the hypotheses, we used AMOS 21. Previous studies (Kline, 2010; Hooper et al., 2008) recommended assessing χ^2 -test goodness-of-fit indices, such as CFI, GFI, modified goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), RMR, RMSEA, and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), as a way to assess the model fit. Thus, we utilized (χ^2) CFI, GFI, AGFI, RMR, RMSEA, and SRMR to determine the overall model fit in the course of our study. Acceptable model fit is demonstrated by CFI and GFI values above 0.90 and RMSEA and SRMR levels less than 0.06 and 0.05. A strong correlation to the data was determined by all of the goodness-of-fit indices in our study ($\chi^2=834.729$; $\chi^2/df=1.906$; CFI=.970; GFI=.890; AGFI=.868; RMR=.058; RMSEA=.045; SRMR=.0296).

By evaluating discriminant and convergent validity, we assessed construct validity. The degree to which the items of the constructs that ought to be related is known as convergent validity (Wang et al., 2014; Dedahanov, 2017). By evaluating the factor loadings and composite reliability, convergent validity was investigated. The findings indicated that composite reliabilities and factor loadings both exceeded the required cutoffs of 0.80 and 0.60, correspondingly (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Our model thus fulfilled the standards for convergent validity.

In the words of Hair et al. (2010), discriminant validity is the degree to which the evaluations for multiple latent constructs differ from one another. We used the average variance extracted (AVE) to evaluate the discriminant validity. Discriminant validity can be demonstrated when the

squared correlation among a construct and other constructs is greater than 0.5 and the values of the AVE for every construct are higher than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). The results indicated that the inverse squared correlation among each construct and the remaining constructs and the AVE values of the constructs were greater than the cutoff. Therefore, the measures exhibited discriminant validity.

Table 1: Factor Analysis

Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	CR values
My leader ridicules me	.791				
My leader tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid	.673				
My leader gives me the silent treatment	.689				
My leader puts me down in front of others	.677				
My leader invades my privacy	.741				
My leader reminds me of my past mistakes and failures	.764				
My leader does not give me credit for jobs requiring a lot of effort	.756				
My leader blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment	.733				
My leader breaks promises he/she makes	.757				
My leader expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason	.741				0.939
My leader makes negative comments about me to others	.774				
My leader is rude to me	.741				
My leader does not allow me to interact with my coworkers.	.730				
When decisions are made about my job, my leader treats me with kindness and consideration.		.930			
When decisions are made about my job, my leader treats me with respect and dignity.		.764			
When decisions are made about my job, my leader is sensitive to my personal needs.		.834			
When decisions are made about my job, my leader deals with me in a truthful manner.		.748			
When decisions are made about my job, my leader shows concern for my rights as an employee.		.853			
Concerning decisions made about my job, the the leader discusses the implications of the decisions with me.		.847			
The leader offers adequate justification for decisions made about my job.		.836			
When making decisions about my job, the leader offers explanations that make sense to me.		.880			0.958
My leader explains very clearly any decision made about my job		.934			

Table 2 shows standard deviation values, mean values, AVE and correlation values between the constructs. The results demonstrated that acquiescent silence was negatively correlated with interactional justice ($r = -0.205$, $p < 0.01$) and positively correlated with abusive leadership ($r = 0.190$, $p < 0.01$) and deviant silence ($r = 0.134$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, AVE and Correlations

	Variables	Mean	SD	AVE	1	2	3	4
1	Abusive Leadership	3.195	1.068	.542	1			
2	Interactional Justice	3.149	1.213	.721	-.231**	1		
3	Acquiescent Silence	3.057	1.422	.836	.190**	-.205**	1	
4	Deviant Silence	3.199	1.299	.764	.023	.009	.134**	1

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Analysis

To assess the validity of suggested hypotheses, we utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) procedures with maximum likelihood estimation. The SEM analysis revealed a good model fit, as judged from the goodness-of-fit indices ($\chi^2 = 947.223$; $\chi^2/df = 1.780$; CFI = .969; GFI = .888; AGFI = .868; RMR = .071; RMSEA = .042; SRMR = .0367).

The findings suggested that abusive leadership was negatively associated with interactional justice ($\beta = -.260$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, H1 was supported. Moreover, SEM analysis revealed that interactional justice was negatively related with acquiescent silence ($\beta = -.181$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, H2 was also supported. In H3 we hypothesized that interactional justice has a negative relationship with deviant silence. The results demonstrated that the relationship between interactional justice and deviant silence was insignificant ($\beta = .010$, $p > 0.05$). Hence, H3 was not supported.

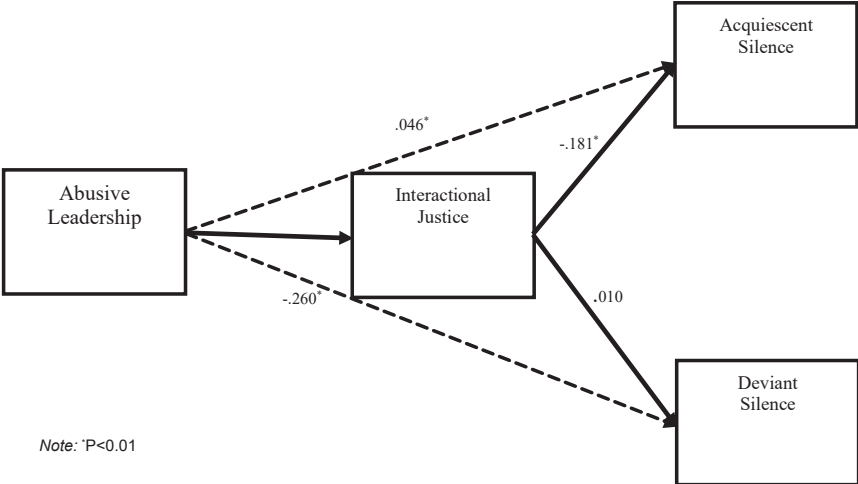


Figure 1: Name of Figure (Source: ARI, 2018)

To evaluate the mediation, we utilized a bootstrapping procedure (Preacher and Hayes, 2008) with maximum likelihood estimation in Amos 21. The bootstrapping analysis demonstrated that interactional justice mediated the link between abusive leadership and acquiescent silence ($\beta=0.046$, $p<0.01$; $CI_{0.95} = 0.019, 0.088$). Meanwhile, results from bootstrapping test indicated that interactional justice did not mediate the link between abusive leadership and deviant silence ($\beta = -0.003$, $p > 0.05$; $CI_{0.95} = -0.030, 0.022$). Thus, H4 was supported and H5 was not. Further, findings suggested that control variables such as gender age and work experience of employees did not impact their silence.

Table 3: Standardized Structural Estimates from the Structural Model

Path	Standardized Coefficient	T-value
<i>Direct effects</i>		
Abusive Leadership → Interactional Justice	-0.260	-4.825 [*]
Interactional Justice → Acquiescent Silence	-0.181	-3.450 [*]
Interactional Justice → Deviant Silence	0.010	0.195
Age → Acquiescent Silence	-0.069	-0.492
Age → Deviant Silence	-0.072	-0.513
Gender → Acquiescent Silence	-0.057	-0.417
Gender → Deviant Silence	-0.206	0.318

Work Experience → Acquiescent Silence	-.022	-.426
Work Experience → Deviant Silence	.046	.956
<i>Indirect effects</i>		
	p-value	Standardized Coefficient
Abusive Leadership → Interactional Justice → Acquiescent S.	.001	.046 [*]
Abusive Leadership → Interactional Justice → Deviant S.	.781	-.003

Note: ^{*}P<0.01

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our study extends the literature by investigating the link between interactional justice and acquiescent and deviant silence and the mediating role of interactional justice on the associations between abusive leadership and two forms of silence such as acquiescent and deviant. The empirical findings suggested the following.

Although a number of studies (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008; Wang and Jiang, 2015; Rafferty and Restubog, 2011;) investigated employee silence, there was a lack of knowledge on the link between interactional justice and acquiescent and deviant silence. For example, previous research examined the links between procedural justice and the unitary construct of silence (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008) and the relationships between interactional justice and prosocial silence (Wang and Jiang, 2015; Rafferty and Restubog, 2011). Hence, our study extends the literature by examining the links between interactional justice and acquiescent and deviant silence. The findings suggest that interactional justice is negatively related to acquiescent silence. In other words, when decisions are made about employees' jobs, supervisors are not sensitive to the personal needs of employees and employees are not treated with kindness and consideration, individuals tend to refrain themselves from information sharing based on the belief that speaking up does not change the situation. Thus, interactional injustice fosters acquiescent silence whereas interactional justice mitigates it. Based on this finding, we confirm that employees who experience interactional justice believe that they can make a meaningful difference in their organization and therefore, are less likely to refrain themselves from information sharing. Moreover, the SEM analysis demonstrate

insignificant relationship between interactional justice and deviant silence. That is, experiencing interactional injustice does not influence individuals' intention to purposefully harm or retaliate their supervisor or organization by withholding information. The potential reason for this insignificant relationship is that South Korea has a high-power distance oriented culture that refers to the degree of accepting hierarchical power inequalities between superiors and subordinates (Hofstede, 1980). According to Chao et al., (2011) individuals from high power distance oriented cultures are less likely to have intention to commit deviant behavior. Hence, cultural values might hinder individuals from having a deviant intention in withholding information. Further, despite the number of studies on abusive leadership and silence, very little was known how abusive leadership fosters acquiescent and deviant silence via interactional justice. The results indicated that interactional justice mediates the links between abusive leadership and acquiescent silence. That is, when supervisors are abusive, they disrespect employees and treat them unfairly. Consequently, individuals experiencing interactional injustice from abusive supervisors might perceive that making difference in their organization is futile and therefore, become reluctant to share their concerns by having acquiescent silence. Hence, interactional justice plays crucial role in mediating the links between abusive leadership and acquiescent silence.

Practical Implications

Employee silence can be a great obstacle for innovation (Milliken and Lam, 2009), development and change (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Initially our study demonstrated that interactional justice is harmed by abusive leadership. Thus, for the purpose to minimize supervisor misbehavior and improve personnel psychological security, we suggest employing suitable punishment techniques (Li, 2024). Stated differently, organizations need to offer employees a clear guidance regarding the implications of violating business regulations and laws. Furthermore, this authorized punishment could reduce extra illegal behaviors of managers while providing employees a sense of safety and fairness.

Second, results demonstrated that interactional justice fosters acquiescent silence. Hence, we suggest organizations share more information and treat employees with respect and dignity and fairness to enhance

individual's perceived interactional justice. Moreover, to reduce acquiescent silence we recommend organizations solicit individual's opinions in decision-making process (Dedahanov et al., 2015). Further, organizations can establish communication channels to foster communication between management and subordinates.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the fact that our work extends the study by exploring the relationships between interactional justice and acquiescent silence and the mediating role of interactional justice on the link between abusive leadership and acquiescent silence, it has several limitations. First, our study investigated the association between interactional justice and only two forms of silence such as acquiescent and deviant. Thus, we recommend that future studies examine the link between interactional justice and other forms of silence such as ineffectual, relational, disengaged and diffident silence (Brinsfield, 2013). In addition, the connection between abusive leadership and two kinds of silence, such as deviant and acquiescent, were just investigated in our study in connection with interactional justice. For that reason, we suggest that future scholars examine distributive and procedural justice. Third, personal information that assesses respondents' perceptions were used in our study. We suggest that for the purpose of mitigating the common method bias effect, subsequent research use employee-supervisor dyads. Fourth, because the study was solely carried out in the Republic of Korea, there could be further restrictions to the results' generalizability. Therefore, this sort of study should be performed in different countries to produce more general decisions.

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