

Does Change Incite Abusive Supervision? The Role of Transformational Change and Hindrance Stress.

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Summary

Purpose and importance of study for the UAE

In today's competitive work environment, organizations must continually adjust their ways of working to survive, which is often referred to as transformational change. Unfortunately, transformational changes have often failed to be successful. Although organizations often expect their supervisors to be successful role-models and change-agents during the transformational change process, in our paper, we argue that transformational change often fails because organizations do not pay sufficient attention to supervisors' reactions to this change process. More specifically, transformational change could increase supervisors' stress levels, which may result in undesirable and abusive behaviors towards employees.

Methods, Study Key Points, & Findings

In a multi-source survey (linking supervisor and employee data) and an experimental study, we show that transformational change triggers supervisors' hindrance stress, which ultimately increases their abusive behaviors towards employees. In sum, our studies shows that transformational change is associated with supervisors' hindrance stress, which triggers abusive supervision (i.e., subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behavior, excluding physical contact).

Recommendations

- Organizations need to be aware that transformational change can increase supervisor's hindrance stress and consequently trigger abusive supervision.
- Organizations should organize change in a way that limits supervisor's hindrance stress.
- Organizations should help supervisors to monitor their stress related emotions and behaviors to prevent undesirable supervisor behaviors towards employees such as abusive supervision.