What Goes Around Comes Around: Anticipated Guilt Explains Employee Deviance in Response to Supervision Styles

This chapter is based on: Sanders, Wisse, & Van Yperen. What goes around comes around: Anticipated guilt explains employee deviance in response to supervision styles *Manuscript in preparation.*
Abstract

Employee deviance has costly consequences for organizations. Previous correlational research suggests that this undesirable employee behavior may have its roots in how employees themselves are treated by their supervisors: abusive supervisors elicit employee deviance, whereas ethical supervisors do not. The present research puts forward the anticipation of experiencing guilt as a mechanism explaining why employees deviate against abusive bosses but not against ethical ones. In a series of three studies we demonstrate that leaders’ behavior (abusive vs. ethical) is a precursor of employees’ supervisor-directed deviance and that employees’ anticipatory guilt mediates this relationship. Our findings add to the literature by providing causal evidence for the relationship between supervisor behavior, anticipated guilt, and employee deviance, and suggest that affective forecasting can be considered a critical factor in explaining employee behavior.

Keywords: abusive supervision; ethical supervision; anticipated guilt; supervisor-directed deviance
Employee workplace deviance poses a serious threat to the functioning of organizations and its members. The financial costs associated with employee deviance are estimated to range up to billions of dollars per year in the United States alone (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Previous research demonstrates that no less than one in three employees aggress against their supervisor and feel justified doing so (Baron & Neuman, 1998). This supervisor-directed deviance is defined as purposeful employee behavior that violates organizational norms and is intended to harm the supervisor (Hershcovis et al., 2007), and includes behaviors such as acting rudely towards the supervisor or gossiping about him or her (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007).

We propose that employees’ lack of anticipated guilt may explain why they intentionally engage in supervisor-directed deviance. Guilt is a powerful emotion that, particularly in its anticipated form, may help people to exert self-control and to refrain themselves from acts that harm others (Baumeister, Vohs, DeWall, & Zhang, 2007). Whether employees anticipate feeling guilty about deviating against their supervisor may be determined by the treatment they receive from their supervisor. Based on affective forecasting (Gilbert, Pinel, Wilson, Blumberg, & Wheatley, 1998), reciprocity principles (Gouldner, 1960) and theory on self-regulation impairment (Thau & Mitchell, 2010), we argue that those employees who receive abusive supervision may anticipate feeling less guilty about inflicting harm on their supervisor than those who are led by an ethical supervisor, and, as a consequence, they may be more likely to show supervisor-directed deviance.

Although various previous studies show that abusive supervision is positively related to employees’ supervisor directed deviance (e.g., Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne, & Marinova, 2012; Mayer, Thau, Workman, Van Dijke, & De Cremer, 2012; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007) and a handful of studies show that ethical leadership is negatively related to employees’ supervisor directed deviance (Mayer, Kuenzi, & Greenbaum, 2010), little is known about why this is the case. In testing the mediating role of anticipated
guilt, we aim to provide insight in the mechanism explaining the relationship between supervision styles and employee-deviance. Moreover, the present research aims to contribute to the literature by testing whether supervision styles indeed cause employees’ supervisor-directed deviance. This is important because causal evidence for the order of the effects is scarce (Lian, Ferris, Morrison, & Brown, 2014). Finally, so far, only a few studies have tested the negative association between ethical supervision and supervisor-directed deviance (e.g., Mayer et al., 2010). As such, another aim of the present research is to provide empirical evidence for the causal effects of both abusive and ethical supervision on supervisor-directed deviance.

**Anticipated Guilt as a Factor Inhibiting Behavior that may Harm Others**

Drawing on different theories and perspectives such as social exchange theory, (Homans, 1961) and self-regulation impairment (Thau & Mitchell, 2010), several scholars have argued that employees’ supervisor-directed deviance is a direct consequence of supervisors’ treatment (e.g., Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Specifically, *abusive supervision*, which has been defined as “the subordinates perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact” (Tepper, 2000, p. 178), is positively associated with employees’ supervisor-directed deviance (e.g., Mayer et al., 2012; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). In contrast, *ethical leadership*, which has been defined as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005, p. 120), is negatively associated with employees’ supervisor-directed deviance (Mayer et al., 2010).

Although some research has been devoted to explaining why employees deviate against abusive supervisors (e.g., Lian et al., 2014; Liu,
Kwan, Wu, & Wu, 2010), few research attempts have been made to uncover why employees of ethical supervisors refrain themselves from deviant behavior. In the present research we point to anticipated feelings of guilt as a crucial mechanism explaining why employees do or do not deviate against their supervisor. Guilt in itself is an unpleasant emotion to experience. It elicits feelings of remorse about the adverse impact of one’s actions on others: feeling personally responsible for harming others, violating justice principles, and failing to meet others’ expectations (e.g., Buck, 1999). Yet, the experience of guilt can have beneficial social consequences because it motivates individuals to put the concerns of others above their own (e.g., De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2007; Haidt, 2003; Ketelaar & Au, 2003; Nelissen, Dijker, & De Vries, 2007), and because it may help restore relationships (by stimulating people to make amends for past transgressions; e.g., Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994; Schmader & Lickel, 2006; Tangney, 1993; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996; Zeelenberg & Breugelmans, 2008).

The anticipation of guilt may be particularly important for explaining behaviors that hurt others, such as supervisor-directed deviance. One reason is that the anticipation of feeling guilty may prevent individuals from actually engaging in behaviors such as supervisor-directed deviance. Indeed, previous research has shown that guilt proneness – a personality trait indicative of a predisposition to anticipate feeling guilty about committing transgressions – is negatively correlated with counterproductive work behavior and unethical business decisions (Cohen, Panter, & Turan, 2012). Anticipated emotions—concerns about experiencing the emotion in the future—may play a more powerful role in guiding people’s behavior than actually felt emotions (Baumeister et al., 2007; Fiske, 2002; Lindsey, 2005). As findings from the affective forecasting literature denote, people often inaccurately forecast that the emotion will be more intense and longer lasting than the actual emotion turns out to be (Wilson & Gilbert, 2003).

Hence, anticipated guilt exerts a strong influence on behavior because people are motivated to avoid the guilt they anticipate, and,
subsequently, act in a way that prevents them from actually feeling guilty (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2007). The anticipation of guilt steers individuals away from actions that can have an adverse impact on others and trigger actual feelings of guilt (cf. Steenhaut & Van Kenhove, 2006). Accordingly, anticipatory guilt about obstructing or hurting one’s supervisor may withhold employees from demonstrating supervisor-directed deviance. The strength of anticipated guilt in withholding employees from acts that hurt others has been demonstrated in previous research. For instance, Grant and Wrzysniewski (2010) demonstrated that for other-oriented employees, anticipated feelings of guilt served as a motivational resource to prevent high core self-evaluations from leading to complacency. By worrying about letting others down, employees were able to prevent themselves from actually doing so.

Anticipated Guilt as a Mediator

However, leaders – by demonstrating certain leadership styles – can affect the anticipation of feelings of guilt, and, thereby, its inhibiting role on deviant behavior. The literature on the link between abusive (ethical) supervision and employee deviance draws on several theoretical perspectives (e.g., social exchange theory, self-regulation impairment) that can also be used to explain why anticipated guilt may mediate employee responses to supervision styles. For instance, social exchange theory (Homans, 1961) states that interpersonal relationships are transactions of resources and that the actions of one party depend in a quid pro quo fashion on the actions of another party. It could be argued that employees supervised by an abusive boss may think that the supervisor ‘gets what he/she deserves’ and that it is justified to ‘get even’ with the supervisor by deviating against the supervisor. Therefore, employees of abusive supervisors may anticipate feeling less guilty about their hurtful behavior towards the supervisor, and, consequently, will be more likely to engage in supervisor-directed deviance. In contrast, following a positive reciprocity principle (Gouldner, 1960), employees are considered to feel the need to
behave kindly and compliantly in response to an ethical supervisor and to feel motivated to refrain themselves from behaviors that may harm the supervisor. Therefore, employees of ethical supervisors may anticipate feeling guilty about harming their supervisor, which, in turn, may withhold them from actually deviating against their supervisor.

The self-regulation impairment perspective (Baumeister, 2001; Thau, Aquino, & Poortvliet, 2007; Thau & Mitchell, 2010) states that supervisors’ abusive behavior depletes employees’ resources needed to maintain appropriate behavior (cf. Thau & Mitchell, 2010). For instance, employees who are abused by their supervisor become emotionally exhausted (Aryee, Sun, Chen, & Debrah, 2008), which subsequently infringes on self-regulatory mechanisms that may otherwise lead them to refrain from deviating against their supervisor. Arguably, ethical supervision does not deplete employees’ self-regulatory resources, and thereby, allows for anticipated guilt to curb potential deviant behavioral tendencies against the supervisor.

All in all, abusive supervision may undermine employees’ anticipatory guilt about deviating against their supervisor, whereas ethical supervision may cultivate employees’ anticipatory guilt about harming the supervisor. In turn, the absence of anticipatory guilt may lead employees of abusive supervisors to engage in supervisor-directed deviance, whereas the presence of anticipatory guilt may cause employees of ethical supervisors to refrain themselves from engaging in supervisor-directed deviance. Accordingly, we hypothesize that anticipated guilt mediates the effects of supervision style (abusive vs. ethical) on supervisor-directed deviant behavior. Faced with an abusive supervisor as compared with an ethical supervisor, employees experience less anticipated guilt about deviating against their supervisor, which, in turn, leads to higher levels of deviant behavior.

**Overview of the Present Research**
Three studies, using different samples and methodologies, were conducted to test our general hypothesis. Study 1a and 1b were part of an experimental-causal-chain design (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005). We consecutively tested the causal chain of events in separate studies by first manipulating the independent variable and measuring the proposed mediator (Study 1a) and then by manipulating the proposed mediating variable and measuring the outcome variable (i.e., a behavioral indicator of deviance; Study 1b). In Study 2 and 3, we statistically tested the mediating role of anticipated guilt by employing a measurement-of-mediation design. In Study 2, we experimentally tested the effects of supervision style via anticipated guilt on a behavioral deviance measure, and in Study 3 we conducted a field study among employees using questionnaires to measure our variables of interest. Across all analyses, we controlled for gender, because previous research has shown that females might be more likely to experience guilt than males (e.g., Hoffman, 1975; Tangney, 1990). However, not controlling for gender did not change the significance or direction of the results.

**Study 1a**

**Method**

**Participants and design.** Ninety-six respondents from the United States (31.3% females, $M_{age} = 29.98$, $SD = 8.10$) participated in our online experiment and were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (Supervision style: ethical, abusive, control). Participants’ average work experience was 10.08 years ($SD = 7.83$). Of the participants, 31.3% had a secondary education degree (high school), 49.0% had a bachelor’s degree, 14.6% had a master’s degree, 1.0% had an MBA degree, and 4.2% had a doctoral degree.

**Procedure.** Participants were recruited using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk Website and were paid 50 US cents for their participation. Note that previous research has shown that data obtained with Mechanical Turk are at least as reliable as those obtained via traditional methods.
(Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Mason & Suri, 2012; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). Participants read a brief description of the experiment, gave their informed consent, were informed that their responses would be treated confidentially, and answered some questions that served as demographic variables. Participants then read a description of a supervisor, which constituted our supervision style manipulation. After the manipulation, participants filled out questions that served as manipulation check, and that measured the extent to which they expected to experience feelings of guilt if they were to deviate against the described supervisor. Finally, participants were debriefed, thanked, and paid.

**Supervision style manipulation.** All participants read a description of a bogus supervisor. Across all conditions, participants received identical information regarding the supervisor’s name (Paul Greene), sex (male), date of birth (10/25/1957), education (MBA) and function (Chief Executive Officer), as well as the company he was working for (Kincsem Consultancy) and the size of that company (±500 employees). In the control condition, participants did not receive any extra information about this supervisor. In the ethical and abusive supervision style condition, participants were presented with statements about the leaders’ supervision style that were allegedly expressed by subordinates of the described supervisor. These statements differed per condition and were based on the ethical leadership scale (Brown et al., 2005) on the one hand, and on the abusive supervision scale (Tepper, 2000) and the self-serving behavior scale (Rus, van Knippenberg, & Wisse, 2010) on the other hand. For instance, in the ethical supervision style condition participants read: “Paul keeps his promises, he is honest to subordinates, and he listens to what employees have to say” and “our supervisor makes fair and balanced decisions”. In the abusive supervision style condition, participants read: “Paul regularly breaks his promises, he can be rude to subordinates, and at times unjustifiably expresses anger at subordinates” and “our supervisor makes unfair and unbalanced decisions” (see Appendix A for a complete description of the manipulation).
Dependent measures.

**Manipulation check.** The effectiveness of the supervision style manipulation was assessed with eight items using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very much). Participants were asked to what extent they found the leader in the description to “provide ethical leadership”, “to be a good role model”, “to lack integrity” (R), and to be: ‘nice’, ‘integer’, ‘trustworthy’, ‘rude (R)’, and ‘hypocritical’(R). The reverse-scored items were recoded and all items were averaged into a single supervision style score \( \bar{M} = 4.44, \, SD = 1.85, \, \alpha = .85 \) with higher scores indicating a more ethical leadership style.

**Anticipated guilt.** Participants’ anticipated guilt about deviating against the described supervisor was measured with five items based on Lindsey (2005) and adapted for the purposes of the present research (i.e., “I would feel remorseful if I would hinder this supervisor”; “I would feel guilty if I would hinder this supervisor”; “I would not regret obstructing this supervisor” (R); ‘I expect that I would feel bad if I would hinder this supervisor’; ‘I would feel guilty when I would not try my best for this supervisor’) using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). After recoding the reverse-scored item, all items were averaged into a single anticipated guilt score \( \bar{M} = 4.38, \, SD = 1.77, \, \alpha = .95 \) with a higher score indicating higher levels of anticipated guilt

**Results**

**Manipulation check.** To assess the success of our supervision style manipulation, we performed an ANCOVA (controlling for gender) on the supervision style score. The ANCOVA revealed significant group differences on the supervision style score, \( F(2, 92) = 212.95, \, p < .001, \, \eta^2_p = .82 \). Least significant difference (LSD) pairwise comparisons showed that

---

1 A principal-components (PCA) analysis on the 5-item anticipated guilt scale revealed a single-factor structure in all studies in which we used this scale (Study 1a, Study 2, and Study 3). Across these studies, the single factor solution explained 84.40%, 71.88%, and 73.36%, respectively. Factor loadings were lowest for the reversed coded item, \(|.50|\) or higher, and the non-reversed items exceeded \(|.82|\).
participants in the abusive supervision style condition \( (M = 2.17, SD = 0.89) \) perceived the described leader as less ethical than participants in the ethical supervision style condition \( (M = 6.14, SD = 0.71, p < .001) \) and the control condition \( (M = 5.05, SD = 0.74, p < .001) \). Moreover, participants in the ethical supervision style condition perceived the described leader as more ethical than participants in the control condition, \( p < .001 \).

**Anticipated guilt.** As predicted, an ANCOVA (controlling for gender) on anticipated guilt revealed significant group differences, \( F(2, 92) = 72.34, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .61 \). Participants in the abusive supervision style condition \( (M = 2.48, SD = 1.30) \) experienced less anticipated guilt than participants in the ethical supervision style condition \( (M = 5.68, SD = 0.82, p < .001) \) and the control condition \( (M = 4.99, SD = 1.18, p < .001) \). Moreover, participants in the ethical supervision style condition experienced more anticipated guilt than participants in the control condition, \( p = .01 \) (see Figure 5.1).

![Anticipated Guilt as a Function of Supervision Style in Study 1a](image)

**Study 1b**
Method

Participants and design. Eighty-eight undergraduates (77.3% females, $M_{age} = 20.18, SD = 2.04$) participated in the experiment and were compensated with partial course credits. The experiment had three between-subjects conditions: a high anticipated guilt condition, a no anticipated guilt condition, and a control condition.

Procedure and experimental setup. The experimental setup was based on the hot sauce paradigm as described in Lieberman and colleagues (1999) and McGregor and colleagues (1998). We relied on this paradigm to measure supervisor-directed deviance, because it has often been used to assess individuals’ hostile or aggressive behavior towards others. Accordingly, it may provide a useful measure to assess supervisor-directed deviance, or purposeful behavior that is intended to the harm the supervisor (Hershcovis et al., 2007). Upon arrival to the lab, participants were seated in individual cubicles and were asked to sign for informed consent. Participants were informed that the study consisted of three parts and that the goal of the study was to examine the relationship between personality and food preferences. In the first part, demographic variables and personality related variables were assessed.

In the second part, participants learned that they would be paired with another participant and that, allegedly based on their personality profile, they would be assigned either the leader or the follower role. In addition, participants were asked to complete and hand over their scores on the Taste Preference Inventory. This inventory consisted of six different tastes and textures (i.e., sweet, sour, creamy, salty, spicy, and dry) that were to be evaluated ($1 = \text{no liking at all}, 21 = \text{extreme liking}$). The Taste Preference Inventory was included so that participants later could be presented with a bogus Taste Preference Inventory purportedly completed by their interaction partner in the experiment. The experimenter then

---

1 The complex set up of Study 1b resulted in a total of 12 participants who were suspicious about the setup of the experiment (bogus supervisor), guessed the hypothesis, or did not completely fill out the forms. These participants were not included in the analyses.
entered the cubicle and gave the participant the materials for the third part (i.e., the Taste Preference Inventory of the alleged other participant, the materials used to manipulate anticipated guilt, some questions, a sample of hot sauce, a little spoon, a cup of water, and a napkin).

In the third part, all participants were informed that they were assigned the follower role, and that the other participant was assigned the leader role. The leader had the authority to allocate tasks. Next, participants were informed that that day the tasks were to test spicy foods (hot sauce) and sweet foods (jellybeans). Moreover, they were told that their leader had decided to take care of tasting, rating and sorting jellybeans him or herself, and assigned the presumably less pleasant task of tasting and sampling hot sauce to the participant. Participants were asked to taste the hot sauce and to indicate its hotness (1 = not at all hot, 9 = extremely hot). A cup of water was provided to eliminate any discomfort participants might have experienced from tasting the hot sauce. After tasting the hot sauce, participants read in the instructions that whereas the jellybeans task only required the assistance of one person, completion of the hot sauce task required two persons. The hot sauce not only had to be tasted but also had to be allocated to another person.

Participants were informed that they would have to prepare a sample of hot sauce for their leader and that the leader had to consume the entire quantity of hot sauce that the participant had prepared. Before allocating the hot sauce, participants read the bogus Taste Preference Inventory of their leader, which among other things indicated that this person does not like spicy foods (scoring a three on a scale from 1 [no liking at all] to 21 [extreme liking]). Participants then continued with the guilt manipulation, which was introduced as a task that should be completed while the researcher prepared the materials for the hot sauce allocation part.

**Anticipated guilt manipulation.** In the high anticipated guilt condition, participants were asked to write down as many reasons (participants were encouraged to write down at least three reasons) as they
could as to why they would feel guilty about allocating a large amount of hot sauce to their leader. In the no anticipated guilt condition, participants were asked to write down as many reasons as they could as to why they would not feel guilty about allocating a large amount of hot sauce to their leader. In the control condition, participants were asked to write down as many reasons as they could as to why airlines should merge.

To assess the success of the guilt manipulation, two independent raters – who were both blind to conditions – rated the participants’ texts on the extent to which it reflected participants’ anticipated feelings of guilt on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = this participant would not feel guilty at all, 4 = neutral, 7 = this participant would feel extremely guilty)\(^3\). Cohen’s Kappa showed substantial agreement between raters, Cohen’s Kappa = .78, SE = 0.04, 95% CI = .71 - .86 (Landis & Koch, 1977). Hence, the scores of the two raters were averaged into a single anticipated guilt score.

Upon completion of the manipulation part, participants were told to open the door of their cubicle to receive the materials for the hot sauce allocation part (a 2-oz Styrofoam cup, a lid to cover the Styrofoam cup with, a plastic cup containing 50 grams of hot sauce, a spoon, and a black pencil).

**Hot sauce.** For the purpose of this study, in which we had to weight the amount of hot sauce using a sensitive scale, we had chosen a hot sauce with an even consistency that would ordinarily be applied in a volume greater than a drop of two. Furthermore, we had chosen a sauce that the participants considered to be hot ($M_{\text{hotness}} = 7.47$, $SD = 1.15$), does not contain any ingredients derived from animals (so that vegetarians could also taste the hot sauce), does not contain ingredients with a pronounced flavor (e.g., garlic) other than chili, and is unfamiliar to participants (i.e., can only be bought in specific wholesale stores). The hot sauce used was a

---

\(^3\) Sample texts include: “The leader has been eating sweet jelly beans which the leader enjoys, while I had to try the hot sauce. So, the leader should try it as well” (coded as a 1), and “he/she does not like spicy food, I already had to try it and it was pretty spicy and I do not want that somebody else has to eat a large amount of it. It is not fair to make somebody eat a lot of this; it is mean” (coded as a 7).
Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce (Super Hot) produced by Exotic Food Thailand (70% chili).

**Hot sauce allocation.** Participants were informed that they could fill the Styrofoam cup with as much or as little hot sauce as they wanted. Participants were further told they had to cover the cup with the lid and hand it over to the experimenter. Finally, participants were asked to indicate their leader’s dislike of hot sauce on a 21-point rating scale (*1 = no liking at all, 21 = extreme liking*).

At the end of the experiment, participants were informed that no one had to actually eat the hot sauce they had allocated. No participant indicated distress or objected in any way to the procedure. Participants were shortly debriefed on the spot and those who were interested in receiving more information received an e-mail with details about the study setup and preliminary findings.

**Results**

**Leaders’ dislike of hot sauce.** To test whether participants had attended to the Taste Preference Inventory information regarding their leader’s dislike of hot sauce (a score of 3 on a 21 point scale), we assessed the extent to which participants recalled that information. The mean response for recall of the leaders’ rating of spicy foods was 3.43 (*SD = 1.17*) indicating that the participants correctly recalled that the leader does not like spicy foods. Results did not differ by condition (*p > .39*).

**Manipulation check anticipated guilt.** An ANCOVA (controlling for gender) revealed, as predicted, significant group differences on the anticipated guilt score, \(F(2, 84) = 168.92, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .80\). Pairwise comparisons (LSD) showed that participants in the high anticipated guilt condition (*M = 5.79, SD = 0.76*) anticipated experiencing higher levels of guilt than those in the no anticipated guilt condition (*M = 2.56, SD = 0.89, p < .001*), and the control condition (*M = 3.93, SD = 0.35, p < .001*). Moreover, participants in the no anticipated guilt condition anticipated experiencing lower levels of guilt than those in the control condition, *p < .001*. 
**Hot sauce allocation.** As a measure of supervisor-directed deviance, we used the weight in grams of hot sauce (as determined by an Escali Pico HP Pocket Precision scale) allocated to the leader. We predicted that those in the high anticipated guilt condition would allocate smaller amounts of hot sauce to their alleged leader than those in the no anticipated guilt condition and the control condition.

An ANCOVA (controlling for gender) on the amount of hot sauce allocated revealed significant group differences, $F(2, 84) = 3.95, p = .02, \eta^2_p = .09$. As predicted, participants in the high anticipated guilt condition ($M = 4.17, SD = 2.09$) allocated less hot sauce than those in the no anticipated guilt condition ($M = 5.67, SD = 2.67, p = .04$) and the control condition ($M = 5.89, SD = 3.21, p = .01$). Participants in the no anticipated guilt condition did not significantly differ from those in the control condition, $p = .66$ (see Figure 5.2).4,5

---

4 Although causal chain designs are useful for making inferences about the causal chain of events, it is important to demonstrate that the psychological process in its manipulated form is the same variable as it is in its measured form (Spencer et al., 2005). Therefore, we also tested the effects of an anticipated guilt measure on the amount of hot sauce participants allocated to their leader. Specifically, we gathered data on 30 undergraduate students (83.3% females, $M_{age} = 19.83, SD = 1.44$) who followed the same procedure as the one described in Study 1b. Yet, instead of being exposed to a manipulation they filled out the same anticipated guilt measure as was used in Study 1a. We conducted a hierarchical regression using centered scores for our independent measures (Aiken & West, 1991). In Step 1, we included the control variable gender. In Step 2, anticipated guilt was added. Step 1 did not explain a significant proportion of variance in hot sauce allocation, $\Delta R^2 = .00, \Delta F(2, 28) = .01, p = .92$. Step 2 did explain a significant proportion of variance in hot sauce allocation, $\Delta R^2 = .19, \Delta F(1, 27) = 6.22, p = .02$. As predicted, anticipated guilt was negatively associated with the amount of hot sauce allocated to the alleged leader, $b = -1.09, SE_b = 0.43, t(27) = -2.50, p = .02$. As the measurement of anticipated guilt yielded similar findings as the manipulation of anticipated guilt, we may have increased confidence that the manipulation and measurement of anticipated guilt tap into the same construct.

5 In Study 1a and 1b, we also assessed participants’ trait-anger using Spielberger’s (1996) 10-item scale ($M = 2.51, SD = 0.62, a = .81$ in Study 1a; $M = 2.70, SD = 0.58, a = .82$ in Study 1b). Previous research has shown that anger/hostility can mediate the relationship between abusive supervision and supervisor-directed aggression (e.g., Lian et al., 2014). Therefore, we also tested the effects when controlling for trait-anger. In both studies this did not yield different results, indicating that supervision style may predict anticipated guilt (Study 1a) and that anticipated guilt can predict supervisor-directed deviance (Study 1b), even when anger is controlled for.
Discussion Study 1a and 1b

Study 1a demonstrated that compared with the control condition, abusive supervision decreased the extent to which participants anticipated feeling guilty about deviating against their supervisor, whereas ethical supervision increased the extent to which participants anticipated feeling guilty about deviating. In turn, Study 1b, showed that compared with the control condition and the no anticipated guilt condition, the anticipation of feeling guilty decreased the amount of hot sauce allocated to the supervisor. Taken together, Study 1a and 1b yielded strong conclusions about the causal chain of events by employing an experimental-causal-chain design.

Moreover, in Study 2 we also conducted the analyses controlling for a broader range of emotions. Specifically, when controlling for positive and negative affect, measured with Watson and Tellegen’s (1988) 20-item scale (excluding the item “guilty” because of overlap with the anticipated guilt measure), we found similar results. This indicates that independent of participants’ negative and positive affect, supervision style predicted participants’ performance via anticipated guilt, thereby explaining variance above and beyond the variance explained by positive and negative affect.
Studies 2 and 3 employed a measurement-of-mediation design, in order to further test whether the effects of supervision style on supervisor-directed deviance can be explained by anticipated guilt. We also opted for different operationalizations of supervisor-directed deviance. In Study 2, we relied on a behavioral measure of supervisor-directed deviance that was not associated with causing physical harm to the supervisor, but assessed a more subtle way of deviating against the supervisor (i.e., harming the evaluation of the leader by performing less well). In Study 3, we conducted a field study and used an established scale to measure respondents’ supervisor-directed deviance (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). We also included respondents’ intentions to allocate hot sauce to the supervisor to test whether the effects could be replicated in a field setting, and whether the construct showed overlap with an established scale of supervisor-directed deviance.

Study 2

Method

Participants and design. Fifty-seven undergraduate students (50.9% females, $M_{age} = 22.14$, $SD = 2.47$) participated in exchange for 5 Euros (approximately $6.50). Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (Supervision style: ethical vs. abusive). One participant did not speak the language and was excluded from the analyses.

Procedure. Upon arrival to the lab, participants were seated in individual computer-equipped cubicles and all the information and measures were administered via the program software. Participants gave their informed consent and answered some questions that served as demographic variables. They were then told that they would watch a video clip of a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student who made the clip as part of a leadership course. In reality, participants watched a video clip of trained confederates. Depending on the supervision style condition, these confederates either displayed ethical or abusive supervisory
behaviors. Gender of the person seen in the video-clip was matched to the gender of the participant (i.e., [fe]male participants watched a video clip of a [fe]male supervisor). In the video clip, the alleged MBA student presented him/herself as the participants’ supervisor for the upcoming task and gave task instructions. In particular, participants were told that their performance on the task would be reflected in their supervisor’s grade for the specific course. A higher score on the task would result in a higher grade for their supervisor. Hence, suboptimal performance on the part of the participant would have negative consequences for the supervisor. After watching the video clip, participants performed a short filler task that was followed by questions pertaining to the extent to which participants would feel guilty about deviating against the supervisor displayed in the video clip. Next, participants performed the main task, answered some questions and were debriefed, thanked and paid.

**Supervision style manipulation.** Supervision style was manipulated with a video clip in which an ethical or an abusive supervisor was displayed. The scripts were based on the ethical leadership scale (Brown et al., 2005) and the abusive supervision scale (Tepper, 2000). In the ethical supervision style condition, the supervisor gave a vision on leadership that could be viewed as ethical, whereas in the abusive supervision style condition the supervisor gave a vision on leadership that could be interpreted as abusive (see Appendix B). Task instructions, clothing, and pronunciation were held constant across conditions.

**The task.** Participants were presented the GRID task (e.g., Van Yperen, Hamstra, & van der Klauw, 2011). The ‘GRID’ is a 10×10 square, consisting of 100 equal boxes, each containing a different symbol. For every single GRID the purpose was to find and click the ‘target’ symbols that matched the one indicated on top of the page. For instance, when the target symbol was ‘a’, the purpose was to find and click all boxes containing an ‘a’ within that specific GRID. Participants were instructed to continue with the next GRID when they thought that they found all the boxes containing the target symbol. Participants worked for seven minutes on the task and were
informed that higher scores per GRID indicated better performance on the task.

**Dependent measures.**

*Manipulation check.* To assess the effectiveness of the supervision style manipulation we used the same eight items as in Study 1a ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.49$, $\alpha = .93$).

*Anticipated guilt.* Participants’ anticipated guilt about deviating against their supervisor was measured with the same five items as in Study 1b ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.49$, $\alpha = .95$).

*GRID task performance.* Participants’ average performance per GRID was used as a behavioral measure of participants’ deviance. Reflecting a realistic situation, participants’ suboptimal performance on the GRID task harmed the evaluation of the supervisor ($M = 8.40$, $SD = 0.68$).

**Results**

*Manipulation check.* An ANCOVA (controlling for gender) on our supervision style score revealed that participants in the abusive supervision condition perceived their supervisor to be less ethical ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 0.97$) than participants in the ethical supervision style condition ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 0.90$), $F(1, 54) = 86.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .62$. Supervision style scores did not differ significantly across confederates ($p = .79$).

*Anticipated guilt.* An ANCOVA (controlling for gender) on the mediator variable anticipated guilt revealed that participants in the abusive supervision style condition felt less guilty about deviating against the described leader ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.42$) than participants in the ethical supervision style condition ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.50$), $F(1, 54) = 4.45$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2_p = .08$. Moreover, our proposed mediator variable anticipated guilt and our dependent variable GRID task performance, were positively related, $b = 0.18$, $SE_b = 0.06$, $t(54) = 3.06$, $p = .003$. Higher levels of anticipated guilt were associated with better GRID task performance.

*GRID task performance.* An ANCOVA on participants’ GRID task performance revealed that participants in the abusive supervision style
condition performed less well \((M = 8.24, SD = 0.78)\) than participants in the ethical supervision style condition \((M = 8.57, SD = 0.52)\), \(F(1, 54) = 4.06, p = .05, \eta^2_p = .07\).

**Mediation analyses.** A procedure detailed by Hayes (2009) was used to statistically test the mediating effects of anticipated guilt on participants’ GRID task performance. In line with our hypothesis, anticipated guilt mediated the effect of supervision style on participants’ GRID task performance, such that participants in the abusive supervision style condition performed worse than participants in the ethical supervision style condition via lower levels of anticipated guilt (estimate: -.06; BCa CI: -.01 to -.13).

**Study 3**

**Method**

**Procedure and sample.** A total of 80 employees from the United States (58.8% females, \(M_{age} = 34.30, SD = 10.88\)) participated in our online field study. Only respondents who worked at least 24 hours a week and had a direct supervisor to report to participated in the survey. Respondents’ average number of years working under the supervision of their current direct supervisor was 2.12 years \((SD = 2.80)\). Of the respondents, 37.5% had secondary education degree (high school), 47.5% had a bachelor’s degree, 11.3% had a master’s degree, 1.3% had an MBA degree, and 2.5% had a doctoral degree. Respondents were recruited using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk Website and were paid 35 US cents for their participation.

**Measures.**

**Abusive supervision.** To measure abusive supervision, we used Tepper’s 15-item scale (2000). Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which their supervisors engaged in abusive behaviors against them \((1 = I\ cannot\ remember\ him/her\ ever\ using\ this\ behavior\ with\ me,\ 5 = he/she\ uses\ this\ behavior\ often\ with\ me)\). Sample items include “my supervisor ridicules me”, and “my supervisor puts me down in front of others”.

**Ethical supervision.** The ethical supervision style of respondents’ supervisors was assessed with the 10-item Ethical Leadership Scale (Brown et al., 2005) using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Sample items include “my supervisor listens to what employees have to say”, and “my supervisor disciplines employees who violate ethical standards”.

**Anticipated guilt.** Participants’ anticipated guilt about deviating against their direct supervisor was measured with the same five items as in Study 1a.

**Supervisor-directed deviance.** Respondents’ supervisor-directed deviance was measured with 10 items developed by Mitchell and Ambrose (2007). Sample items include “I said something hurtful to my supervisor at work”, and “I refused to talk to my supervisor’. Respondents indicated the frequency with which they acted in these ways on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 7 = *daily*).

**Intention to give hot sauce.** We assessed participants’ intention to harm their supervisor using a single item. Participants were asked to indicate on a scale ranging from zero (*no hot sauce at all, 0 ml*) to hundred (*the complete bottle of hot sauce, 100 ml*) which amount of hot sauce they would give to their supervisor in the hypothetical situation that their supervisor does not like hot sauce.

**Results**

Table 5.1 shows the means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations for the study variables. In all subsequent analyses, continuous measures were mean-centered (Aiken & West, 1991). Similar to all other studies, we included respondents’ gender as a control variable.

**Reactions to abusive supervision.** We hypothesized that leaders’ abusive supervision style would be positively associated with employees’ deviant behavior (i.e., their supervisor-directed deviance and the amount of hot sauce they prescribed to their leader), via lower levels of anticipated guilt. To test this hypothesis, we conducted regression analyses and
statistically tested the mediating effect of anticipated guilt using a procedure detailed by Hayes (2009). Abusive supervision was negatively associated with anticipated guilt, $b = -1.31$, $SE_b = 0.18$, $t(77) = -7.20$, $p < .001$, and positively associated with supervisor-directed deviance, $b = 0.66$, $SE_b = 0.11$, $t(77) = 6.23$, $p < .001$, and the amount of hot sauce respondents’ intended to give to their supervisor, $b = 17.40$, $SE_b = 3.29$, $t(77) = 5.29$, $p < .001$. Second, we tested whether our mediator anticipated guilt was significantly associated with our dependent variables. Anticipated guilt was negatively associated with supervisor-directed deviance, $b = -0.28$, $SE_b = 0.06$, $t(77) = -5.03$, $p < .001$, and the amount of hot sauce respondents intended to give to their supervisor, $b = -9.13$, $SE_b = 1.54$, $t(77) = -5.93$, $p < .001$. Moreover, bootstrapping showed that abusive supervision was positively associated with supervisor-directed deviance (estimate: .16; BCa CI: 0.01 to 0.33) and the amount of hot sauce respondents intended to give to their supervisor (estimate: 8.31; BCa CI: 2.51 to 18.91) via lower levels of anticipated guilt.

Reactions to ethical supervision. We hypothesized that leaders’ ethical supervision style would be negatively associated with employees’ deviant behavior, via higher levels of anticipated guilt. Regression analyses revealed that ethical supervision was positively associated with anticipated guilt, $b = 1.10$, $SE_b = 0.12$, $t(77) = 9.46$, $p < .001$, and negatively associated with supervisor-directed deviance, $b = -0.39$, $SE_b = 0.08$, $t(77) = -4.68$, $p < .001$, as well as with the amount of hot sauce respondents intended to give to their supervisor, $b = -12.92$, $SE_b = 2.40$, $t(77) = -5.39$, $p < .001$. Moreover, bootstrapping showed that ethical supervision was negatively associated with supervisor-directed deviance (estimate: -.20; BCa CI: -0.40 to -.05) and the amount of hot sauce respondents intended to give to their supervisor (estimate: -6.90; BCa CI: -13.38 to -2.79) via higher levels of anticipated guilt.
Table 5.1 Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Intercorrelations for Study 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Gender</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Abusive supervision</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>(.93)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Ethical supervision</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>(.95)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Anticipated guilt</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>(.90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Intention to give hot sauce</td>
<td>11.71</td>
<td>25.69</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Supervisor-directed deviance</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 80. Cronbach’s alphas are displayed on the diagonal. Male = -1; Female = 1.

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001
General Discussion

The present research puts forward the anticipation of experiencing guilt as a mechanism explaining why employees deviate against abusive bosses but not against ethical ones. Across three studies, employing both an experimental-causal-chain design and a measurement-of-mediation design showed that (a) individuals faced with an ethical supervisor experienced increased levels of anticipated guilt about deviating against the supervisor, whereas individuals faced with an abusive supervisor experienced decreased levels of anticipated guilt (Study 1a), (b) compared with the control condition, high anticipated guilt resulted in less supervisor-directed deviance (operationalized as the amount of hot sauce allocated to the supervisor; Study 1b), (c) individuals faced with an abusive supervisor, as compared to an ethical supervisor, show higher levels of supervisor-directed deviance (operationalized as suboptimal task performance) via lower levels of anticipated guilt (Study 2), (d) in a field study, leaders’ abusive supervision was positively associated with employees’ supervisor-directed deviance via lower levels of anticipated guilt, whereas leaders’ ethical supervision was negatively associated with employees’ supervisor-directed deviance via higher levels of anticipated guilt (Study 3).

Theoretical Implications

Considering these findings, the present set of studies contributes to the extant literature in several ways. First, by testing the mediating role of anticipated feelings of guilt, the present research offers further insight into the mechanism explaining why employees of abusive bosses show higher levels of supervisor-directed deviance than employees of ethical bosses. Although the role of different moderators in the relationship between abusive supervision and employee deviance has been tested in a considerable number of studies (e.g., Lian et al., 2012; Thau et al., 2008) mediating mechanisms explaining why the relationship occurs are tested less often. Previous studies that focused on mediating mechanisms either looked at revenge cognitions (Liu et al., 2010) or at anger/hostility as a
possible mediating mechanism in the abusive supervision-employee deviance link (Judge, Scott, & Ilies, 2006; Lian et al., 2014; Mayer et al., 2012). The latter studies are particularly interesting to the present discussion because they also point to the role of employee emotion in explaining the abusive supervision-employee deviance link. In these studies, anger/hostility is proposed as a mechanism that activates harmful behavior. The present research aims to extend these findings by zooming in on an emotion that may help people to inhibit behavior that may harm others (i.e., guilt). As such, we focus on a route of inhibition of harmful behavior directed to the supervisor. We show that the proposed mediating role of anticipated guilt in the relationship between supervision styles and employee deviance even holds when controlling for anger (see Footnote 5). This suggests that both an affective route of inhibition as well as an affective route of activation may play a role in explaining reactions to different supervision styles. Yet, future research has to further explicate when one route is stronger than the other and under what conditions. In this regard, it is also important to note that we adopted a novel approach by looking at the influence of guilt in its anticipated form. Although the importance of anticipated emotions for predicting behavior has been highlighted before (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2007), we are, to our knowledge, the first to demonstrate the crucial role of affective forecasting (i.e., anticipated guilt) in predicting employee reactions to different supervision styles. In doing so, we show that the mere anticipation of experiencing an emotion in the future may already have an effect on how people behave.

Second, it is commonly thought that abusive supervision predicts deviance on the part of employees (e.g., Lian et al., 2012; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Tepper et al., 2008; Thau & Mitchell, 2010). Nevertheless, to date, experiments testing the causal relationship between supervision styles and supervisor-directed deviance are scarce (for an exception, see Mayer et al., 2012; Study 5). As such, the present research is amongst the first to provide robust evidence for the causal relationship between ethical
versus abusive supervision styles and employees’ supervisor-directed deviance.

Third, it is somewhat surprising that in the extant literature the relationship between abusive supervision and supervisor-directed deviance has been extensively studied, whereas the negative relationship between ethical supervision and supervisor-directed deviance has, by comparison, received little research attention. Although we do not want to place abusive supervision and ethical leadership at the opposite ends of a single continuum, the theories that are often used to explain why employees of abusive supervisors would deviate could also explain why employees of ethical supervisors would be less likely to deviate. By comparing the effects of abusive versus ethical supervision styles on employees’ supervisor-directed deviance, we attempted to put equal weight on both leadership styles and to provide more insight into the role of ethical supervisory behaviors in minimizing employee deviance.

**Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions**

Although we consider the use of an experimental design a strength of the present research, it inevitably comes at the cost of external validity. Ideally, one would like to have both high internal and high external validity. Yet, manipulating abusive supervision by having leaders display hostile behaviors for a sustained period of time would be inappropriate (cf. Lian et al., 2014). By relying on a sample of employees (instead of undergraduate students) in Study 1a and aiming to replicate the findings of our experiments in a field study (Study 3), we aimed to increase the external validity of our findings. Moreover, the existing literature on supervision styles and employee deviance has consistently favored research high in external validity over research high in internal validity. Therefore, we believe that there is added value in employing a design in which the balance tips more towards high internal validity.

On a related note, the experiments used in the present research measured short-term effects of abusive and ethical leadership. Furthermore,
by using the amount of hot sauce allocated to the supervisor (or intentions to allocate hot sauce) as a measure of employees’ supervisor-directed deviance we relied on a measure that is quite narrow in scope. Therefore, we aimed to replicate the findings of our experiments in a field study, which included an established scale that measures a wider variety of supervisor-directed deviant behaviors. Additionally, in Study 2 we used a different behavioral measure to test whether we would find similar effects when using a behavioral measure that assesses a more passive way of deviating against the supervisor, that is, harming supervisors’ performance evaluation by not performing optimally. Replicating the findings across different outcome measures increases the confidence in the robustness of our findings.

The present research provides causal evidence for the link between supervision styles (ethical vs. abusive) and employees’ supervisor-directed deviance. Nonetheless, this does not exclude that the reversed relationship (cf. Lian et al., 2014), employee deviance instigating abusive supervisory behaviors via lower levels of supervisor’s anticipated guilt about harming employees, may exist as well. Future research is warranted to test whether this may be the case.

Because women and men may differ with regard to the anticipated guilt they experience, we controlled for gender throughout all our studies. Aside from playing a role in the level of anticipated guilt that is experienced, gender may also play a role in reactions towards an abusive/ethical (fe)male supervisor. That is, would (fe)males respond differently towards an abusive/ethical (fe)male supervisor? Previous research has shown that male and female supervisors may employ different leadership styles. For instance, Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) showed that female supervisors are generally more democratic than male supervisors and score higher on individualized consideration. Moreover, follower expectations of how a (fe)male leader should behave may play a role in their reactions toward their leader (Bellou, 2011). Specifically, gender-incongruent leader roles are argued to be least effective (Eagly &
Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Hence, female leaders displaying abusive supervision may be more strongly perceived as violating a gender-congruent leader role than male leaders displaying abusive supervision. A notion that could be tested in future research is whether followers would deviate more against a leader demonstrating a gender-incongruent leader role than against a leader demonstrating a gender-congruent role.

Finally, we did not test whether those who refrained themselves from supervisor-directed deviance, because of higher levels of anticipated guilt, also felt less actual guilt afterwards. Nor did we test whether those who engaged in supervisor-directed deviance, because of lower levels of anticipated guilt, also felt more actual guilt afterwards. Lindsey (2005) showed that people who anticipated feeling guilty about not engaging in helping behaviors were more likely to engage in helping behaviors and experienced less actual guilt afterwards than people who did not engage in helping behaviors. Similarly, the anticipation of feeling guilty about deviating against one’s supervisor may help to avoid the actual feelings of guilt by withholding oneself from deviant behaviors. Yet, future research has to explicate whether this is indeed the case.

Practical Implications

The present findings illustrate that employees are more likely to deviate against an abusive supervisor than against an ethical supervisor. As such, a first step in reducing employee deviance is to select leaders who display ethical leadership and who refrain themselves from abusive supervisory behaviors. A second step in reducing employee deviance is to identify abusive leaders and to educate them. For instance, it might be fruitful for employees, supervisors, and organizations at large to raise abusive supervisors’ awareness of the negative consequences that their behavior may have, as well as to alert them that the emotions they (fail) to instigate in their employees may play a role in subordinates’ self-regulation. Specifically, their abusive behavior may result in a lack of guilt about showing deviant behavior amongst employees. In addition, it might be
advantageous to train abusive supervisors to adopt a more ethical style of leadership. Finally, organizations could take steps against the display of abusive supervisory behaviors by developing policies that make clear that the display of such behaviors violate organizational norms.

**Conclusion**

The present series of studies speak to the issue whether supervision styles (abusive vs. ethical) can indeed be positioned as precursors of employees’ supervisor-directed deviance. Our findings suggest that abusive supervisory behaviors, as compared with ethical supervisory behaviors, may cause employees to deviate against their supervisor because of failing to induce an anticipatory guilt trip in their employees.
Appendix A to Chapter 5

In the *ethical supervision style condition* participants read:

“Paul regularly protects subordinates’ interests, even if there is no clear benefit for himself. For instance, recently he gave up legitimate privileges (an extra bonus) to serve the team.”

“In general, our CEO has a tendency to define success not just by results, but also by the way these results were obtained.”

“Paul keeps his promises, he is honest to subordinates, and he listens to what employees have to say.”

“Our supervisor makes fair and balanced decisions.”

In the *abusive supervision style condition* participants read:

“Paul regularly pursues personal interests, even if those interests are not serving the group. For instance, recently he awarded himself a bonus that was substantially higher than the bonus subordinates received.”

“In general, our CEO has a tendency to define success by the results that are obtained, and does not care about how the results are obtained.”

“Paul regularly breaks his promises, he can be rude to subordinates, and at times unjustifiably expresses anger at subordinates.”

“Our supervisor makes unfair and unbalanced decisions.”
Appendix B to Chapter 5

The text below displays the script that was used as a basis of the video clip. The ethical supervision style condition is presented in bold face and italicized font. The abusive supervision style condition is presented between square brackets and in italicized font. The original version of the script was written in Dutch.

Dear subordinate,

As your supervisor for this task I will explain to you how the GRID task works. Before I will give you the instructions for the task I will first clarify my vision on leadership to you. This will provide you with some more information about my leadership style. As a supervisor I believe that it is important that subordinates contribute to the accomplishment of collective goals [my own goals]. To make sure that this happens you have to be careful in dealing with subordinates [you sometimes have to be relentless in dealing with subordinates]. Ethical guidelines need to be followed [are nothing more than just guidelines]. You should never victimize others [Sometimes you have to be willing to make victims]. It is important to always take into account how subordinates may feel [I do not always feel like taking into account how subordinates may feel]. It is necessary to always be open and honest to subordinates and oftentimes it helps to be interested in and to listen to subordinates [Sometimes it is necessary to twist the truth a little bit and oftentimes it helps to put subordinates in place or to ignore them] to boost their performance. That is my opinion on leadership. Now I will tell you more about the task.

The task you are about to do is the GRID task. It is important that you perform to the best of your abilities on this task. It is my job as a supervisor to make sure that you will come out on top as a subordinate [It is your job to make sure that I will come out on top as a
I will now explain to you what the GRID task is. The GRID is a 10x10 matrix, and consists in total of 100 fields. You can see an example of a small GRID on this whiteboard (confederate points to the whiteboard behind him/her). Different symbols, letters for example, are displayed in the fields. You will be asked to find target symbols as fast as you can. So, imagine that you will be asked to click on all fields containing the target symbol “A”, than you will try to find and click as fast as you can on all the A’s that are displayed in the GRID (confederate points to the A’s in the GRID that is displayed on the whiteboard). I think I have clearly explained the task now. It is important to know that your performance on this task is not the only thing that counts [of crucial importance]. How you will get to your result or how you feel about doing this task is also important [not that important].