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Spoiled Rotten? LMXSC Motivates Greater Supervisor-Directed Deviance in Individuals Who Were Overindulged as Children

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Abstract

Recent work has demonstrated that perceiving oneself as being treated better by one's leader compared to one's coworkers' treatment by the same leader (i.e., leader-member exchange social comparison; LMXSC) can motivate aggressive behavior towards one's colleagues. Extending these findings, the current paper argues that high LMXSC employees can also be motivated to show aggressive behavior towards their leader, depending on their early experiences with authority figures (i.e., parents/guardians). Using both experimental and time-lagged field study designs, this study demonstrates that LMXSC elicits hubristic pride which, in turn, motivates supervisor-directed deviance in subordinates who were overindulged by their parents/guardians as children. These findings challenge the assumption that high LMXSC employees reciprocate their leaders' positive treatment by revealing when and why they can be motivated to demonstrate aggressive and deviant leader-directed behavior.

Keywords Leader-member exchange social comparison (LMXSC) · Hubristic pride · Parental overindulgence · Supervisor-directed deviance

A consensus in the literature has formed around the idea that subordinates who perceive themselves as having a better leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship with their supervisor relative to their coworkers, that is have high leader-member exchange social comparison (LMXSC; Vidyarthi et al., 2010), feel an obligation to reciprocate their leader's support and are motivated to help them either directly (Bryant & Merritt, 2019) or indirectly (Lapointe et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Singh & Vidyarthi, 2018; Vidyarthi et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2023). This perspective is limited, however, in that it only explains the positive outcomes for leaders that stem from their relationships with

high LMXSC employees but does not explain when or why having such relationships may backfire on leaders. Addressing this limitation, the current study challenges the consensus in the literature by considering what previous work has overlooked, that leaders' kindness and support may be taken for an exploitable weakness by some subordinates (Reynolds, 2018; Warren, 2018). Instead of reciprocating leaders' support, certain subordinates with high LMXSC may instead be motivated to act aggressively towards their leader in an attempt to control them and their resources. Shifting the consensus in the literature (Hollenbeck, 2008), this study demonstrates when and why high LMXSC can motivate subordinates' aggressive and unethical leader-directed intentions and behaviors.

In this study, I specifically test whether high LMXSC can lead to interpersonal deviance (e.g., verbal abuse) directed at the supervisor (i.e., supervisor-directed deviance; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Integrating recent findings showing that LMXSC can elicit a sense of superiority (i.e., hubristic pride; Tracy et al., 2009) and aggressive status-driven behavior (Korman et al., 2023) with research on the negative impacts of parental overindulgence (also referred to as permissive parenting; Bredehoft et al., 1998; Cui et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2009), I argue that LMXSC motivates

Additional supplementary materials may be found here by searching on article title <https://osf.io/collections/jbp/discover>.

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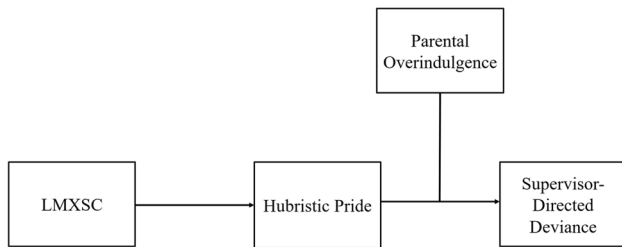


Fig. 1 Theoretical Model. Notes: LMXSC = leader-member exchange social comparison. Study 1 predicts employees' supervisor-directed deviance intentions. Study 2 predicts employees' supervisor-directed deviance behaviors

supervisor-directed deviance in subordinates who were overindulged as children (see Fig. 1) because they learned that dominance-based strategies for resource acquisition from authority figures can be effective. In doing so, I incorporate an important aspect of subordinates' upbringing into work on leader-subordinate relationships, identify a limiting condition for when individuals act on their feelings of hubristic pride, and answer calls both for additional research into subordinates' supervisor-directed aggression (Branch et al., 2021) as well as hubristic pride's relationship to status and status-striving behavior (Witkower et al., 2022).

This study offers both theoretical and practical implications. First, it challenges the consensus in the literature that high LMXSC motivates reciprocal leader-directed behavior by revealing that high LMXSC can be associated with greater supervisor-directed deviance. It thereby extends recent research linking LMXSC to negative coworker-directed behavior (Korman et al., 2023) to include negative supervisor-directed behavior and, taken together with work linking high LMXSC to lower supervisor-directed deviance (Huang et al., 2015), offers a more detailed picture of the overall LMXSC-supervisor-directed deviance relationship. Second, the current study shows that subordinates' supervisor-directed behavior is influenced by their early experiences with authority figures, that is their parents and guardians.¹ This novel perspective helps elucidate how individuals' child-parent relations frame their later subordinate-leader relations and introduces parental overindulgence as an important moderator of employees' work-related social behavior. By incorporating parental overindulgence into the LMXSC literature, this study contributes to nascent research exploring the effects of childhood experiences on employee outcomes (Campbell et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2016) and lays the groundwork for continued research on this largely unexplored topic. Third, this study expands on previous

work linking personality characteristics (e.g., trait narcissism) to hubristic pride and dominance-based status strategies (Carver et al., 2010; Cheng et al., 2010; Mercadante et al., 2021; Tracy & Robins, 2007a, 2007b) by suggesting that one's previous, successful use of a dominance strategy towards resource-distributing authority figures (e.g., parents) can be decisive in determining the extent to which individuals act on their feelings of hubristic pride. In doing so, this study provides nuance to previous work reporting direct effects of hubristic pride on dominant behaviors (e.g., Korman et al., 2023; Mercadante, et al., 2021; Yeung & Shen, 2019) while adding to the current discussion of when dominance-based strategies may persist (Redhead et al., 2019; Witkower et al., 2022). Finally, this study offers practical advice to leaders on how to recognize and deal with situations where their more esteemed subordinates might take advantage of this esteemed status in an aggressive manner.

Theory and Hypotheses

According to theory on leader-member exchange, leaders have differing relationships with each of their subordinates (Graen, 1976). Due to leaders' time and resources being limited, subordinates with higher LMX receive greater socioemotional resources (e.g., attention, influence) and tangible resources (e.g., preferred tasks, career opportunities) while subordinates with lower LMX receive less (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Wilson et al., 2010). Subordinates are motivated to compare their LMX quality with the leader to that of their coworkers because objective standards defining good or bad leader treatment are lacking (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Subordinates, therefore, engage in LMX-related social comparisons with coworkers to gain a better understanding of their relationship with the leader (Greenberg et al., 2007). LMXSC is the comparison subordinates make regarding their own LMX as it compares to the LMX that their coworkers are perceived as having with the shared supervisor (Vidyarthi et al., 2010). While LMX is not judged based on a comparative judgment or reference point, LMXSC is derived from subordinates' within-group social comparisons with their coworkers as the reference point (Vidyarthi et al., 2010).

LMXSC and Hubristic Pride

LMXSC is said to inform subordinates' judgements of their relative status in their workgroup (Matta & Van Dyne, 2020; Vidyarthi et al., 2010) and high LMXSC has been interpreted as signalling one's superiority over others (Pan et al., 2021). This interpretation is supported by recent empirical work by Korman et al. (2023) demonstrating that high LMXSC elicits feelings of hubristic pride, a

¹ For brevity, I will simply refer to parents throughout the rest of the paper.

self-aggrandizing emotion associated with arrogance (Tracy & Robins, 2007a) and characterized by feelings of superiority (Tracy et al., 2009). Hubristic pride is a contrastive downward social comparison emotion worthy of study considering that organizations are fundamentally competitive environments (Pearsall et al., 2010) that trigger competitive mindsets (Kay et al., 2004) and foster contrast effects by rewarding individual employees' success (Collins, 2000). Furthermore, competition has been found to increase contrastive social comparisons (Colpaert et al., 2015) and it is therefore unsurprising that employees' social comparisons are predominately contrastive in nature (Brown et al., 2007).

Hubristic pride is considered an evolutionary, psychological adaptation guiding individuals' strategies of status acquisition and maintenance (Tracy et al., 2010). Specifically, it is thought to provide individuals with a sense of entitlement that reduces their empathy for others (Tracy et al., 2014). As such, hubristic pride is theorized to facilitate the acquisition and maintenance of social status via dominance, a strategy by which individuals gain and maintain control over others through aggression and intimidation (Cheng et al., 2013). Hubristic pride is theorized to drive aggressive behavior (Cheng et al., 2010), for example supervisor-directed deviance, as aggression is a means of gaining and maintaining obedience and deference from others (von Rueden et al., 2011). In this way, aggression can promote the accumulation of and control over valuable resources (Bjorklund & Hawley, 2014; Buss & Duntley, 2006). Evolutionarily, this aggression is advantageous as resource control is linked to greater reproductive success (Essock-Vitale, 1984). In the workplace, supervisors make for a risky, yet valuable, target of subordinate control as supervisors "have increased access to information, people, and things" (Ludwig & Longenecker, 1993, p. 270), or simply, resources. Furthermore, supervisors play a major role in determining the success (e.g., salary, promotability) of subordinates in the organization (Wayne et al., 1999). Thus, by intimidating their supervisor using dominance behaviors, subordinates stand to gain the assets needed to advance in both the organization and their careers.

Although supervisors hold formal authority over their subordinates (Yukl, 1989) and are in a position to retaliate against subordinates' supervisor-directed aggression (Aquino et al., 2006; Oh & Farh, 2017), supervisors are more likely to experience aggression from their subordinates than from either middle or senior management (Hoel et al., 2001). One reason for this may be that because supervisors are dependent on their subordinates to be productive and achieve work goals (Cook, et al., 1997), subordinates can control their supervisor by hindering the supervisor's goal achievement (Emerson, 1962). Furthermore, studies have found that supervisors are reluctant to report aggression from their subordinates because of concerns it would

suggest their failure as a supervisor (Miller, 1997) and negatively impact their professional standing (Lee, 1997). Qualitative findings suggest that this aggressive strategy by subordinates can be effective, and supervisors have reported appeasing their subordinates to avoid negative subordinate actions (Thomas & Farnham, 2013). As such, subordinates' supervisor-directed aggression is thought to lead to "the development of associated imbalances between perpetrator and target" (Branch et al., 2021, p. 597). However, research on supervisor-directed aggression is in a nascent stage and more work is needed to determine which individual differences predict its occurrence (Branch et al., 2007; Branch et al., 2021).

Parental Overindulgence and Supervisor-Directed Deviance

Individuals' first experiences with leadership are with their parents because their parents represent the leaders of their family (Stech, 2006). As such, parents are often considered individuals' earliest and most important source of socialization (Grusec, 2006; Winkler, 2010). Based on early interactions with their parents, individuals form internal working models of self and others (Bowlby, 1982), so understanding individuals' interactions with their parents during childhood is important because child-parent relationships may determine how individuals later interact with their leaders in subordinate-leader relationships (Winkler, 2010). This is because leader-subordinate dynamics are analogous to parent-child dynamics in that leaders, like parents, are tasked with "guiding, directing, taking charge, and taking care of others less powerful than they and whose fate is highly dependent on them" (Popper & Mayseless, 2003, p. 42). Overly permissive environments, such as households where parents overindulge their children - that is, flood them with resources, attention, and experiences (Bredehoft et al., 1998) - may affect how children later behave as adult employees of an organization (cf. Maccoby, 1994).

Importantly, parental overindulgence can teach children that aggressive behavior is a useful strategy for coercing others into compliance (Cottrell & Monk, 2004). From an evolutionary perspective, aggression is a functional response that can increase one's rank in the social hierarchy (Archer, 2001; Griskevicius et al., 2009) and, with it, control over resources (e.g., attention, influence) (Hawley, 1999). To this end, aggression has been found to be a strategy implemented by both children (Hawley, 2003a, 2003b; Olthof et al., 2011; Vaillancourt et al., 2003) and employed adults alike (Castille et al., 2017; Reh et al., 2018). Specifically, research shows that children of overindulgent parents demonstrate greater proactive aggression (Xu et al., 2009), a deliberate and instrumental form of aggression considered a means of controlling resources. Furthermore, teenagers of permissive

parents are thought to use aggressive behavior to control their parents and coerce them into meeting their demands (Cottrell, 2005). The effectiveness of this aggressive strategy is demonstrated by findings that parents indulge their children to avoid conflict (Calvete et al., 2014) and overindulging parents report a lack of control over their children (Baumrind, 1978). Thus, unlike subordinates who were not overindulged as children, subordinates who were overindulged as children (i.e., were allowed lots of privileges and to dominate the family) may have learned that aggressing towards those who control resources (i.e., parents, supervisors) can be a rewarding enterprise. This is in line with Winkler's proposal that, "the way the child, the adolescent, and later on the adult behave towards a person of authority [e.g., a supervisor] is to a great extent dependent on the degree of authority experienced in the relationship between the child and the parents" (2010, p. 24). Furthermore, permissive parenting has been associated with decreased emotional intelligence (Wischerth et al., 2016), suggesting that the children of permissive parents are less able to regulate their emotions and, therefore, more likely to act on their (negative) impulses. Thus, while subordinates who were not overindulged as children may restrain their aggressive supervisor-directed behavior in the wake of experiencing hubristic pride, those who were overindulged as children may be less able to do so. Taking this prior research into account, I propose the following:

Hypothesis 1: LMXSC has a positive association with supervisor-directed deviance, which is first mediated by feelings of hubristic pride then moderated by parental overindulgence. Specifically, the positive indirect effect of LMXSC on supervisor-directed deviance via hubristic pride is stronger (weaker) in individuals with higher (lower) parental overindulgence.

Overview of Studies

I test my hypothesis using a vignette experiment (Canadian sample) and a time-lagged field study (USA sample). In doing so, I am able to provide both internally and externally valid support for my hypothesis while triangulating my findings (Turner et al., 2016). Furthermore, the inclusion of theoretically relevant covariates into the analyses demonstrates that the findings are robust to alternative explanations.

Study 1

Study 1 implemented a vignette experimental design because such designs are effective in establishing internal validity (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014) and commonly used in investigations of leadership social comparisons and subordinate

behavior (e.g., Korman et al., 2023; Thau et al., 2013). Furthermore, the use of experimental vignette designs is warranted considering that previous studies using them have shown convergence between real and imagined reactions to emotional stimuli (Robinson & Clore, 2001).

Method

Participants and Procedure

Four hundred and eighteen (61% female) participants located in Canada completed a vignette experiment via the online platform CloudResearch.com (Chandler et al., 2019). Cloudresearch.com, alternatively referred to as Prime Panels, affords subject pools that are more diverse than Amazon's Mechanical Turk yet analogous in terms of data quality (Chandler et al., 2019). Participants were on average 47.1 years old ($SD = 15.6$) with 23.6 years of work experience ($SD = 14.5$). Forty-four percent of participants reported having a university degree.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions (low vs. high LMXSC) and presented a scenario in which they attend a weekly team meeting. Participants ($n_{LMXSC\ low} = 204$, $n_{LMXSC\ high} = 214$) were informed that the sales team was comprised of themselves, the team leader, and four other team members in order to keep the team size constant across conditions. In the different LMXSC conditions, I manipulated the extent to which participants perceived their leader as providing them with a greater proportion of formal support (leadership opportunities) and informal support (praise and lunch invitations). Participants then completed measures of hubristic pride, authentic pride, supervisor-directed deviance, parental overindulgence, and trait narcissism. At the end of the survey, participants were asked whether they answered all questions honestly.

LMXSC is a multidimensional concept and subordinates with high LMXSC perceive themselves as "receiving a relatively higher share of the leader's valued resources, information, and emotional support than other coworkers" (Vidyarathi et al., 2010, p. 852). For this reason, I manipulated participants' perceptions of the proportion of valued resources such as time and support (praise and leadership opportunities) that their leader provided them. To ensure adequate construct validity of the manipulations, I formulated the manipulations in part using items from the LMXSC measure (Vidyarathi et al., 2010, p. 853; "Relative to the others in my work group, I receive more support from my manager", "My manager enjoys my company more than he/she enjoys the company of other group members", "When my manager cannot make it to an important meeting, it is likely that s/he will ask me to fill in"). Furthermore, LMX was kept equal for participants across manipulation conditions so as to only manipulate LMXSC. This was to ensure that the general

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations Among Variables in Study 1

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. LMXSC	0.51	0.50	-					
2. Hubristic pride	2.18	1.44	0.133**	-				
3. Parental overindulgence	2.50	0.64	0.125*	0.361***	-			
4. Supervisor-directed deviance intentions	1.51	0.99	-0.042	0.509***	0.372***	-		
5. Authentic pride	5.15	1.18	-0.050	-0.288***	-0.018	-0.277***	-	
6. Trait narcissism	1.99	1.46	0.004	0.324***	0.358***	0.458***	-0.163**	-

LMXSC = leader-member exchange social comparison. LMXSC was coded as 0 (low) or 1 (high) and so point-serial correlations are reported for this variable.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

quality of one's LMX (e.g., good or bad) would not drive the results, but instead the relative quality of one's leader treatment (e.g., equal to that received by colleagues or better). This approach has been similarly taken in other experimental research investigating LMXSC (Korman et al., 2023). Below is the manipulation used in the low LMXSC condition, with words in parenthesis used in the high LMXSC condition:

Imagine that you work on the sales team of an advertising company. The sales team is supervised by the team leader, Alex, and is comprised of you and four other team members. On a weekly basis, Alex, the team leader, calls the sales team together to discuss current and upcoming work projects. In these recurrent meetings, Alex frequently singles you out for praise (praises the sales team as a whole). Following these meetings, Alex often invites you out to lunch (the sales team out to lunch). On days where Alex can't run the meeting, Alex chooses you (randomly chooses a member of the sales team) to do this instead.

As recommended by Hauser et al. (2018), I validated the manipulation conditions in a separate pilot study before using them to test my hypothesis. I specifically wanted to ensure that the LMXSC manipulations did not accidentally manipulate participants' LMX. To this end, data was collected from 56 participants (61% female) who were located in Canada and recruited via CloudResearch.com. Participants were on average 47.9 years old ($SD = 15.6$) and 39% had a bachelor's degree or higher university qualification.

Participants were randomly assigned to a manipulation condition ($n_{\text{low}} = 25$, $n_{\text{high}} = 31$) then asked to rate their perceived relationship with the hypothetical supervisor, Alex, using the 6-item LMXSC scale (Vidarthi et al., 2010) and the 7-item LMX scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). LMXSC was measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = 'strongly disagree', 7 = 'strongly agree') ($\alpha = 0.90$). An example item is "Relative to the others in my work group, I receive more support from Alex, the team leader". LMX was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree') ($\alpha = 0.90$). An example item is "I would have enough confidence

in Alex, the team leader, that I would justify his/her decision if he/she were not present to do so". Whereas participants rated their LMXSC significantly higher in the high LMXSC condition ($M_{\text{high}} = 4.91$, $SD_{\text{high}} = 0.16$) compared to the low LMXSC condition ($M_{\text{low}} = 4.42$, $SD_{\text{low}} = 0.19$), $t(54) = -2.02$, $p = .048$, they did not report differences in LMX across manipulation conditions ($M_{\text{low}} = 3.66$, $SD_{\text{low}} = 0.15$; $M_{\text{high}} = 3.70$, $SD_{\text{high}} = 0.13$), $t(54) = -0.19$, $p = .850$. These results substantiate the efficacy of the LMXSC experimental conditions and provide support that LMXSC was not confounded with LMX.

Measures

The means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations of the study variables are presented in Table 1.

Hubristic pride Hubristic pride was assessed using the 7-item hubristic pride scale developed by Tracy and Robins (2007a) and adapted to take into account the hypothetical nature of the vignette. An example item is "I would feel arrogant". All responses were given using 7-point Likert scales (1 = 'not at all likely', 7 = 'extremely likely') ($\alpha = 0.97$).

Parental overindulgence Parental overindulgence was assessed using all 10 positively worded items of the 14-item scale developed by Bredehoft et al. (2002).² An example item is "When I was growing up, my parents/caregivers allowed me to take the lead or dominate the family". All responses were given using 5-point Likert scales (1 = 'never or almost never', 5 = 'always or almost always') ($\alpha = 0.81$).

Supervisor-directed deviance intentions Supervisor-directed deviance intentions were assessed using the 10-item scale developed by Mitchell and Ambrose (2007) and adapted to

² Details regarding the empirical justification for this operationalization of parental overindulgence can be found in Online Supplemental Material A here: https://osf.io/q9n3k/?view_only=65b7fd5643404d31a61a0dcf1052c70d

take into account the hypothetical nature of the vignette. The measure was preceded by the following instruction to participants: “*Regarding the scenario you just read, how likely is it that you would do the following when dealing with Alex, the team leader?*” An example item is “I would act rudely towards the team leader”. All responses were given using 6-point Likert scales (1 = ‘*extremely unlikely*’, 6 = ‘*extremely likely*’) ($\alpha = 0.97$).

Covariates In order to provide a more robust test of my theory, I account for potential covariates that may explain the relationship between LMXSC and supervisor-directed deviance intentions. Authentic pride was included as a covariate to ensure that the effect of hubristic pride on supervisor-directed deviance intentions was not confounded with authentic pride, a separate facet of pride also linked to status-acquisition and maintenance strategies (Cheng et al., 2010). Moreover, hubristic pride and authentic pride are both high in positive affect (Mercadante et al., 2021), and by controlling for authentic pride, I rule out positive affect more generally as the mechanism driving the effect of LMXSC on supervisor-directed deviance intentions, as well as control for the inhibiting effect of authentic pride on aggressive behavior (Yeung & Shen, 2019). Furthermore, I controlled for authentic pride given that employees may attribute their high LMXSC both to their hard work (which is theorized to elicit authentic pride, Tracy & Robins, 2007a, 2007b) and innate superiority (which is theorized to elicit hubristic pride, Tracy & Robins, 2007a, 2007b). Thus, authentic pride and hubristic pride may covary. Support for this idea comes from within-person longitudinal findings positively linking daily levels of authentic pride with daily levels of hubristic pride (Korman et al., 2023; see also Yeung & Shen, 2019). Accounting for both facets of pride (i.e., hubristic and authentic) is common practice in modern work on the antecedents and outcomes of pride (e.g., Brosi et al., 2016; Korman et al., 2023; Yeung & Shen, 2019). Authentic pride was assessed using the 7-item authentic pride scale developed by Tracy and Robins (2007a) and adapted to take into account the hypothetical nature of the vignette. An example item is “I would feel like I am achieving”. All responses were given using 7-point Likert scales (1 = ‘*not at all likely*’, 7 = ‘*extremely likely*’) ($\alpha = 0.96$).

Furthermore, to ensure that the 2nd-stage moderation effects are explained by parental overindulgence and not narcissism, a psychological trait associated with both parental overindulgence (Capron, 2004; Ramsey et al., 1996) and aggressive behavior (for meta-analyses, see Du et al., 2022; Kjærviik & Bushman, 2021), I included trait narcissism as a covariate. This approach is in line with my argument that employees who were overindulged by their parents learned that they could use a dominance strategy to successfully gain and maintain resources from authority figures and helps rule

out individuals’ psychological makeup as a driver of their deviant behavior. Trait narcissism was measured using the single-item narcissism scale (Konrath et al., 2014).³ This was measured with a 7-item Likert scale (1 = ‘*not very true of me*’, 7 = ‘*very true of me*’) using the following item: “I am a narcissist. (Note: The word ‘narcissist’ means egotistical, self-focused, and vain).”

Results

Although all participants reported responding honestly to the study measures, one participant did not complete the supervisor-directed deviance intentions measure. This participant was excluded from the analyses and the final sample was comprised of 417 participants.

I conducted a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) to test whether the 34 items representing the four constructs measured with multiple items (i.e., trait narcissism was excluded) were distinguishable from one another. The 4-factor model, $\chi^2(521) = 1636$, RMSEA = 0.07, CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.92, SRMR = 0.06, fit the data better than a 3-factor model in which hubristic pride and authentic pride loaded together, and parental overindulgence and LMXSC loaded on their own individual factors, $\chi^2(524) = 4171$, RMSEA = 0.13, CFI = 0.74, TLI = 0.73, SRMR = 0.14. Furthermore, the 4-factor model fit the data better than a single-factor model in which all variables loaded together, $\chi^2(527) = 8218$, RMSEA = 0.19, CFI = 0.46, TLI = 0.42, SRMR = 0.19. The difference between the 4-factor model and the 3-factor model were significant in terms of model fit ($\chi^2(3) = 2535$, $p < .001$), as was the difference between the 3-factor model and the single-factor model ($\chi^2(3) = 4047$, $p < .001$). These analyses demonstrate the superiority of the 4-factor model and lend support for the discriminant validity of the study’s measured variables.

All measured variables were standardized (i.e., converted to z-scores) prior to the following analysis. I first estimated the paths required for testing the conditional indirect effects of interest. The results of this initial analysis are summarized in Table 2 (Model 2). As expected, LMXSC condition significantly predicted hubristic pride ($b = 0.35$, $p = .007$). Furthermore, hubristic pride interacted with parental overindulgence to predict supervisor-directed deviance intentions ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < .001$).⁴ Follow-up simple-slopes analysis showed

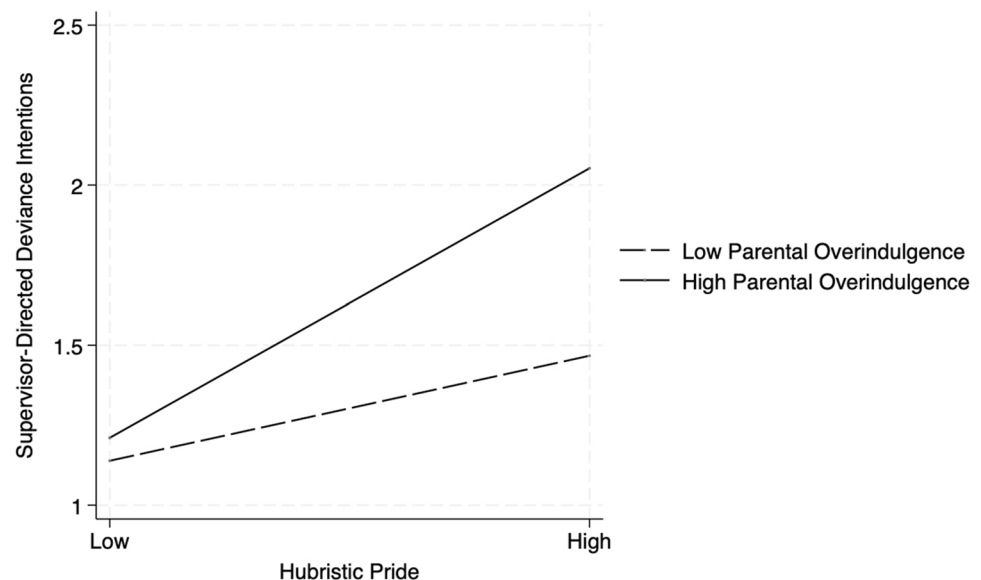
³ Although scholars have generally been cautioned from using single-item measures (Loo, 2002; Nunnally, 1978), the single-item narcissism scale has repeatedly been found to be a valid and reliable measure (Özsoy et al., 2017; Van der Linden & Rosenthal, 2016).

⁴ The exclusion of covariates (i.e., authentic pride and trait narcissism) did not significantly affect the results or their interpretation (see Table 2: Model 1 for details).

Table 2 Regression Results of Study 1

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Hubristic pride						
Intercept	1.98	0.10	<.001	2.00	0.09	<.001
LMXSC (0=low; 1=high)	0.38	0.14	.006	0.35	0.13	.007
Authentic pride				-0.34	0.06	<.001
Trait narcissism				0.41	0.06	<.001
Supervisor-directed deviance intentions						
Intercept	1.58	0.06	<.001	1.58	0.05	<.001
LMXSC (0=low; 1=high)	-0.24	0.08	.002	-0.22	0.07	.003
Hubristic pride	0.38	0.04	<.001	0.29	0.04	<.001
Parental overindulgence	0.22	0.04	<.001	0.16	0.04	<.001
Hubristic pride \times Parental overindulgence	0.16	0.04	<.001	0.13	0.03	<.001
Authentic pride				-0.14	0.04	<.001
Trait narcissism				0.24	0.04	<.001

LMXSC = leader-member exchange social comparison

Fig. 2 Hubristic Pride \times Parental Overindulgence Interaction Effect on Supervisor-Directed Deviance Intentions in Study 1. Notes: High and low levels of variables represent +1 and -1 standard deviations around the mean

that when parental overindulgence was high (+1 *SD*), the relationship between hubristic pride and supervisor-directed deviance intentions was more positive ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$) than when parental indulgence was low (-1 *SD*), ($\beta = 0.16$, $p = .009$). See Fig. 2 for details.

A 2nd stage moderated-mediation analysis (see Model 3 in Preacher et al., 2007) involving 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples was used to test Hypothesis 1. This analysis was conducted using STATA/MP 15.1. LMXSC was set as the independent variable, hubristic pride the mediator, parental overindulgence the 2nd-stage moderator, and supervisor-directed deviance intentions the dependent variable. Authentic pride and trait narcissism were included as covariates predicting both the mediator and dependent

variable. Supporting Hypothesis 1, LMXSC was associated with greater supervisor-directed deviance intentions via increases in hubristic pride when parental overindulgence was high ($\beta = 0.15$, 95% CI [0.042, 0.270]) as compared to when it was low ($\beta = 0.06$, 95% CI [0.007, 0.146]). These indirect effects were significantly different from one another ($\beta = -0.09$, 95% CI [-0.200, -0.013]).⁵

⁵ Using the same vignette design implemented in Study 1, these results were replicated in an Australian sample. These complementary results are not reported in the manuscript due to space limitations but are available in the Online Supplementary Material B found here: https://osf.io/q9n3k/?view_only=65b7fd5643404d31a61a0dcf1052c70d

Table 3 Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations Among Variables in Study 2

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. LMXSC	4.12	1.57	-						
2. LMX	3.74	0.87	0.67***	-					
3. Hubristic pride	1.93	1.44	0.250***	0.012	-				
4. Parental overindulgence	2.67	0.78	0.276***	0.222***	0.465***	-			
5. Supervisor-directed deviance	1.59	1.11	0.175**	-0.066	0.777***	0.467***	-		
6. Authentic pride	5.27	1.36	0.470***	0.616***	-0.045	0.156*	-0.096	-	
7. Trait narcissism	0.31	0.26	0.297***	0.118	0.491***	0.288***	0.380***	0.126*	-

LMXSC = leader-member exchange social comparison; LMX = leader-member exchange

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion

Study 1 demonstrates that LMXSC leads to greater supervisor-directed deviance intentions via increased hubristic pride in individuals reporting higher parental overindulgence as children. Thus, I demonstrate the conditions in which positive perceptions of leader treatment (i.e., high LMXSC) lead to negative, supervisor-directed behavioral intentions (i.e., deviance) using experimental support with high internal validity. Furthermore, these findings are robust to the inclusion of authentic pride and trait narcissism as covariates in the statistical model. In Study 2, I conduct a time-lagged field study using a participant sample from the USA to establish the external validity of the findings and to provide additional support for my theoretical model.

Study 2

Method

Participants and Procedure

Two hundred and seventy-eight participants (37% female) located in the United States completed a time-lagged field study via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Michel et al., 2017). As recommended (Hauser & Schwarz, 2016; Litman et al., 2015), I only recruited participants who had completed 50 or more HITs ("human intelligence tasks") with a high ratio (95%) of approved-versus-submitted tasks. This was done to ensure the high quality of the data sample as research shows that MTurkers with a high reputation are more attentive while completing online tasks (Peer et al., 2014).

Data was collected over three time points, each one week apart, with an overall completion rate of 69% ($N_{\text{Time1}} = 401$, $N_{\text{Time2}} = 308$, $N_{\text{Time3}} = 278$) which is similar to the completion rates of other multi-survey MTurk studies (Stoycheff,

2016). Temporal separation of the independent, mediator, and dependent variables was implemented to reduce common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Multiple logistic regression analysis was used to determine whether the missing data in the sample were missing at random (Goodman & Blum, 1996). The results indicate no non-random sampling (see Appendix A: Table 6 for details) and, therefore, we can be confident that participant attrition did not bias the subsequent analyses (Goodman & Blum, 1996). Participants were full-time employees who were on average 35.0 years old ($SD = 9.6$) with 5.6 years average tenure at their current organization ($SD = 4.3$) and 4.5 years average tenure under their current supervisor ($SD = 4.3$). Sixty-one percent of participants reported having a university degree.

Importantly, the data used in Study 2 are the same as those reported in an abridged six-page article published in *Proceedings of the 2020 Academy of Management* (see Korman et al., 2020). However, the theoretical models tested in these works differ significantly and each focuses on distinct moderator and dependent variables (see Appendix B: Table 7 for details).

Measures

The means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations of the study variables are shown in Table 3.

LMXSC. Leader-member exchange social comparison was assessed at T1 using the 6-item scale developed by Vidyarthi et al. (2010). An example item is "I have a better relationship with my manager than most others in my work group". All responses were given using 7-point Likert scales (1 = 'strongly disagree', 7 = 'strongly agree') ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Hubristic pride. Hubristic pride was assessed at T2 using the same 7-item hubristic pride scale used in Study 1 ($\alpha = 0.97$). In contrast to Study 1, however, participants in Study 2 were instructed to indicate to what extent each hubristic pride item describes how they feel while at work.

Table 4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for Study 2 Data

Model		$\chi^2(df)$	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Model 1						
5 Factors	(1) LMXSC (2) LMX (3) HP (4) PO (5) SDD	1713 (730)	0.07	0.91	0.90	0.08
4 Factors	(1) LMXSC & LMX (2) HP (3) PO (4) SDD	2791 (735)	0.10	0.80	0.79	0.17
1 Factor	(1) LMXSC & LMX & HP & PO & SDD	5916 (740)	0.16	0.51	0.49	0.20
Model 2						
7 Factors	(1) LMXSC (2) LMX (3) HP (4) AP (5) PO (6) TN (7) SDD	3292 (1869)	0.06	0.86	0.85	0.08
5 Factors	(1) LMXSC & LMX (2) HP & AP (3) PO (4) TN (5) SDD	6160 (1880)	0.09	0.71	0.69	0.14
1 Factor	(1) LMXSC & LMX & HP & AP & PO & TN & SDD	10575 (1890)	0.13	0.40	0.38	0.19

LMXSC leader-member exchange social comparison, LMX leader-member exchange, HP hubristic pride, AP authentic pride, PO parental overindulgence, TN trait narcissism, SDD supervisor-directed deviance

Parental overindulgence. Parental overindulgence was assessed at T3 using the same 10-item scale used in Study 1 ($\alpha = 0.87$).

Supervisor-directed deviance. Supervisor-directed deviance was assessed at T3 using the same 10-item scale used in Study 1. In contrast to Study 1, in which behavioral intentions of supervisor-directed deviance were measured, participants in Study 2 were instructed to indicate to what extent they engage in actual supervisor-directed deviance at work generally. All responses were given using 6-point Likert scales (1 = ‘never’, 6 = ‘always’) ($\alpha = 0.97$).

Covariates. In order to provide a more robust test of my theory, I accounted for potential covariates that may explain the relationship between LMXSC and supervisor-directed deviance. As in Study 1, authentic pride and trait narcissism were included as covariates in the analysis. Authentic pride was assessed at T2 using the same 7-item authentic pride scale used in Study 1 ($\alpha = 0.94$), though it was adapted similarly to the hubristic pride measure mentioned above. Trait narcissism was measured at T1 using the 16 paired-item Narcissism Personality Inventory by Ames et al. (2006). An example pair is “I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so” and “When people compliment me, I sometimes get embarrassed”. Responses involved choosing one of the two paired items ($\alpha = 0.86$).

Furthermore, and as in Study 1, I wanted to ensure that the effects of LMXSC were not confounded with LMX, the general quality of one’s leader treatment. This is of high theoretical importance considering that “LMX serves as the baseline or point of comparison on which LMXSC judgments are based” (Vidyarthi et al., 2010, p. 853). Thus, as commonly done in studies on LMXSC (e.g., Korman et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2019; Vidyarthi et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2023), LMX was measured to examine whether LMXSC explains additional variance beyond that explained by LMX. Leader-member exchange was assessed at T1 using the 7-item scale developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). An example item is “I have enough confidence in my supervisor that I would defend and justify his/her decision if he/

she were not present to do so”. All responses were given using 5-point Likert scales (1 = ‘rarely’, 5 = ‘very often’) ($\alpha = 0.92$).

Results

Ten participants (3.6%) reported working alone and were therefore excluded from the analyses due to the reliance of the independent variable (LMXSC) on social comparison processes with coworkers. Thus, the final sample consisted of 268 participants.⁶

I conducted a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) to test whether the scale items representing the constructs measured were distinguishable from one another (see Table 4 for details). A 5-factor model in which LMXSC, LMX, hubristic pride, parental overindulgence, and supervisor-directed deviance each loaded on separate factors had adequate model fit (Nye, 2023), $\chi^2(730) = 1713$, RMSEA = 0.07, CFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.90, SRMR = 0.08, and fit the data better than alternative models in which some or all of these constructs loaded on shared factors. It is also important to note that a 7-factor model in which the covariates authentic pride and trait narcissism were allowed to load on separate factors showed adequate fit (Nye, 2023) on some indices (RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .08) but not others (CFI = .86, TLI = .85). For this reason, the following main analysis focuses on the 5-factor model that does not include authentic pride and trait narcissism as covariates. However, to ensure full transparency, supplementary analyses based on the 7-factor statistical model including these covariates - despite its inadequate values in terms of the CFI and TLI indices - are also reported.

⁶ Although nine participants (3.4%) in the final sample reported having had a *fatal* heart attack, the inclusion of these participants did not significantly affect the results or their interpretation and so they were kept in the final sample.

Main Analysis

All variables were standardized (i.e., converted to z-scores) prior to analysis. I first estimated the paths required for testing the conditional indirect effects of interest. LMXSC was set as the independent variable, hubristic pride the mediator, parental overindulgence the 2nd-stage moderator, and supervisor-directed deviance the dependent variable. LMX was included as a predictor of both hubristic pride and supervisor-directed deviance. The results of this initial analysis are summarized in Table 5 (Model 1). LMXSC was positively associated with hubristic pride ($\beta = 0.66$, $p < .001$), as expected. Furthermore, hubristic pride interacted with parental overindulgence to predict supervisor-directed deviance ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < .001$). Follow-up simple-slopes analysis showed that when parental overindulgence was high (+1 *SD*), the relationship between hubristic pride and supervisor-directed deviance was more positive ($\beta = 0.84$, $p < .001$) than when parental overindulgence was low (-1 *SD*), ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < .001$). See Fig. 3 for details.

A 2nd stage moderated-mediation analysis involving 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples was used to test Hypothesis 1. Supporting Hypothesis 1, LMXSC was associated with greater supervisor-directed deviance via increases in hubristic pride when parental overindulgence was high ($\beta = 0.55$, 95% CI [0.347, 0.773]) as compared to when it was low ($\beta = 0.21$, 95% CI [-0.097, 0.373]). The indirect effects were

significantly different from one another ($\beta = -0.35$, 95% CI [-0.517, -0.186]).

Supplementary Analyses

Using the 7-factor model reported in Table 4 (Model 2), I tested the statistical model while including authentic pride and trait narcissism as covariates predicting both the mediator (i.e., hubristic pride) and dependent variable (i.e., supervisor-directed deviance). The results of this supplemental analysis are summarized in Table 5 (Model 2). As before, initial analyses showed that LMXSC was positively associated with hubristic pride ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$), as expected. Furthermore, hubristic pride interacted with parental overindulgence to predict supervisor-directed deviance ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < .001$). Follow-up simple-slopes analysis again showed that when parental overindulgence was high (+1 *SD*), the relationship between hubristic pride and supervisor-directed deviance was more positive ($\beta = 0.81$, $p < .001$) than when parental overindulgence was low (-1 *SD*), ($\beta = 0.27$, $p = .001$).

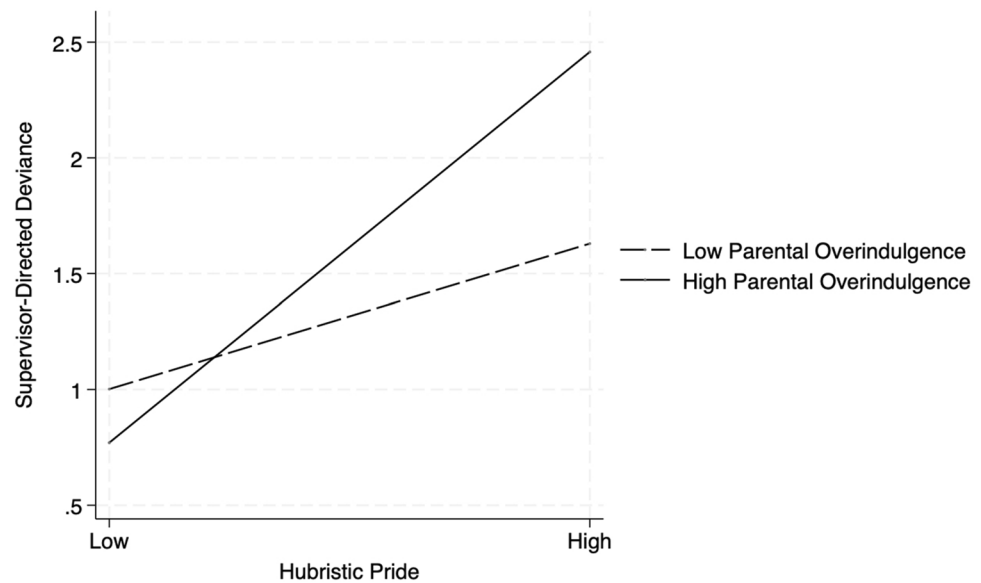
Second-stage moderated-mediation analysis involving 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples was again used to test Hypothesis 1. Supporting Hypothesis 1, LMXSC was associated with greater supervisor-directed deviance via increases in hubristic pride in individuals reporting high parental

Table 5 Regression Results of Study 2

Variable	Model 1 ^a			Model 2 ^b		
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Hubristic pride						
Intercept	1.93	0.08	<.001	1.93	0.07	<.001
LMXSC	0.66	0.11	<.001	0.42	0.11	<.001
LMX	-0.43	0.11	<.001	-0.21	0.12	.062
Authentic pride				-0.21	0.09	.027
Trait narcissism				0.63	0.08	<.001
Supervisor-directed deviance						
Intercept	1.47	0.04	<.001	1.46	0.04	<.001
LMXSC	0.06	0.05	.273	0.06	0.06	.311
LMX	-0.18	0.05	.001	-0.14	0.06	.014
Hubristic pride	0.58	0.05	<.001	0.54	0.06	<.001
Parental overindulgence	0.15	0.04	.001	0.15	0.04	.001
Hubristic pride \times Parental overindulgence	0.27	0.03	<.001	0.27	0.03	<.001
Authentic pride				-0.07	0.05	.161
Trait narcissism				0.06	0.04	.190

LMXSC leader-member exchange social comparison, LMX leader-member exchange, ^a = RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and SRMR model fit statistics were adequate, ^b = RMSEA and SRMR model fit statistics were adequate.

Fig. 3 Hubristic Pride \times Parental Overindulgence Interaction Effect on Supervisor-Directed Deviance in Study 2. Notes: High and low levels of variables represent +1 and -1 standard deviations around the mean



overindulgence ($\beta = 0.34$, 95% CI [0.176, 0.525]) compared to those reporting low parental overindulgence ($\beta = 0.11$, 95% CI [-0.040, 0.228]). The indirect effects were significantly different from one another, $\beta = -0.23$, 95% CI [-0.372, -0.106]. These results provide additional support for my theory, though they must be interpreted with caution considering that CFI and TLI fit indices indicated a lack of discriminant validity in this model including authentic pride and trait narcissism as covariates (see Table 4 for details).

General Discussion

Using both experimental and field study designs, I find consistent support for my hypothesis that LMXSC is associated with greater supervisor-directed deviance via increased feelings of hubristic pride in subordinates who report having experienced higher parental overindulgence during childhood. Additional analyses show that these findings are robust to alternative explanations (i.e., authentic pride, trait narcissism, and LMX).

Theoretical Implications

Prior research has taken for granted that high LMXSC subordinates feel obligated to reciprocate their leader support (Bryant & Merritt, 2019; Lapointe et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Singh & Vidyarthi, 2018; Vidyarthi et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2023), ignoring the prospect that some of these individuals may instead be motivated to take advantage of their comparatively better relationship with their leader. The current study challenges this assumption by demonstrating that high LMXSC elicits hubristic pride (see also Korman et al., 2023), an emotion associated with aggressive behavior in the

pursuit of resources (Cheng et al., 2010), which in turn motivates supervisor-directed deviance. Thus, this study shifts the consensus in the LMXSC literature while highlighting that aggressive supervisor-directed behavior is not limited to mistreated subordinates or witnesses to coworker mistreatment as previous studies would suggest (Liu et al., 2010; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2015; Peng et al., 2020). Instead, the findings provide initial evidence that aggressive supervisor-directed behavior may be used as a means by which comparatively better treated subordinates attempt to control their leaders and their leader's resources. This is in line with previous work (e.g., Kipnis & Schmidt, 1985) suggesting that subordinates can use an array of tactics (ranging from "soft" to "hard") to gain resources from their leader and adds to nascent work demonstrating that negative, antisocial behavior can result from LMXSC-induced feelings of superiority (Korman et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the study findings counterpoint previous work by Huang et al. (2015) which associated higher LMXSC with lower supervisor-directed deviance. However, notable differences in our theoretical as well as methodological approaches are to account for the differences between our findings. Importantly, whereas Huang et al. (2015) argue that low LMXSC motivates supervisor-directed deviance due to subordinates' negatively valenced emotions (specifically, "feelings of anger or frustration"; Huang et al., 2015, p. 1274), I argue that high LMXSC motivates supervisor-directed deviance due to subordinates' positively valenced emotions (specifically, feelings of hubristic pride; Mercadante et al., 2021). Taken together, these studies offer a more detailed picture of the complex relationship between LMXSC and supervisor-directed deviance by highlighting the various indirect (and affect-driven) paths linking these constructs while further "confirm[ing]" the necessity of

exploring the cognitive and affective psychological processes linking leadership and outcomes for subordinates (Huang et al., 2015; p. 1284). Additionally, it is worth mentioning that, from a methodological perspective, my study differs from that of Huang et al. (2015) in that their findings were derived from a cross-sectional analysis based on an Eastern (specifically Chinese) sample while my findings stem from experimental and time-lagged analyses drawing from various Anglo samples. Thus, differences in our findings may also be due to methodological differences or a (yet unexplored) contextual effect of culture moderating the relationship between LMXSC and supervisor-directed deviance.

In addition to demonstrating that LMXSC is associated with increased supervisor-directed deviance via hubristic pride, the current study shows that the indirect effect of LMXSC on supervisor-directed behavior is moderated by subordinates' childhood experiences with their parents. Specifically, high LMXSC subordinates who experienced more parental overindulgence during their childhood reported engaging in more supervisor-directed deviance relative to subordinates who experienced less parental overindulgence. This is in line with Slinger and Bredehoft's (2010) finding that parental overindulgence is negatively associated with gratitude, an emotion motivating increased prosocial, and decreased antisocial, behavior (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; DeWall et al., 2011) in adulthood. The current study therefore suggests that, instead of being grateful for their comparatively better relationship with their supervisor, high LMXSC individuals who were overindulged as children demonstrate ungrateful and aggressive supervisor-directed behavior. By introducing parental overindulgence as an important moderator of employees' workplace behavior, this study lends further credence to research highlighting how parent-child relationships inform leader-subordinate relationships (e.g., Popper & Mayseless, 2003) and contributes to developing research into the effects of childhood experiences on later employee outcomes (cf. Campbell et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2016). Furthermore, this study provides initial empirical evidence linking LMX relationships and child-parent relationships with deviant behavior, a topic of research that has been theorized about (Eddleston & Kidwell, 2011) but for which empirical work is lacking. In addressing this topic, this study answers calls for additional research into subordinate's supervisor-directed aggression (Branch et al., 2007; Branch et al., 2021).

This study also expands on work investigating the interplay between personality characteristics (e.g., trait narcissism), hubristic pride, and dominance-based status strategies (Carver et al., 2010; Cheng et al., 2010; Mercadante et al., 2021; Tracy & Robins, 2007a, 2007b). By showing that parental overindulgence explains variance in dominant-driven behavior beyond that explained by trait narcissism, this study introduces one's previous, successful use of dominance strategies toward resource-distributing

authority figures (e.g., parents) as an important factor determining whether individuals act on their feelings of hubristic pride. This study thereby provides nuance to previous work reporting direct effects of hubristic pride on dominant behavior (e.g., Korman et al., 2023; Mercadante et al., 2021; Yeung & Shen, 2019) while contributing to the current discussion on when dominance-based strategies emerge and persist (Redhead et al., 2019; Witkower et al., 2022). This is important considering that hubristic pride and dominance are bidirectional, suggesting that "the tendency to feel pride after success may be an evolved adaptation that motivates individuals to strive for greater social status and reinforces their efforts when successful" (Witkower et al., 2022, p. 383). Thus, although recent longitudinal work (Redhead et al., 2019) reports that the effectiveness of dominance strategies (in newly formed groups) tends to wane with time, the current study suggests that dominance strategies can persist if they were effective in the past *and* that they can be transferred from (child-parent) relationship to (subordinate-leader) relationship. As such, it answers calls for additional work to assess how social rank (e.g., LMXSC) is linked to hubristic pride and hubristic pride is linked to status-striving behaviors (e.g., supervisor-directed deviance) (Witkower et al., 2022) as well as calls for research into when dominance becomes a long-term, status-driven strategy (Redhead et al., 2019).

Practical Implications

Although previous work has highlighted, and sought to explain, the aggressive behavior subordinates can show toward their supervisors (Liu et al., 2010; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Peng et al., 2020), the current study is the first to demonstrate that subordinates who perceive themselves as having a uniquely positive relationship with their supervisor (i.e., high LMXSC) can also be motivated to act aggressively towards them. This finding has high practical relevance considering that leaders cannot treat all subordinates exactly equal due to their limited time and resources (Graen, 1976), and prior studies have emphasized that subordinates' perceptions that they enjoy better leader treatment than their co-workers positively impacts their ethical behavior, for example their norm compliance (Thau et al., 2013) and organizational citizenship behavior (Yang et al., 2023). The current study's findings indicate that unethical, deviant behavior can also emerge from such perceptions, thereby adding an additional layer of complexity to the question of when leaders should decide to treat their subordinates differentially. Given that hubristic pride – a driver of employees' unethical behavior – has been linked to the attribution of positive events to internal, stable, and uncontrollable causes, such as one's innate ability (Tracy & Robins,

2007b), supervisors are recommended to direct their attention and resources towards subordinates who demonstrate notable team contributions specifically through hard work and collegiality. Doing so can help ensure that recognized subordinates experience positive emotions unassociated with feelings of superiority (e.g., authentic pride; Tracy et al., 2009) and do not subsequently become a source of trouble for the leader.

I therefore recommend supervisors to be vigilant after singling subordinates out with praise or unique opportunities as this behavior may have unintended negative effects on the leader-subordinate relationship. Should this happen, supervisors should be quick to admonish the negative subordinate behavior and draw clear boundaries with clear consequences. Furthermore, my findings highlight the importance of leaders taking stock of how they are viewed by their subordinates (e.g., through in-person discussions or online surveys) and, when necessary, adjusting this perception accordingly. This practical implication is particularly timely given recent estimates showing that a growing proportion of adults between 18 and 29 live with their parents or return to living with their parents after living independently (52%; Pew Research Center, 2020). Considering the increased child-parent contact that comes with this extended or reinstated cohabitation, the influence that child-parent relationships can have on leader-subordinate relationships would be expected to be particularly strong in newer (i.e., younger) members of the workforce. This is important given that, as the baby boomer generation exits the workforce (Dohm, 2000), newer (i.e., younger) workers will play an increasingly important role in defining the social conditions of the workplace (c.f. Benítez-Marquez et al., 2022).

Limitations and Future Directions

This research sets the stage for prospective studies investigating how parental overindulgence affects subordinates' interactions with their supervisors. However, this work has important limitations. First, the findings rely on subordinates' self-report data. Although individuals have greater access to their thoughts and feelings relative to others (Robins et al., 1999), and self-reports are thus a valid tool when studying individuals' experiences and emotions (Pekrun, 2016), social desirability bias can impact the validity and reliability of self-report data (Podsakoff et al., 2012). For this reason, social desirability concerns affecting the first half of my model (i.e., the effect of LMXSC on hubristic pride) were addressed by experimentally manipulating LMXSC in Study 1 and temporally separating LMXSC from hubristic pride in Study 2 (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Social desirability concerns affecting the second half of my model (i.e., the effect of hubristic pride on supervisor-directed deviance) were addressed by using parental overindulgence as a moderator of hubristic pride when

predicting supervisor-directed deviance because method bias, of which social desirability is a form, “cannot inflate (but does deflate) quadratic and interaction effects” (Podsakoff et al., 2012, p. 541). It is also important to note that, if social desirability were affecting the results, the reported effects would likely be conservative given that individuals are motivated to *underreport* socially unacceptable behavior (e.g., supervisor-directed deviance), not overreport it (Podsakoff et al., 2012). That being said, future work could further reduce social desirability concerns regarding this study's findings by implementing multi-source designs (Podsakoff et al., 2003) which would also allow for the simultaneous study of both subordinates' and supervisors' perspectives regarding the treatment they provide to, and receive from, one another.

The findings are further limited in that they are based on samples drawn solely from Western countries with Anglo cultures. Increased external validity for the presented theory could be garnered by investigating the relationship between parental overindulgence and supervisor-directed deviance in Eastern countries with non-Anglo cultures. One such country is Japan, which has a culture that emphasizes humility over self-assertion and where direct forms of aggression (i.e., aggressing towards the target) are considered extreme (Severance et al., 2013). By incorporating culture as a moderator into the theoretical model, future scholars can build on these findings and potentially highlight limiting conditions in which parental overindulgence has a greater or lesser effect on subordinates' supervisor-directed behavior. In addition to exploring how a country's culture may moderate the relationship between hubristic pride, parental overindulgence, and supervisor-directed deviance, the corporate culture could be taken into account as well (Narayanan & Murphy, 2017). For example, individuals in organizations that emphasize strict, vertical hierarchies (e.g., police, military) may be less likely to engage in supervisor-directed deviance compared to organizations that emphasize horizontal hierarchies. Although little is known regarding the effects of parental overindulgence on work-related attitudes or behavior (but see Lonstein, 2019; Shahine, 2015), this study aims to motivate future research into this interesting, yet untapped, topic.

Conclusion

Whereas previous research has assumed that high LMXSC relationships motivate reciprocal and prosocial supervisor-directed behavior, this study shows that high LMXSC can lead to greater supervisor-directed deviance via feelings of hubristic pride in subordinates who experienced more parental overindulgence during childhood. In doing so, this study shifts the consensus in the literature while introducing the importance of parent-child relations in predicting later leader-subordinate relations.

Appendix A

Table 6 Multiple Logistic Regression Results Comparing Starters to Completers in Study 2

Variables	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	0.44	0.48	.361
LMXSC	-0.04	0.10	.699
LMX	-0.15	0.17	.366
Trait narcissism	-0.08	0.45	.867

LMXSC = leader-member exchange social comparison; LMX = leader-member exchange. Results were calculated using multiple logistic regression to test for differences between the 123 participants who started but did not complete Study 2 (i.e., completed only the T1 survey) and the 278 participants who completed Study 2 (i.e., completed the T1, T2, and T3 surveys). “Starters” were coded as 0 and “Completers” were coded as 1. LMXSC, LMX, and trait narcissism were measured at T1

Appendix B

Table 7 Data Transparency for Study 2

Variable	Manuscript	
	<i>Proceedings of Academy of Management Article</i>	Current Article
1. LMXSC	X (IV)	X (IV)
2. LMX	X (COV)	X (COV)
3. Hubristic pride	X (MED)	X (MED)
4. Parental overindulgence		X (MOD)
5. Supervisor-directed deviance		X (DV)
6. Authentic pride	X (MED)	X (COV)
7. Trait narcissism		X (COV)
8. Coworker-directed social undermining	X (DV)	
9. Coworker-directed organizational citizenship behaviors	X (DV)	

IV independent variable, COV covariate, MED mediator, MOD moderator, DV dependent variable

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-024-09989-w>.

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Data Availability The data that support the findings of this study are available from the author upon reasonable request.

Declarations

Conflict of interest This work was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG—German Research Foundation) under Germany’s Excellence Strategy—EXC-2035/1–390681379. Furthermore, data collection for this project was funded by the DFG grant TR 1398/1-1 (PI: Tröster). I have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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