

MOVING FROM ABUSE TO RECONCILIATION: A POWER-DEPENDENCE PERSPECTIVE ON WHEN AND HOW A FOLLOWER CAN BREAK THE SPIRAL OF ABUSE

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Despite the burgeoning research on abusive supervision, the literature lacks an in-depth understanding of how followers can successfully break the spiral of abusive supervision over time and influence their leaders to engage in reconciliatory behaviors following abusive supervision. Using power-dependence theory as our framework, we first examine the specific state of power dependence that predicts abusive supervision. We then theorize balancing operations as coping strategies that the follower can use to address the persistence of abusive supervision over time by changing the power imbalance within the dyad. We hypothesize that through the follower's approach balancing operations, the leader is more likely to regard the abused follower as someone who is instrumental to his or her pursuit of goals and resources, resulting in a reduction in future abuse and an increase in the leader's future reconciliation. After developing and validating measures of balancing operations, we test the hypotheses using a three-wave panel design with field data from a real estate company (Study 1). In addition, we strengthen our conclusions by replicating our results through a different field sample in a commercial bank (Study 2). The findings' theoretical and practical implications for abusive supervision and followership are discussed.

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A startling 27% of U.S. workers (65.6 million people) have suffered from some form of abusive behaviors from their leaders, such as repeated intimidation, humiliation, and verbal abuse (Workplace Bullying Institute & Zoeby International, 2014). These behaviors, collectively referred to as abusive supervision, are defined as expressions of nonphysical hostility that leaders perpetuate against their followers (Tepper, 2000). Abusive supervision has dire, consequential effects on followers, such as psychological distress (Tepper, 2000). At the organizational level, abusive supervision also brings a substantial financial cost for organizations—the estimated cost of abusive supervision is \$23.8 billion annually for U.S. corporations (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006). Given these significant impacts, abusive supervision

has received considerable attention in the literature (e.g., Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007; Marcus-Newhall, Pedersen, Carlson, & Miller, 2000; Tepper, Carr, Breaux, Geider, Hu, & Hua, 2009).

Surprisingly, the common narrative in the abusive supervision literature focuses on the followers' attempts to mitigate the personal consequences of abusive supervision. Followers engage in coping strategies to manage the psychological distress introduced by abusive supervision, including alcohol use (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006), psychological withdrawal (Mawritz, Dust, & Resick, 2014), or upward maintenance communication (Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, & Carr, 2007). Alternatively, the next viable strategy for the abused follower is to exit the organization (e.g., Tepper et al., 2009). Organization-level intervention for abusive supervision is also lacking, as victims of abusive supervision are often unable to count on their organizations to hold the perpetrators accountable (Courtright, Gardner, Smith, McCormick, & Colbert, 2015). Together with the knowledge that abusive behaviors tend to persist over time (Lian, Ferris, Morrison, & Brown, 2014; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), these issues point to a bleak future for abused followers, who are often portrayed as helpless against the spiral of abuse.

Similarly, extant literature has neglected the possibility for the follower to experience the leader's reconciliation following abuse. The leader's effort to extend acts of goodwill toward the abused follower is a critical step to mend the strained relationship and secure future cooperation within the dyad (McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998). Compared to the victim's initiation of reconciliation, the leader's reconciliation is more effective in supporting relationship restoration (Andiappan & Trevino, 2010). However, the question of how a follower inspires the leader's reconciliation remains unanswered. As such, it is both important and useful for scholars to explore new coping strategies that enable followers to effectively break the spiral of abuse and receive meaningful attempts at relationship restoration from the perpetrator—the leader.

Relatedly, prior studies have tended to adopt a static perspective on the power imbalance between the leader and the follower (i.e., the leader's power advantage over the follower is stable). Power is defined as the capacity to control one's goals and resources, as well as those of others (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Leaders, by virtue of their superior hierarchical positions, tend to be more powerful than their followers (Krackhardt, 1993). Past research has implied that a leader's power advantage over a

follower may trigger abusive supervision (e.g., Tepper et al., 2009; Tepper, Mitchell, Haggard, Kwan, & Park, 2015). If the assumption is that a leader's power advantage over his or her follower is stable, it is not surprising that there has not been much research on identifying viable, follower-centric solutions that may address power imbalance in the dyad—a key reason for the persistence of abusive supervision over time (Tepper et al., 2009). Clearly, abusive supervision is not evident in all leader–follower dyads despite leaders holding superior positions over followers. Power does shift from one party to another in today's workplace (Sturm & Antonakis, 2015), as such, power dynamics in the dyad are likely to change over time. This suggests that we need to adopt a relational view of power (Flynn, Gruenfeld, Molm, & Polzer, 2011) from both the leader's and the follower's perspective (Casciaro & Piskorski, 2005) in order to be precise about the state of power that predicts abusive supervision over time. Will abusive supervision emerge and persist if both parties are mutually dependent on each other for valued goals and resources (power symmetry)? Or will abusive supervision occur if the leader is more dependent on the follower for valued goals and resources (power asymmetry)?

To address these important questions, our research draws on power-dependence theory (Emerson, 1962; Molm, 1991; Tepper et al., 2009) to first specify the state of power dependence in the dyad that predicts abusive supervision, and then to highlight the type of follower coping strategies that will not only reduce the occurrence of abusive supervision over time, but also increase the likelihood of the leader's future reconciliation. This research contributes to the abusive supervision and followership literatures in two primary ways. First, we provide a precise explanation of when and how power will predict abusive supervision. Power dependence represents the state of power dynamics between the leader and the follower (Emerson, 1962). We define the follower's (leader's) dependence on the leader (the follower) as the leader's (the follower's) control over goals and resources that the follower (the leader) values. By examining all possible patterns of power dependence from both the leader's and the follower's perspective, we argue that only when the follower is asymmetrically dependent on the leader for goals and resources is the leader significantly more powerful than the follower, and therefore more likely to exploit and abuse the follower. By explaining the specific condition in which power leads to abusive supervision, we add to the limited research on the antecedents of abusive supervision (Mackey, Frieder, Brees, & Martinko, 2015; Martinko, Harvey, Brees, & Mackey, 2013).

Second, extending the followership research, we challenge the often victimized, helpless portrayal of followers in the literature by introducing balancing operations as coping strategies that followers adopt to address the persistence of abusive supervision over time. Based on Emerson's (1962) power-dependence theory, the state of power dependence in the dyad is malleable. Balancing operations are strategies for the follower to either increase the leader's dependence on the follower (i.e., approach balancing operations) or decrease the follower's dependence on the leader (i.e., avoidance balancing operations) (Emerson, 1962; Gargiulo & Ertug, 2014). We propose that a follower who engages in more approach, instead of avoidance, balancing operations will improve his or her instrumental value to the leaders' goals and resources. In turn, the leader is motivated to not only reduce future abusive behaviors, but also mend the strained relationship in hope of future cooperation. This represents an important contribution to the followership literature because we are the first to take a follower-centric approach to explain how the follower may effectively change the

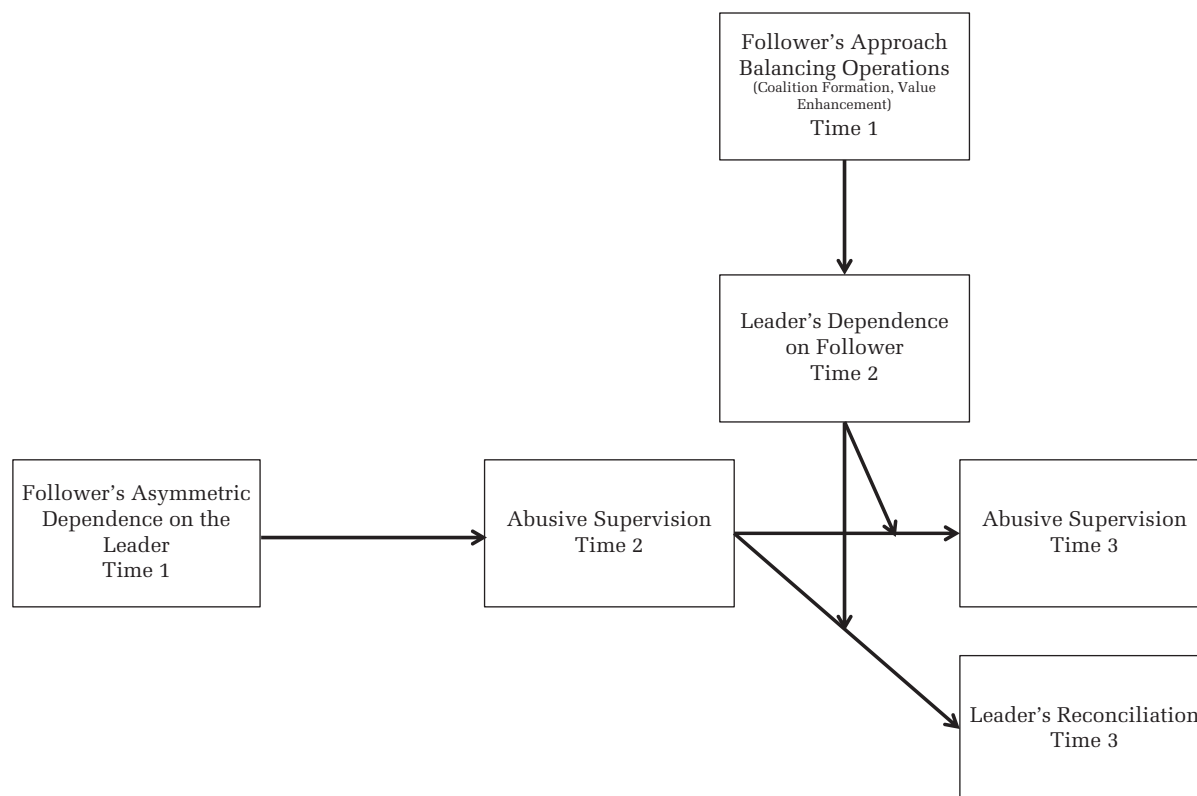
state of power imbalance in the leader–follower dyadic relationship, which, in turn, enables him or her to break out of the abusive spiral. Figure 1 summarizes the studied relationships in this research.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Follower's Asymmetric Dependence on the Leader Predicts Abusive Supervision

Power shapes the nature of social and strategic interactions in organizations (Malhotra & Gino, 2011). An individual's elevated sense of power over another party may create a corresponding imbalance in the interactions between the two (Molm, Takahashi, & Peterson, 2000), thereby influencing the powerful party's behaviors toward the weak party. This psychological experience of power may lead more powerful individuals to become disinhibited (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Keltner et al., 2003), to act in accordance with their own preferences and goals (Galinsky, Magee, Gruenfeld, Whitson, & Liljenquist, 2008), to objectify others (Overbeck & Park, 2001), and to become less aware of others' perspectives

FIGURE 1
Proposed Model



(Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006). In sum, existing research on power has pointed to the disproportional impact of the powerful individual's behaviors on the weak individual (Keltner et al., 2003).

However, given that power in the leader–follower dyad may shift from one party to the other in today's workplace (Sturm & Antonakis, 2015), we need to be precise about the state of power dependence within the dyad that will create the power imbalance leading to abusive supervision. Power-dependence in the leader–follower dyad represents the state of power dynamics between the two actors (Molm, 1991; Tepper et al., 2009). Emerson's (1962: 32) theory on power dependence states that actor A's dependence on B is “(1) directly proportional to A's motivational investment in goals mediated by B, and (2) inversely proportional to the availability of those goals to A outside of the A-B relation.” More recently, Gargiulo and Ertug (2014) asserted that in addition to the control of goals, actor A's dependence on actor B is dependent on actor B's control of resources that are critical to A. More specifically, goals reflect the states that individuals want to attain or avoid (Levin & Edelstein, 2009), whereas resources reflect the means necessary for these individuals to attain their goals (Guinote, 2007). A powerful person affects others' goal attainment by granting or withholding the resources needed for realizing the goals (Guinote, 2004; Keltner et al., 2003). For example, a follower may depend on his or her leader for a career goal because the leader is in charge of allocating resources (e.g., production materials, information, and guidance) that are critical for accomplishing the follower's career goal (Wilson, Sin, & Conlon, 2010). Similarly, for the leader, an example of a follower-controlled goal is higher employee performance, whereas an example of a follower-controlled resource is follower expertise (Wilson et al., 2010). Hence, the literature has suggested that goal and resource dependence are intertwined and jointly determine power dependence in the leader–follower dyad (Farmer & Aguinis, 2005; Gargiulo & Ertug, 2014).

While the current abusive supervision literature acknowledges the importance of power (e.g., Tepper et al., 2009, 2015), studies have not fully examined the different patterns of power dependence that explain how and when the state of power in the dyad may evolve to trigger abusive supervision. Moreover, a more refined depiction of power dependence in a leader–follower dyad “calls for the simultaneous consideration of the power capability of *i* in relation

to *j* and the power capability of *j* in relation to *i*” (Casciaro & Piskorski, 2005: 170). Accordingly, we examine the four possible states of power dependence from both the leader and the follower's perspectives: (1) mutual high dependence, (2) mutual low dependence, (3) leader's asymmetric dependence on the follower, and (4) follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader. We expect that the leader's dependence on the follower and the follower's dependence on the leader are independent of each other: the level of the leader's dependence on the follower does not affect the level of the follower's dependence on the leader. We can observe a leader having high dependence on his or her follower, yet the follower's dependence on that particular leader in the dyad can be either high (i.e., mutual high dependence) or low (i.e., leader's asymmetric dependence on the follower).

Among these four states of power dependence we propose that only the follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader will fuel abusive supervision. This state of power dependence implies that the leader is able to unilaterally determine the fate of the follower's valued goals and resources (Sheppard & Sherman, 1998). The leader clearly feels more powerful over the follower, and therefore is more willing to express exploitation and abuse toward the follower (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). In this state of power imbalance, the leader experiences an increased sense of entitlement in the dyad (Zitek, Jordan, Monin, & Leach, 2010), which may then further promote opportunistic behaviors toward the follower (Malhotra & Gino, 2011). These behaviors include not caring about the follower (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008) or treating the follower unethically (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2001). As a result, a more dependent follower is likely to suffer an increased sense of vulnerability (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). Put together, the follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader predicts abusive supervision.

We do not expect the leader's asymmetric dependence on the follower to cultivate abusive supervision. When the follower has control over the leader's valued resources and goals, the leader will pay close attention to the follower so as to maintain a cordial relationship. Since any form of abusive behavior toward this follower is going to impede the leader's pursuit of valued goals and resources (Molm, 1997; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003), abusive supervision is unlikely to emerge. Similarly, mutual high dependence may not predict abusive supervision. In this state, the leader–follower dyad is

characterized by positive interactions, reduced use of threats and coercion, and enhanced stability and congeniality (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003), since both parties are reliant on the other to achieve their desired means or ends. Finally, mutual low dependence indicates that neither party has any valued goals and resources that are controlled by the other party. In this state, since the leader does not experience a power advantage over the follower (Molm, 1997), abusive supervision is unlikely to emerge. Because we incorporated a time-lagged design in Studies 1 and 2 to test our hypotheses, we indicate the measurement times of the constructs in our hypotheses. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 1. The follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader (time 1) (in contrast to mutual high dependence, mutual low dependence, and leader's asymmetric dependence on the follower) is positively related to abusive supervision (time 2).

Rebalancing Power Dependence via the Follower's Balancing Operations

Individuals rely on coping strategies to manage stressful situations they encounter (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Abusive supervision is an important workplace stressor (Nandkeolyar, Shaffer, Li, Ekkirala, & Bagger, 2014), and followers often find ways to either remove, evade, or diminish its impact (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Interestingly, most of the existing research on these strategies has focused on how the follower may cope with the consequences of abuse (e.g., Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007; Mawritz et al., 2014). For example, as a coping strategy, upward maintenance communication does not directly address the factors causing the abusive relationship, but instead serves to maintain the baseline level of relationship necessary in a functioning leader-follower dyad (Lee, 1998). In another example, upward hostility is a coping strategy for the abused follower to create self-images that are incompatible with the victim identity (Tepper et al., 2015). Upward hostility does not directly address the factors causing abusive supervision, but functions to weaken the deleterious effects of abusive supervision on follower job satisfaction, affective commitment, and psychological distress (Tepper et al., 2015). To gain insights into how followers can break the spiral of abuse, we need to examine coping strategies that directly address the persistence of abusive supervision over time.

We contend that balancing operations, based on power-dependence theory (Emerson, 1962; Gargiulo & Ertug, 2014), offer a novel and important extension to the abusive supervision literature. These four strategies change the existing state of power dependence in a dyad in two different ways: (1) by increasing the powerful actor's dependence on the weak actor, or (2) by decreasing the weak actor's dependence on the powerful actor. Since Emerson's (1962) classic work highlighted the dynamic nature of the power relationship in a dyad, we propose that the power-dependence framework provides a useful perspective to discuss how followers may rely on balancing operations as coping strategies to loosen the grip of abusive supervision over time. Consistent with the coping literature, we regard balancing operations as followers' conscious, volitional attempts to regulate and respond to a stressful environment (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001). Therefore, we recognize followers' agency in the use of balancing operations, similar to other examples of coping strategies (e.g., Harvey et al., 2007; Tepper et al., 2015).

Going further, we organize the four balancing operations along the framework of approach and avoidance motivation (Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Covington, 2001). Approach and avoidance are primary motivational forces that influence human functioning in the presence of external stimuli such as an abusive leader (Kenrick & Shiota, 2008). This suggests that the approach and avoidance framework is an effective categorization scheme to explain different work behaviors. Approach motivation is defined by the activation of a person's behavior by, or the direction of the behavior toward, external stimuli in order to attain positive outcomes (Elliot, 2008). On the other hand, avoidance motivation is defined by the activation of a person's behavior by, or the direction of the behavior away from, external stimuli in order to avoid negative outcomes (Elliot, 2008). Recent developments in the workplace aggression literature include the use of approach or avoidance motivation to explain the differential effects and consequences of workplace aggression constructs (Ferris, Yan, Lim, Chen, & Fatimah, 2015). Building on this research momentum, we integrate the approach and avoidance framework in our discussion of the four balancing operations to explain how these two basic motivational forces play a key role in clarifying the distinct nature of different balancing operations.

Approach balancing operations. Coalition formation and value enhancement are approach balancing operations because they signal the follower's motivation to approach or maintain contact with the leader (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009), and also to attain the follower's desired state of power dependence by increasing the leader's dependence on him or her. *Coalition formation* is a strategy for the focal follower to enlist participation from other followers who are under the same leader to coordinate their behaviors in a way that constrains the attainment of the leader's valued goals and resources (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2014). For example, the leader may rely on a specific follower in the team for key performance outcomes (e.g., sales promotion). If the focal follower is able to convince a highly valued follower to form a united, coordinated front against the leader, the leader may view the focal follower as a "single unit" with the valued follower. In turn, this will increase the leader's dependence on the focal follower.

*Value enhancement*¹ is a strategy for the follower to increase his or her instrumental value to the leader's valued goals and resources (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2014; Murray, Aloni, Holmes, Derrick, Stinson, & Leder, 2009). The strategy is for the follower to make himself or herself indispensable to the leader by demonstrating specific knowledge, skills, abilities, or resources that are valuable to the leader. For example, the follower may take the initiative to acquire a new skill or obtain critical information that is important to the leader. As such, value enhancement, similar to coalition formation, will increase the leader's dependence on the follower.

Avoidance balancing operations. Motivational withdrawal and network extension are avoidance balancing operations because they signal the follower's motivation to create distance from the

leader (Spielberg, Heller, Siltan, Stewart, & Miller, 2011), and also to avoid the undesired state of power dependence (i.e., follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader) by decreasing his or her dependence on the leader. *Motivational withdrawal* is a strategy for the follower to move away from his or her valued goals and resources that are controlled by the leader, and to make a conscious effort to pursue other goals and resources that are outside of the leader's control (Emerson, 1962). *Network extension* is a strategy for the follower to find an alternative route to his or her valued goals and resources through other individuals (Emerson, 1962). Instead of relying on the leader, the follower may invest in other relationships that support the attainment of the same or similar goals and resources. Therefore,

Hypothesis 2. The follower's approach balancing operations (time 1), as opposed to avoidance balancing operations (time 1), are positively related to the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2).

Breaking the Abusive Supervision Spiral

Without any intervention, abusive behaviors often continue over time (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Abusive supervision is likely to be a repeated phenomenon because the leader's justifications for abuse tend to persist in the absence of any significant positive change in the leader's perception of the follower (Simon, Hurst, Kelley, & Judge, 2015). In line with this prediction, Lian and colleagues (2014) found a positive relationship between time 1 and time 2 abusive supervision across two independent studies. We propose that the follower's approach balancing operations, as opposed to avoidance balancing operations, will break the abusive supervision spiral. Specifically, the follower's approach balancing operations indicate to the leader that the follower is making tangible, proactive efforts to improve his or her instrumental value to the leader's pursuit of goals and resources. Since these efforts are directed at the leader, approach balancing operations weaken the leader's justification to abuse the follower (Nandkeolyar et al., 2014). When followers engage in more approach balancing operations, we expect the occurrence of abusive supervision to decline over time. In contrast, the follower's avoidance balancing operations indicate to the leader that the follower is committed to alternative pathways to

¹ Emerson (1962) used the term "status-giving" to describe a balancing operation that involves status recognition from the weaker party. This action gratifies the stronger party's ego and thus enhances the weaker party's value to the stronger party. In this paper, we rely on Gargiulo and Ertug's (2014: 183) broader definition of "increasing the dependence of the stronger party" to expand the theoretical discussion beyond ego gratification. Specifically, we use the term "value enhancement," which delineates the situation of the weaker party, demonstrating instrumental value to the stronger party (i.e., valued competencies [Murray et al., 2009]).

their valued goals and resources. Since these efforts create distance away from the leader and do not impact the leader's pursuit of his or her valued goals and resources, they are unlikely to change the leader's justification for abuse. Therefore, the follower's avoidance balancing operations do not reduce the occurrence of abusive supervision over time.

Hypothesis 3a. The follower's approach balancing operations (time 1), as opposed to avoidance balancing operations (time 1), attenuate the relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and abusive supervision (time 3), such that this relationship will be less positive when the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) are higher.

Building on Hypothesis 2, we further propose that an increased level of the leader's dependence on the follower, which results from the follower's approach balancing operations, will reduce the occurrence of abusive supervision over time. We focus on the change in the level of the leader's dependence on the follower² because the leader's behavior is more responsive to changes in his or her dependence on the follower compared to the follower's dependence on him or her. Individuals are more attuned to situational cues about their own valued goals and resources than about others' (e.g., Fiske, 2010; Galinsky et al., 2008; Overbeck & Park, 2001). When a follower successfully instigates significant changes in the leader's dependence on the follower, this will directly affect the leader's attention to the existing relationship with the follower, resulting in a significant change in the leader's behavior. This is especially so when the follower engages in more approach balancing operations, which put constraints on the leader's pursuit of valued goals and resources. In this situation, the leader is motivated to increase his or her likelihood of goal or resource attainment by reducing his abusive behavior toward the follower. Furthermore, it is the perpetrator of abuse (i.e., the leader), and not the victim of abuse (i.e., the follower), that directly determines the extent of future abusive supervision. Based on these arguments, we focus on the leader's

dependence on the follower, instead of the follower's dependence on the leader, in order to explain the change in abusive supervision in our model.

Hypothesis 3b. The leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) attenuates the relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and abusive supervision (time 3), such that this relationship will be less positive when the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) is higher.

Promoting Leader's Reconciliation Following Abusive Supervision

Leader's reconciliation, defined as the leader's efforts to extend acts of goodwill toward the abused follower in the hope of restoring the relationship, helps to deescalate existing conflict and secure future cooperation (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; McCullough et al., 1998). Past discussion of reconciliation has placed the focus squarely on the victim (i.e., abused follower) (e.g., Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006). However, reconciliation efforts from the leader are more effective in restoring an abusive relationship compared to efforts from the follower. Whereas abused followers may readily reconcile with a leader out of the necessity to maintain a working relationship (Aquino et al., 2006), leaders are less motivated to engage in the reconciliation process if the impetus comes from the followers (Andiappan & Trevino, 2010). Yet, although a leader's effort to mend the existing strained leader-follower relationship is the most effective way to turn the relationship around, this effort is unlikely to naturally follow abusive supervision. Indeed, the power differential between the leader and the follower affects the leader's intention and action toward reconciliation, such that the leader is more likely to seek reconciliation when he or she realizes the abused follower's importance to the leader's valued goals and resources (Tyler & DeGoey, 1996).

Approach balancing operations enable the follower to either (1) be part of a larger collective of followers (i.e., coalition formation) or (2) increase his or her instrumental value to the leader's goal and resource pursuit (i.e., value enhancement). When the follower engages in more approach balancing operations, the leader is prompted to recognize the need for future cooperation from the follower who is becoming more critical to the leader's valued goals and resources. This, in turn, increases the leader's intention to mend the strained relationship with

² Statistically, we controlled for the follower's dependence on the leader in our model specification. This allowed us to demonstrate the predictive power of the leader's dependence on the follower over and above that of the follower's dependence on the leader.

the abused follower. For example, a follower who successfully enlists the participation of other followers in the team to form a united, coordinated front against their leader is likely to prompt the leader to reconsider the instrumental value of the follower (Emerson, 1962; Gargiulo & Ertug, 2014). Individuals are motivated to enhance working relationships that are instrumental in helping them achieve desired outcomes (Tepper et al., 2007). An important step for the leader to secure future cooperation from the abused follower is to first show reconciliation efforts (Andiappan & Trevino, 2010). When followers engage in approach balancing operations, an increased level of abusive supervision will be more likely to activate leaders' reconciliatory behaviors. In contrast, avoidance balancing operations do not significantly increase the leader's need for future cooperation with the follower. Engaging in more avoidance balancing operations will create a greater distance from the leader (Spielberg et al., 2011); therefore, it is unlikely for the leader to seek reconciliation after abusive supervision occurs. Thus,

Hypothesis 4a. The follower's approach balancing operations (time 1), as opposed to avoidance balancing operations (time 1), augment the relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and the leader's reconciliation (time 3), such that this relationship will be more positive when the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) are higher.

Likewise, we propose that when the level of the leader's dependence on the follower is higher, the leader is more likely to show reconciliation efforts following abuse. When the leader's dependence on the follower is high, the leader may experience future obstruction in pursuing his or her goals and resources because of the follower's control over the leader's valued goals and resources. Following abusive supervision, the leader is motivated to seek reconciliation with the abused follower who increased the leader's level of dependence on the follower, which indicates that the follower is gaining control over the leader's valued goals and resources (Aquino et al., 2006). Similarly, when a leader's dependence on the follower is high, the leader is likely to experience a potential loss in power, causing the leader to be more vigilant and attentive to the follower (Stevens & Fiske, 2000). Overall, following abusive supervision, we predict that a higher level of the leader's dependence on the follower will

strengthen the likelihood of relationship restoration from the leader.

Hypothesis 4b. The leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) augments the relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and the leader's reconciliation (time 3), such that this relationship will be more positive when the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) is higher.

Considering Hypotheses 2 to 4b together, along with prior mediated moderation studies (Edwards & Lambert, 2007), we propose a mediated moderation model. Our model suggests that the leader's dependence on the follower functions as the pivotal psychological mechanism that transmits the moderating effect of the follower's approach balancing operations on the two main relationships: (1) abusive supervision over time, and (2) abusive supervision and future leader's reconciliation (see Grant & Berry, 2011 for a similar mediated moderation model). That is:

Hypothesis 5a. The moderating effect of the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) on the relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and abusive supervision (time 3) is explained through the mechanism of the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2).

Hypothesis 5b. The moderating effect of the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) on the relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and the leader's reconciliation (time 3) is explained through the mechanism of the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2).

OVERVIEW OF THE TWO EMPIRICAL STUDIES

We conducted two empirical studies to examine the proposed hypotheses. First, to the best of our knowledge, there is no existing scale for balancing operations. Therefore, as a pilot to Study 1, we first develop and validate a new measure of balancing operations. We heed the call by abusive supervision scholars to rely on longitudinal, time-lagged designs to highlight and test the directionality of proposed effects between key variables (Lian et al., 2014; Mackey et al., 2015; Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2007). Thus, we adopt a three-wave panel field design to reflect and test the dynamic relationships among the key constructs in our model (see Figure 1). Standing out from a majority of abusive supervision

studies, our research also models the trajectories of abusive supervision over three time periods (Singer & Willett, 2003), allowing more precise examination of the causal relationships between power dependence and abusive supervision. Finally, in Study 2, we conduct a replication field study³ in a different industry employing a time-lagged research design to cross-validate our findings from Study 1. Hence, Study 2 can provide additional confidence in our proposed model.

STUDY 1: THREE-WAVE PANEL FIELD STUDY

Scale Development for Balancing Operations

Since there is no existing measure of balancing operations in the literature, we followed the standard scale development procedure (Hinkin, 1995) to develop the scale of balancing operations. First, we delved into the existing literature to create an initial item pool for balancing operations (Emerson, 1962; Farmer & Aguinis, 2005; Gargiulo & Ertug, 2014). We generated eight items for each of the four balancing operations, with a total of 32 items for the entire item pool. We then invited eight organizational behavior and industrial-organizational psychology doctoral students and a faculty who specialized in psychometrics (outside of the research team) to provide an expert content evaluation. These experts, who were unaware of the research purpose, sorted each item into the four categories and then rated each item under each category on its representativeness on a seven-point scale: 1—"not representative at all," 4—"neutral," and 7—"fully representative." We went on to retain items with good interrater agreements in the sorting (i.e., inter-rater agreement > .70 [LeBreton & Senter, 2007]), and those with highest average ratings in each category. Through this content evaluation process, we narrowed down to 16 items in total, with four items for each balancing operation.

We then explored the factor structure of the newly created scale by surveying participants via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is an online platform used to collect high-quality data, and "the data obtained are at least as reliable as those obtained via traditional methods" (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011: 3). We included screening items in the survey to test the attentiveness of the participants (35 participants were dropped as a result). In the final usable sample of 286 participants, the

average age was 30.6 years ($SD = 6.2$), the average work experience was 8.1 years ($SD = 2.9$), and 51.6% were in leadership positions.

Notably, we found an excellent fit for the four-factor model ($\chi^2 = 125.6$, $df = 98$, SRMR = .03, CFI = .98, TLI = .98) with all items loading strongly on their expected factors.⁴ We then examined higher-order factors to test our theoretical model of approach and avoidance balancing operations, which helps to explain the covariation among the first-order factors in a more parsimonious way (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). We found an excellent fit for the theorized two-factor second-order model (approach and avoidance balancing operations as second-order factors) with $\chi^2 = 125.6$, $df = 99$, SRMR = .03, CFI = .98, TLI = .98. In addition, the target coefficient (i.e., ratio of first-order model χ^2 to second-order χ^2 [Marsh & Hocevar, 1985]) was 1, suggesting that the relationship among first-order factors is sufficiently captured by the second-order factors. Because of this, we concluded that the theorized second-order model fits no worse than the first-order factor model; based on the principle of model parsimony, the second-order factor model is preferred (Rindskopf & Rose, 1988). Finally, our theorized two-factor model demonstrated good discriminant validity compared to a nested two-factor second-order model with the second-order factors correlated at 1 ($\Delta\chi^2 = 88$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001$, SRMR = .06, CFI = .92; TLI = .90). Overall, these results provide support for our theorized two-factor model.

Research Setting, Design, and Sampling

To test the hypotheses, we used a sample from a real estate firm based in Beijing, China. This firm is considered to be one of the biggest in the real estate industry in China. We recruited all 245 leaders in the firm to create matched leader-follower dyads. From the employee roster of the followers under the supervision of each leader (obtained from the HR department), we randomly selected two real estate agents from each team to participate in the capacities of follower and co-worker. This randomization

³ We thank the AE and reviewers for making this suggestion.

⁴ The intercorrelations among the four first-order factors are as follows: coalition formation and value enhancement, $r = .55^{**}$, $p < .01$; coalition formation and motivational withdrawal, $r = .25^*$, $p < .05$; coalition formation and network extension, $r = .30^{**}$, $p < .01$; value enhancement and motivational withdrawal, $r = .29^*$, $p < .05$; value enhancement and network extension, $r = .35^{**}$, $p < .01$; motivational withdrawal and network extension, $r = .50^{**}$, $p < .01$.

process of selecting two employees under each leader was critical for three reasons: (1) this approach helped to control for any potential biases in the selection process; (2) we reduced the survey fatigue on the leader and enhanced the quality of responses by asking the leader to rate one follower, as opposed to all of his or her followers; and (3) we minimized common source bias by adopting a multi-rater approach in our study.

With the goal of fully examining the effects of time on our key constructs, we employed a three-wave panel design to test our model. A three-wave panel design involves assessing the same set of variables at three time points, allowing researchers to specify both cross-lagged and synchronous effects of key constructs (Finkel, 1995). Following Singer and Willett's (2003) recommendation, we spaced the waves of data collection in such a way as to capture the meaning of these variables during these determined periods of time. Based on our discussions with senior management, we adopted a four-week time lag between every wave of the survey to synchronize with the monthly follower's performance review conducted by the direct leaders.

We obtained 219 matched and completed responses (consisting of leader, follower, and coworker) across three waves, yielding a response rate of 89.4%. The good response rate was achieved because senior management strongly encouraged leaders and employees to participate in all three waves of the study. Following Bentein, Vandenberghe, Vandenberg, and Stinglhamber's (2005) procedure, we did not find any significant attrition effect in terms of demographics. Leaders were 38.2 years old ($SD = 7.4$) on average and had an average of 3.05 years ($SD = 2.6$) with the firm. Followers were 35.6 years old ($SD = 7.4$) and had an average of 1.9 years ($SD = 1.2$) with the firm; similarly, coworkers were 35.1 years ($SD = 7.3$) and had an average of 1.9 years ($SD = 1.1$) with the firm.

Measures

We administered these measures in the form of surveys to the respective participants (leader, follower, coworker) for three waves. All participants responded on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1—"strongly disagree" to 5—"strongly agree." We followed the translation-back-translation procedure to create the measures in Chinese (Brislin, 1980).

Follower's power dependence on the leader (self-rated by the follower). In line with de Jong, Van der Vegt, and Molleman (2007), we asked the follower to evaluate his or her dependence on the leader in the

past month, "How dependent are you on your direct leader for career goals (e.g., promotion, development) that you care about?" and "How dependent are you on the direct leader for materials, means, information, etc. that you care about?" For clarity, we also included the definition and examples of dependence "In work relationships, employees are often dependent on their direct supervisors for desired goals and resources that they value (e.g., performance evaluation, promotion, information)." Reliabilities were .75, .77, and .77 for time 1, time 2, and time 3, respectively.

Leader's power dependence on the follower (self-rated by the leader). Similarly, in line with de Jong et al. (2007), we asked the leader to evaluate his or her dependence on the follower in the past month, "How dependent are you on [name of focal follower] for career goals (e.g., promotion, development) that you care about?" and "How dependent are you on [name of focal follower] for materials, means, information, etc. that you care about?" We also included the definition and examples of dependence for the leader. Reliabilities were .82, .76, and .75 for time 1, time 2, and time 3, respectively.

Abusive supervision (rated by a co-worker). Using the five-item scale (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), the focal follower's coworker evaluated the leader's abusive supervision toward the focal follower in the past month. An example item included, "My supervisor ridiculed [name of focal follower]." In the research setting, employees under the same supervisor had plenty of opportunities to observe the dynamics between other employees and the leader, and therefore they were good candidates to rate the extent of abusive behavior occurring between the leader and a specific follower. Coworker rating of abusive supervision also minimizes the possible common source bias, which may occur if the focal follower rates both dependence (independent variable) and abusive supervision (dependent variable). Reliabilities were .88, .89, and .89 at time 1, time 2, and time 3, respectively.

Leader's reconciliation (self-rated by the leader). We used Aquino et al.'s (2006) four-item scale to capture the leader's response toward the follower in the past month. An example item included, "I made an effort to be more concerned about [name of focal follower]." Reliabilities were .81, .81, and .80, at time 1, time 2, and time 3, respectively.

Follower's approach balancing operations (self-rated by the follower). Each follower responded to our coalition formation and value enhancement scales (Table 1). We averaged responses on both scales to compute the follower's approach balancing

TABLE 1
Items from Follower's Balancing Operations Scale

Approach Balancing Operations

Coalition Formation

I emphasized how cohesive my coworkers and I were during interactions with my supervisor.

I emphasized the cohesiveness among coworkers when I interacted with my supervisor.

I encouraged my coworkers to be cohesive in front of our supervisor.

I supported the efforts of my coworkers to be cohesive, especially in the presence of our supervisor.

Value Enhancement

I focused on developing new skills that my supervisor regards as important.

I improved myself on the skills that my supervisor regards as important.

I learned new skills that might increase my supervisor's reliance on me.

I improved my job performance so that my supervisor could achieve what he or she desired.

Avoidance Balancing Operations

Network Extension

I strengthened networks outside of my team that might help me get what I desire.

I took the initiative to meet other colleagues outside of my team who could help me get what I desire.

I reached out to colleagues outside of my team to increase my chances of getting what I desire.

I built new relationships outside of my team that might help me achieve what I desire.

Motivational Withdrawal

I increased my focus on goals and resources that my supervisor did not influence.

I focused on goals and resources that did not rely entirely on my supervisor.

I put my energy into pursuing new goals and resources that were not dependent on my supervisor.

I directed my attention to goals and resources that my supervisor had little control over.

operations. Reliabilities for approach balancing operations were .87, .85, and .86, at time 1, time 2, and time 3, respectively.

Follower's avoidance balancing operations (self-rated by the follower). Each follower responded to our network extension and motivational withdrawal scales (Table 1). Similarly, we averaged responses on both scales to compute the follower's avoidance balancing operations. Reliabilities for avoidance balancing operations were .84, .88, and .88, at time 1, time 2, and time 3, respectively.

Controls.⁵ We included leader's tenure with the follower because relationship length may influence the quality of interaction between leader and follower (Cogliser & Schriesheim, 2000).

Analytical Approach

We utilized polynomial regressions (Edwards & Cable, 2009) to test the symmetrical and asymmetrical

effects of power dependence on abusive supervision (Hypothesis 1). We also generated response surface modeling to reflect three-dimensional responses highlighting the effects of asymmetry on the outcome variable (Edwards & Harrison, 1993; Edwards & Parry, 1993). We regressed the dependent variable (i.e., abusive supervision, time 2) on the control variable, as well as five polynomial terms including follower's dependence on the leader (F), leader's dependence on the follower (L), follower's dependence on the leader squared (F^2), follower's dependence on the leader \times leader's dependence on the follower ($F \times L$), and leader's dependence on the follower squared (L^2). Prior to the analyses, we scale-centered the leader's dependence on the follower and follower's dependence on the leader by subtracting the midpoint of the scale, and used these scale-centered F and L to derive the polynomial terms (Edwards, 1994). This procedure reduced multicollinearity and improved the interpretation of our results (Zhang, Wang, & Shi, 2012).

We then examined the slopes and curvature along two critical lines: the congruence line ($F = L$) and the incongruence ($F = -L$). According to Edwards and Parry (1993), in order to show evidence of an asymmetric effect on the dependent variable, the coefficients for the three second-order polynomial terms (i.e., F^2 , $F \times L$, L^2) are required to be jointly significant. In addition, the magnitude and direction of the lateral shift determines the nature of the

⁵ To rule out alternative explanations, we initially included more control variables in our analyses. These additional control variables included leader's dominance personality, follower's self-esteem, leader-member exchange (LMX), and follower's quit intention. We found that results from our analyses still hold with these control variables in the model. For the purpose of parsimony in our reporting (Becker, 2005), and also to minimize the possible issue of false positives raised by reviewers, we did not include these additional controls in our final statistical analysis.

asymmetric relationship regarding the dependent variable. To complete our test of mediated moderation, we relied on Edwards and Cable's (2009) block variable approach to combine the five polynomial terms into a weighted linear composite variable. This allowed us to test the effect of the follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader without changing the estimated coefficients for other variables in the model (Heise, 1972). Finally, we estimated bias-corrected confidence intervals for the indirect effects using Monte Carlo simulations and conducted the analyses using Mplus 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2007).

In all our analyses, we took full advantage of our three-wave panel design to provide a more stringent test of the predictive relationship in our model. For example, strong evidence would be provided for the predicted relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and leader's reconciliation (time 3) if a significant path existed between these two variables when leader's reconciliation (time 2) was controlled for in the analyses (Finkel, 1995). We adopted this approach in our analyses by adding time-relevant control variables to our models. As auxiliary analyses, we used latent growth modeling to determine the trajectory of our key variable of interest, abusive supervision. Latent growth modeling allowed us to model the trend of abusive supervision (i.e., increasing or decreasing over the key time periods), and the strength (i.e., magnitude) of this change (Chan, 1998). We included leader's dependence on the follower and follower's dependence on the leader as two time-varying covariates to explicate the relationship between power dependence and abusive supervision over time.

Results

Table 2 reports descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities of the variables in our model.

Measurement invariance test. We conducted a series of measurement invariance tests on the key variables: abusive supervision, approach balancing operations, avoidance balancing operations, and leader's reconciliation. Following the procedure from Chan and Schmitt (2000), we allowed the error variances of the same indicators to covary freely across the three time periods. In the analyses, the model in which the factor loadings of the indicators to the respective time factors were freely estimated indicated good fit for the key variables, such as abusive supervision ($\chi^2 = 342.6$; $df = 88$; SRMR = .05; CFI = .94; TLI = .92), and leader's reconciliation ($\chi^2 = 210.2$; $df = 51$; SRMR = .06; CFI = .92; TLI = .91). A more constrained measurement model in

which we set the factor loadings to be equal across the three time periods yielded as good a fit as the less constrained model, as indicated for abusive supervision ($\Delta\chi^2 = 1.7$, $\Delta df = 8$, n.s.) and leader's reconciliation ($\Delta\chi^2 = 6.3$, $\Delta df = 6$, n.s.). These results showed that the same constructs were assessed over the three time periods.

Measurement model. We found that our hypothesized six-factor model (leader's power dependence, follower's power dependence, abusive supervision, leader's reconciliation, approach balancing operations, and avoidance balancing operations) was a better fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 668.6$, $df = 362$, SRMR = .05, CFI = .91, TLI = .91) than more parsimonious models: e.g., a six-factor model with the correlation between latent variables approach and avoidance balancing operations set to 1 ($\Delta\chi^2 = 533.6$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001$, SRMR = .11, CFI = .75, TLI = .72); and a six-factor model with correlations among latent variables set to 1 ($\Delta\chi^2 = 644.4$, $\Delta df = 15$, $p < .001$, SRMR = .16, CFI = .72, TLI = .70).

Trajectories of abusive supervision over time. Table 3 summarizes the latent growth modeling of abusive supervision. Notably, on average, there was no significant increase in abusive supervision over the three time periods (average slope = .29, n.s.). However, we observed two significant time-varying covariates of abusive supervision. First, across the three time periods, the leader's dependence on the follower was negatively related to abusive supervision (i.e., $-.33$, $p < .01$ [time 1]; $-.25$, $p < .01$ [time 2]; $-.29$, $p < .01$ [time 3]). On the contrary, across the three time periods, the follower's dependence on the leader was positively related to abusive supervision (i.e., $.24$, $p < .01$ [time 1]; $.34$, $p < .01$ [time 2]; $.32$, $p < .01$ [time 3]). Put together, this provides evidence in support of the consequential effect of power dependence on abusive supervision.

Hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 states that follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader (time 1) positively predicts abusive supervision (time 2). Table 4 highlights the estimated coefficients, as well as the slopes and curvatures along both congruence and incongruence lines in predicting abusive supervision (time 2). First, the three second-order polynomial terms were jointly significant ($F = 77.2$, $p < .01$). Second, the curvature along the incongruence line was convex ($.31$, $p < .01$) and the quantity representing the lateral shift (slope) was negative ($-.83$, $p < .01$). The surface was curved upward along the incongruence line, suggesting that the dependent variable of abusive supervision (time 2) increased when the follower's dependence was higher than the

TABLE 2
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations among Key Variables (Study 1)

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Leader-follower tenure	1.85	2.08											
2 Follower's dependence on leader, T1	2.89	0.82	-0.06										
3 Follower's dependence on leader, T2	2.82	0.81	-0.07	0.56**									
4 Leader's dependence on follower, T1	2.68	0.73	-0.06	-0.14*	(0.77)								
5 Leader's dependence on follower, T2	2.70	0.71	-0.10	0.04	-0.10	(0.82)							
6 Abusive supervision, T2	1.81	0.94	-0.08	0.22**	0.05	0.62**	(0.76)						
7 Abusive supervision, T3	1.83	0.72	0.01	0.19**	0.47**	-0.38**	-0.15*	(0.89)					
8 Leader's reconciliation, T2	2.69	0.91	0.05	0.08	0.26**	-0.31**	-0.35**	0.41**	(0.81)				
9 Leader's reconciliation, T3	2.65	0.97	-0.02	0.03	0.04	-0.04	0.10	0.08	0.01	0.32**			
10 Follower's approach balancing operations, T1	2.89	0.72	-0.09	0.19**	0.21**	0.35**	0.38**	0.03	-0.04	0.11*	0.22**	(0.87)	
11 Follower's avoidance balancing operations, T1	2.74	0.68	-0.04	0.13*	0.10	-0.08	-0.07	0.08	0.04	0.06	-0.03	0.17*	(0.84)

Notes: Reliabilities of the measures are noted in the diagonals.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

TABLE 3
Latent Growth Modeling of Abusive Supervision Including Time-Varying Covariates (Study 1)

Parameters	Unstandardized Coefficient
Growth Parameters	
Average intercept	0.99** (0.20)
Average slope	0.29 (0.28)
Intercept variance	0.48** (0.11)
Slope variance	0.07 (0.05)
Intercept/Slope covariance	-0.14* (0.06)
Time-Varying Covariates	
Leader's dependence on follower, time 1 → abusive supervision, time 1	-0.33** (0.09)
Leader's dependence on follower, time 2 → abusive supervision, time 2	-0.25** (0.06)
Leader's dependence on follower, time 3 → abusive supervision, time 3	-0.29** (0.08)
Follower's dependence on leader, time 1 → abusive supervision, time 1	0.24** (0.07)
Follower's dependence on leader, time 2 → abusive supervision, time 2	0.34** (0.06)
Follower's dependence on leader, time 3 → abusive supervision, time 3	0.32** (0.07)

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

leader's dependence. Supporting Hypothesis 1,⁶ these results showed that only the follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader ($F > L$) positively predicted abusive supervision in time 2. Figure 2 shows the response surface graph.

Table 5 reports the regression analyses. We controlled for the follower's dependence on the leader (time 2) and the leader's dependence on the follower (time 1) to provide a more stringent test of our hypotheses. In support of Hypothesis 2, only the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) were positively related to the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) (Model 1: $b = .11, p < .05$). We used the moderated regression procedures (Aiken & West, 1991) to test Hypotheses 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b. In support of Hypothesis 3a, a moderated regression analysis showed that abusive supervision (time 2) and follower's approach balancing operations⁷

⁶ To provide an illustration of the state of power dependence among leader-follower dyads in the sample, we computed the proportion of dyads that represents each of the four types of power-dependence relationships: 44.9% follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader; 31.8% leader's asymmetric dependence on the follower; 13.9% mutual high dependence; and 9.4% mutual low dependence. We thank the AE for this helpful suggestion.

⁷ We conducted supplementary analyses to examine whether each of the two approach balancing operations (coalition formation and value enhancement) was similarly related to the leader's dependence on the follower, and similarly moderated the relationships of abusive supervision and leader's reconciliation. Our findings from each approach balancing operation separately were consistent with our reported findings from the combined approach balancing operations. We thank our AE and an anonymous reviewer for this analytical suggestion.

(time 1) interacted to predict abusive supervision (time 3) (Model 4: $b = -.16, p < .05$), but there was no interactive effect of abusive supervision (time 2) and follower's avoidance balancing operations (time 1) on abusive supervision (time 3) (Model 4: $b = -.10, n.s.$). A simple slope test (Aiken & West, 1991) (Figure 3) indicated that abusive supervision (time 2) was less positively related to abusive supervision (time 3) at high levels ($b = .20, p < .01$) as compared to low levels of the follower's approach balancing operations ($b = .43, p < .001$). In support of Hypothesis 3b, abusive supervision (time 2) and leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) interacted to predict abusive supervision (time 3) (Model 5: $b = -.25, p < .01$). A simple slope test (Figure 4) showed that abusive supervision (time 2) was less positively related to abusive supervision (time 3) at high levels of leader's dependence on the follower ($b = .13, p < .05$) as compared to low levels of leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) ($b = .45, p < .001$).

Moving to Hypothesis 4a, our moderated regression analysis revealed that abusive supervision (time 2) and follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) interacted to predict leader's reconciliation (time 3) (Model 2: $b = .17, p < .05$), and there was no significant interactive effect of abusive supervision (time 2) and follower's avoidance balancing operations (time 1) on leader's reconciliation (time 3) (Model 2: $b = .05, n.s.$). A simple slope test (Figure 5) showed that abusive supervision (time 2) was more positively related to leader's reconciliation (time 3) at high levels ($b = .29, p < .01$) as compared to low levels, of follower's approach balancing operations ($b = .04, n.s.$). Taking the same approach, we found that abusive supervision (time 2) and the

TABLE 4
Polynomial Regressions of Abusive Supervision (Time 2)
(Study 1)

Variables	Abusive Supervision, Time 2
Constant	1.27** (0.10)
Controls	
Leader–follower tenure	−0.01 (0.02)
Abusive supervision, time 1	0.27** (0.05)
Independent Variables	
Leader's dependence on follower, time 1 (<i>L</i>)	−0.43** (0.06)
Follower's dependence on leader, time 1 (<i>F</i>)	0.40** (0.06)
<i>L</i> ²	−0.09 (0.07)
<i>F</i> ²	0.15** (0.05)
<i>L</i> × <i>F</i>	−0.25** (0.07)
<i>R</i> ²	0.53
Congruence (<i>L</i> = <i>F</i>) line	
Slope	−0.02
Curvature	−0.19
Incongruence (<i>L</i> = −<i>F</i>) line	
Slope	−0.83**
Curvature	0.31**
<i>F</i> for the 3 quadratic terms (<i>L</i> ² , <i>F</i> ² , <i>L</i> × <i>F</i>)	77.2**
Incremental <i>R</i> ²	0.41

** $p < .01$

leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) interacted to predict the leader's reconciliation (time 3) (Model 3: $b = .18, p < .05$). These results supported Hypothesis 4b. We then proceeded to conduct a simple slope test (Figure 6), which revealed that abusive supervision (time 2) was more positively related to leader's reconciliation (time 3) at high levels ($b = .24, p < .01$) than low levels of the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) ($b = -.02, n.s.$).

We followed the moderated path analysis procedures highlighted by Edwards and Lambert (2007) to test Hypotheses 5a and 5b. We computed the indirect effect by calculating the reduced-form equation for the product of (1) the path from the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) to the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2), and (2) the path from the interaction of abusive supervision (time 2) and the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) to abusive supervision (time 3) or leader's reconciliation (time 3). By constructing bias-corrected confidence intervals (20,000 samples [Bauer, Preacher, & Gil, 2006]), we found that the indirect effect of the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) via the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) on the relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and abusive supervision (time 3) was $-.06, 95\% \text{ CI}$

$[-.13, -.02]$. Hypothesis 5a was thus supported. Following the same procedure, we found that the indirect effect of the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) via the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) on the relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and leader's reconciliation (time 3) was $.14, 95\% \text{ CI}$ $[-.02, .20]$. Hypothesis 5b was thus supported.

Auxiliary analyses. We ran structural equation models to cross-verify our theoretical predictions on the relationship between the follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader and abusive supervision in the subsequent time period. Table 6 presents the path coefficients of our structural equation models based on three-wave data. Notably, the block variable in time 1 (i.e., the follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader) was positively related to abusive supervision in time 2 ($\beta = .30, p < .05$), and the block variable in time 2 was also positively related to abusive supervision in time 3 ($\beta = .57, p < .01$). Furthermore, the reverse paths (i.e., abusive supervision predicting block variables in the subsequent time period) were not significant. These results ruled out reverse causation and validated the causality argument for Hypothesis 1. We also tested the relationship between the leader's reconciliation and abusive supervision to explore the alternative explanation of moral cleansing⁸ (Sachdeva, Iliev, & Medin, 2009). The alternative path of leader's reconciliation predicting abusive supervision (e.g., leader's reconciliation [time 1] to abusive supervision [time 2], $\beta = -.02, n.s.$) and the reverse alternative path of abusive supervision predicting leader's reconciliation (e.g., abusive supervision [time 2] to leader's reconciliation [time 3], $\beta = -.001, n.s.$) were not significant. In addition, there was no direct effect of abusive supervision in time 2 on leader's reconciliation in time 3 (Model 3: $\beta = .11, n.s.$). Therefore, given that our data did not show a significant direct path from abusive supervision to leader's reconciliation or vice versa, we did not find support for the alternative explanation that a leader engages in reconciliatory behaviors following abusive behaviors so as to accrue moral license to behave immorally.

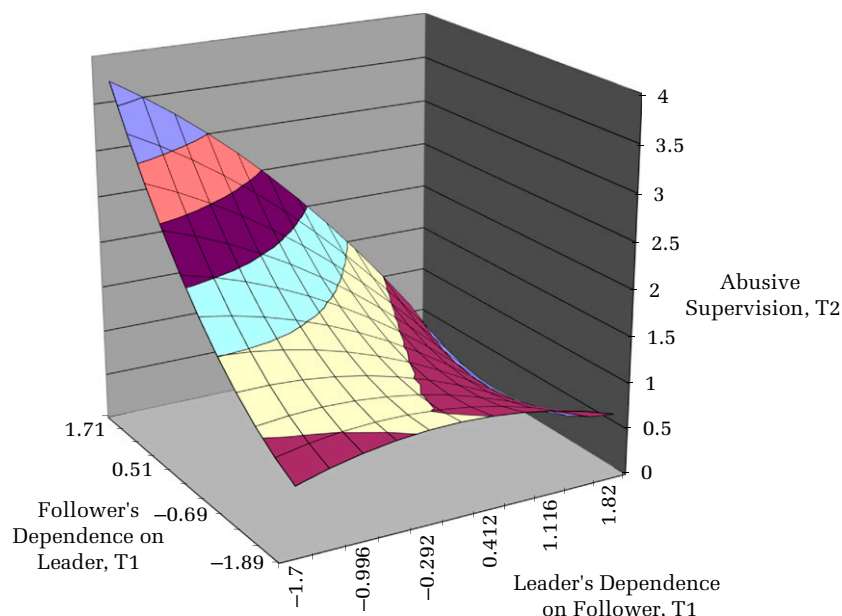
STUDY 2: REPLICATION STUDY

Research Setting and Sampling

We conducted a replication study using an entirely different sample in a different industry to extend the confidence and generalizability of our findings. We used a time-lagged, three-wave research design in this

⁸ We thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing up this alternative explanation for the relationship between abusive supervision and leader's reconciliation.

FIGURE 2
The Asymmetric Effect of Follower's Dependence on the Leader on Abusive Supervision (Study 1)



replication study. Since Study 1 already incorporated the complex panel design that was well suited to address the temporal and causality issues relating to our model, we made three improvements in our replication study: (1) we addressed the limitation of our two-item measure of power dependence in Study 1, (2) we increased the interval between every data point to six weeks (as compared to four weeks in Study 1) to provide evidence of the robustness of our findings across time intervals, and (3) we sampled a different industry (banking) from Study 1 (real estate). We collected data from one of the largest commercial banks in China and recruited the sample from the branch office based in Beijing, China. In all, we obtained 363 matched and completed responses (369 followers and 124 leaders) across three waves.⁹ The senior management offered strong support for this study, which led to a response rate of 98%. Similarly, we did not find any significant attrition effect (Bentein et al., 2005). The average age of the followers was 35.4 years ($SD = 7.5$) with an average of 2.5 years ($SD = 2.0$) at the firm.

Measures and Analytical Approach

We used the same set of measures from Study 2, except for the power-dependence measure. To

address the limitations of our two-item measure of power dependence in Study 1, we added two new items for goal dependence (“How reliant are you on the direct leader/this follower for career goals that you care about?” and “How much do you count on your direct leader/this follower for career goals that are important to you?”) and two new items for resource dependence (“How reliant are you on your direct leader/this follower for critical resources [e.g., materials, means, information, etc.] you need in order to make progress in your work?” and “How much do you count on your direct leader/this follower for resources [e.g., materials, means, information, etc.] you need in order to carry out your work adequately?”). As such, the power-dependence measure in Study 2 comprised six items. Unlike Study 1, the abusive supervision measure was self-reported by the followers in Study 2. We followed Study 1’s analytical approaches to test our hypotheses.

Results

Table 7 reports descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities of the variables in our model. Similarly, in testing our measurement model, we found that our hypothesized six-factor model was a better fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 1159$, $df = 614$, $SRMR = .06$, $CFI = .91$, $TLI = .90$) than more parsimonious models: e.g., a six-factor model with correlation between latent variables approach and avoidance balancing operations set to 1

⁹ We found that there were no significant between-leader variances in the outcome variables (e.g., abusive supervision at time 3, $F(123, 239) = 1.25$, n.s.).

TABLE 5
OLS Regression Analysis (Study 1)

Predictor Variables	Dependent Variables				
	Leader's dependence on follower, Time 2 (Model 1)	Leader's reconciliation, Time 3 (Model 2)	Leader's reconciliation, Time 3 (Model 3)	Abusive supervision, Time 3 (Model 4)	Abusive supervision, Time 3 (Model 5)
Intercept	−1.76** (0.28)	0.003 (0.06)	0.05 (0.37)	−0.13** (0.05)	−0.70* (0.35)
Controls					
Leader–follower tenure	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)	0.03 (0.03)	.03 (0.03)
Leader's dependence on follower, time 1	0.62** (0.07)		0.01 (0.11)		.05 (0.12)
Follower's dependence on leader, time 2	0.05 (0.06)		−0.03 (0.07)		.15* (0.07)
Leader's reconciliation, time 2		0.30** (0.06)	0.22** (0.05)		
Independent Variables					
Block variable, ^a time 1	0.02 (0.12)	−0.44** (0.13)	−0.07 (0.15)	0.23 (0.12)	.06 (0.15)
Abusive supervision, time 2	0.02 (0.06)	0.13 (0.08)	0.11 (0.07)	0.31** (0.07)	.28** (0.07)
Leader's dependence on follower, time 2			0.71** (0.09)		−0.31** (0.09)
Follower's approach balancing operations, time 1	0.11* (0.05)	0.23** (0.08)	0.15* (0.07)	−0.10 (0.07)	−0.13 (0.07)
Follower's avoidance balancing operation, time 1	0.002 (0.06)	−0.11 (0.09)	−0.08 (0.07)	0.06 (0.08)	.06 (0.07)
Abusive supervision, time 2 × follower's approach balancing operations, time 1	0.10 (0.06)	0.17* (0.09)	−0.10 (0.08)	−0.16* (0.08)	−0.21* (0.08)
Abusive supervision, time 2 × follower's avoidance balancing operations, time 1	−0.04 (0.06)	0.05 (0.09)	0.02 (0.08)	−0.10 (0.08)	−0.07 (0.08)
Abusive supervision, time 2 × leader's dependence on the follower, time 2			0.18* (0.08)		−0.25** (0.09)
R^2	0.42	0.21	0.46	0.24	.32
ΔR^2	—	—	0.25	—	.08

^a We followed the block variable approach recommended by Edwards and Cable (2009) by combining the five polynomial terms into a weighted linear combination, with the respective weights based on the estimated regression coefficients.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

($\Delta\chi^2 = 59.2$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001$, SRMR = .13, CFI = .89, TLI = .88); and a six-factor model with all correlations among latent variables set to 1 ($\Delta\chi^2 = 1762.36$, $\Delta df = 15$, $p < .001$, SRMR = .21, CFI = .62, TLI = .59).

In support of Hypothesis 1, Table 8 highlights the estimated coefficients as well as the slopes and curvatures along both congruence and incongruence lines in predicting abusive supervision (time 2). Similarly, the three second-order polynomial terms were jointly significant $F = 12.52$, $p < .01$, curvature along the incongruence line was convex (.39, $p < .01$), and finally, the lateral shift (slope) was negative (−.34, $p < .01$). Hypothesis 1¹⁰ was thus supported (see Figure 7 for the response surface graph).

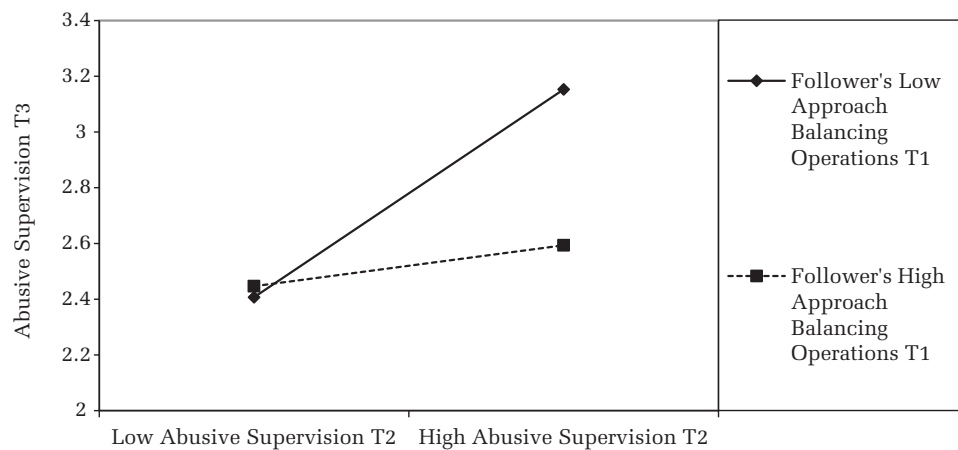
¹⁰ Similar to Study 1, we computed the proportion of dyads that represents each of the four types of power-dependence relationship: 58.2% follower's asymmetric dependence on the leader; 26.9% leader's asymmetric dependence on the follower; 10.4% mutual high dependence; and 4.5% mutual low dependence.

Table 9 reports the results of the regression analyses for Study 2.¹¹ In support of Hypothesis 2, only the follower's approach, as opposed to avoidance, balancing operations (time 1) were positively related to the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) (Model 1: $b = .26$, $p < .01$). We found support for Hypothesis 3a: abusive supervision (time 2) and the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) interacted to predict abusive supervision (time 3) (Model 4: $b = -.26$, $p < .01$). There was no interactive effect of abusive supervision (time 2) and the follower's avoidance balancing operations (time 1) on abusive supervision (time 3) (Model 4: $b = .02$, n.s.). In addition, a simple slope test indicated that abusive supervision (time 2) was less positively

¹¹ The interaction effect results for Hypotheses 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b were consistent with the results from Study 1. Therefore, we did not include the interaction plots for Study 2.

FIGURE 3

The Interactive Effect of Abusive Supervision (Time 2) and Follower's Approach Balancing Operations (Time 1) on Abusive Supervision (Time 3) (Study 1)



related to abusive supervision (time 3) at high levels ($b = .12, p < .05$) as compared to low levels of the follower's approach balancing operations ($b = .55, p < .001$). Abusive supervision (time 2) and the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) interacted to predict abusive supervision (time 3) (Model 5: $b = -.08, p < .05$), thereby supporting Hypothesis 3b. Similarly, a simple slope test revealed that abusive supervision (time 2) was less positively related to abusive supervision (time 3) at high levels ($b = .14, p < .05$), as compared to low levels, of the follower's approach balancing operations ($b = .33, p < .01$).

Supporting Hypothesis 4a, abusive supervision (time 2) and the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) interacted to predict leader's

reconciliation (time 3) (Model 2: $b = .33, p < .05$), whereas there was no significant interactive effect of abusive supervision (time 2) and the follower's avoidance balancing operations (time 1) on leader's reconciliation (time 3) (Model 2: $b = .28, n.s.$). A simple slope test indicated that abusive supervision (time 2) was more positively related to leader's reconciliation (time 3) at high levels ($b = .23, p < .01$) as compared to low levels of the follower's approach balancing operations ($b = .04, n.s.$). In support of Hypothesis 4b, abusive supervision (time 2) and leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) interacted to predict leader's reconciliation (time 3) (Model 3: $b = .15, p < .05$). Accordingly, a simple slope test revealed that abusive supervision (time 2)

FIGURE 4

The Interactive Effect of Abusive Supervision (Time 2) and Leader's Dependence on Follower (Time 2) on Abusive Supervision (Time 3) (Study 1)

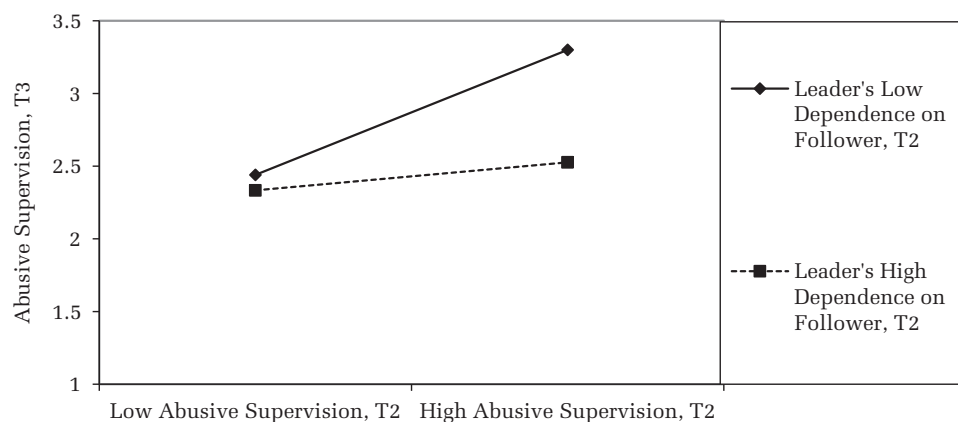
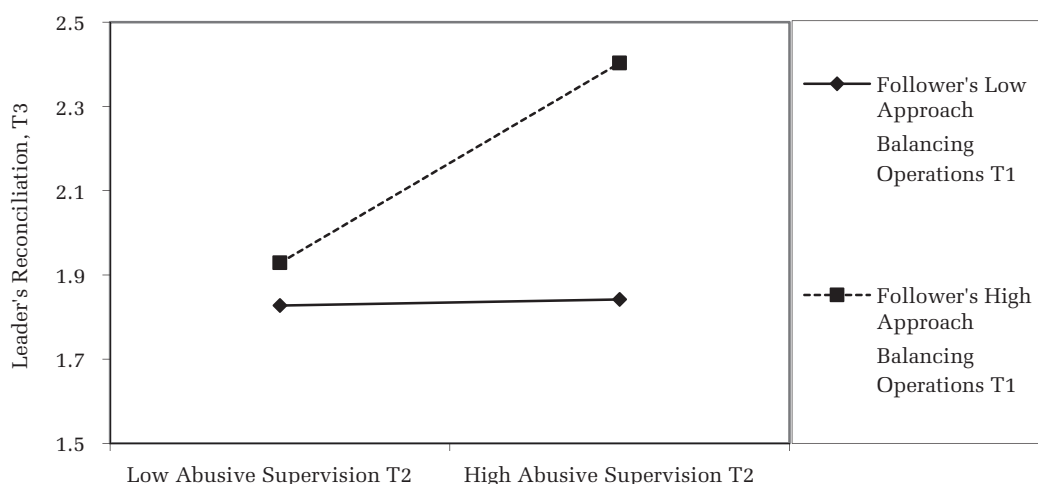


FIGURE 5

The Interactive Effect of Abusive Supervision (Time 2) and Follower's Approach Balancing Operations (Time 1) on Leader's Reconciliation (Time 3) (Study 1)



was more positively related to leader's reconciliation (time 3) at high levels ($b = .30, p < .001$), as compared to low levels, of the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) ($b = .03, n.s.$).

In support of Hypothesis 5a, the indirect effect of the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) via the leader's dependence on the follower (time 2) on the relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and abusive supervision (time 3) was $-.59$, 95% CI $[-.97, -.21]$. Similarly, supporting Hypothesis 5b, the indirect effect of the follower's approach balancing operations (time 1) via the leader's

dependence on the follower (time 2) on the relationship between abusive supervision (time 2) and leader's reconciliation (time 3) was $.91$, 95% CI $[.52, 1.3]$. Overall, the findings from Studies 1 and 2 converged.

DISCUSSION

We bring a fresh perspective to the ubiquitous phenomenon of abusive supervision in the workplace. Specifically, our integration of the power-dependence framework with the abusive supervision

FIGURE 6

The Interactive Effect of Abusive Supervision (Time 2) and Leader's Dependence on Follower (Time 2) on Leader's Reconciliation (Time 3) (Study 1)

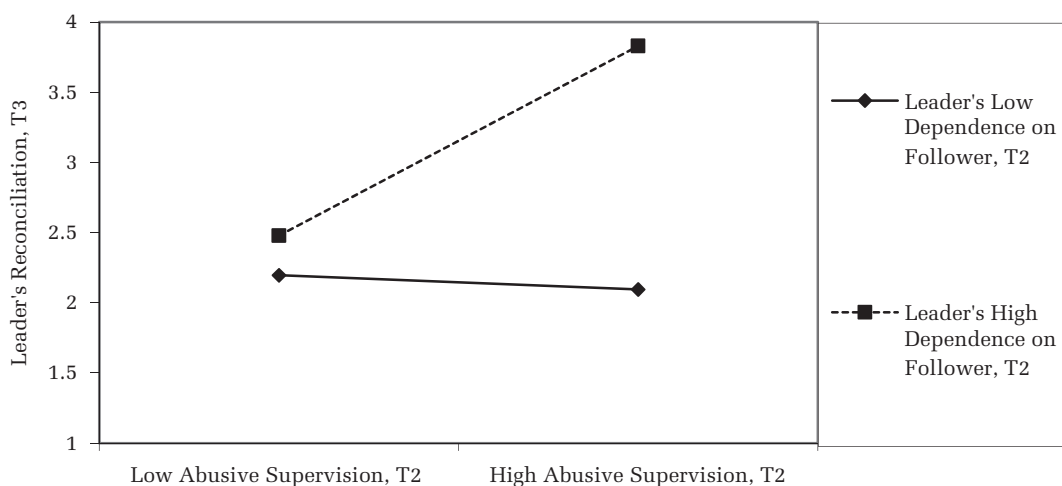


TABLE 6
Structural Equation Models of Abusive Supervision (Study 1)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Controls</i>		
Follower's tenure with leader → abusive supervision, time 2	−0.02 (0.02)	
Follower's tenure with leader → abusive supervision, time 3		−0.05 (0.04)
<i>Stability</i>		
Abusive supervision, time 1 → abusive supervision, time 2	0.33** (0.06)	
Abusive supervision, time 2 → abusive supervision, time 3		0.69** (0.21)
<i>Predicted paths</i>		
Block variable ^a , time 1 → abusive supervision, time 2	0.30* (0.09)	
Block variable, time 2 → abusive supervision, time 3		0.57** (0.08)
<i>Reversed paths</i>		
Abusive supervision, time 1 → block variable, time 2	0.46 (0.25)	
Abusive supervision, time 2 → block variable, time 3		0.80 (0.59)
<i>Alternative paths</i>		
Leader's reconciliation, time 1 → abusive supervision, time 2	−0.02 (0.11)	
Leader's reconciliation, time 2 → abusive supervision, time 3		0.02 (0.06)
<i>Reversed alternative paths</i>		
Abusive supervision, time 1 → leader's reconciliation, time 2	0.06 (0.05)	
Abusive supervision, time 2 → leader's reconciliation, time 3		−0.001 (0.06)

Notes: Standard errors in the estimations are reported in parentheses.

^a We followed the block variable approach recommended by Edwards and Cable (2009), and we combined the five polynomial terms into a weighted linear block variable, with the weights as their respective estimated regression coefficients.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

literature addresses two key research questions. First, by investigating the four possible states of power dependence in the leader–follower dyad, we provide a more in-depth explanation of when and how power predicts abusive behavior. Second, extending the following literature, our paper illustrates

the follower's agency in employing approach balancing operations as coping strategies to break the spiral of abuse. A leader's increased dependence on a follower due to approach balancing operations not only leads to a significant decrease in abusive supervision over time, but also a significant increase in the

TABLE 7
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations among Key Variables (Study 2)

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Leader–follower tenure (years)	3.02	2.81									
2 Follower's dependence on leader, T1	3.15	0.78	−0.12*	(0.72)							
3 Leader's dependence on follower, T1	2.51	0.80	0.14*	−0.06	(0.83)						
4 Leader's dependence on follower, T2	2.42	0.87	0.09	−0.02	0.78**	(0.72)					
5 Abusive supervision, T2	1.96	0.68	−0.07	0.27**	−0.15*	−0.08	(0.81)				
6 Abusive supervision, T3	1.97	0.69	−0.09	0.16*	−0.12*	−0.12*	0.42**	(0.79)			
7 Leader's reconciliation, T3	2.61	0.90	0.08	0.09	0.15*	0.16*	0.01	−0.01	(0.86)		
8 Follower's approach balancing operations, T1	2.88	0.57	−0.09	0.14**	0.10*	0.12*	0.04	−0.05	0.18*	(0.90)	
9 Follower's avoidance balancing operations, T1	2.87	0.61	−0.11*	0.16**	−0.07	−0.09	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.15*	(0.88)

Notes: Reliabilities of the measures are noted in the diagonals.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

TABLE 8
Polynomial Regressions of Abusive Supervision (Time 2)
(Study 2)

Variables	Abusive Supervision, Time 2
Constant	1.95** (0.06)
Controls	
Leader–follower tenure	−0.02 (0.01)
Independent Variables	
Leader's dependence on follower, time 1 (<i>L</i>)	0.10 (0.07)
Follower's dependence on leader, time 1 (<i>F</i>)	0.35** (0.07)
L^2	−0.11 (0.06)
F^2	0.23** (0.07)
$L \times F$	−0.17* (0.03)
R^2	0.10
Congruence ($L = F$) line	
Slope	0.09
Curvature	0.05
Incongruence ($L = -F$) line	
Slope	−0.34**
Curvature	0.39**
<i>F</i> for the 3 quadratic terms (L^2 , F^2 , $L \times F$)	12.52**
Incremental R^2	0.03

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

leader's future reconciliation. Our three-wave, multi-source panel field design in Study 1 afforded causal inferences with more confidence (Finkel, 1995). We also replicated our model in Study 2 to strengthen the confidence and generalizability of our proposed model.

Theoretical Implications

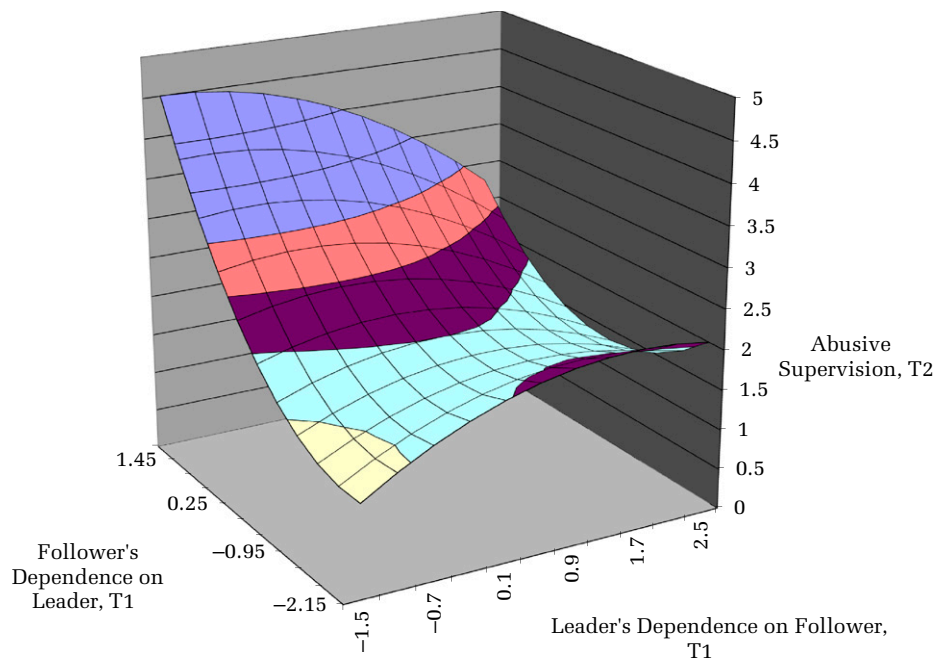
First, this research provides a clear elaboration of the relationship between power and abusive supervision. The abusive supervision literature has suggested that leaders' abusive behaviors can be explained either by a displaced aggression argument (e.g., leaders who felt abused by their managers became more abusive to followers [Liu, Liao, & Loi, 2012]), or a moral exclusion argument (e.g., leaders' perceptions of deep-level dissimilarities with their followers [Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2011]). We enrich this emerging literature by drawing on a power-dependence framework to pinpoint the exact state of power dependence that will engender leader's abusive supervision. Although the abusive supervision literature has highlighted the importance of power (Tepper et al., 2009, 2015), extant studies have often assumed that the leader's power advantage over the

follower is stable and does not change over time, and, as a result, have not fully captured how power may shift from one party to another in today's workplace (Sturm & Antonakis, 2015). Our research answers the call to examine harmful workplace behaviors as a function of dyadic relationships (e.g., Hershcovis & Barling, 2010) by providing a more refined portrayal of power dynamics in a dyad from both the leader and the follower's perspective (Casciaro & Piskorski, 2005). As such, by taking a dynamic perspective on the state of power within the leader–follower dyad, we challenge the underlying, implicit assumption that the fate of abuse is unchanging in the eyes of the follower.

Second, we add to the abusive supervision research by highlighting the unique functioning of the follower's balancing operations. Extant studies have tended to focus on the strategies followers utilize to cope with the consequences of abusive supervision (e.g., Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Tepper et al., 2007, 2015). However, this research demonstrates that approach balancing operations, which have been understudied in the extant literature, represent coping strategies that directly tackle power imbalance in the dyad—a key factor for the persistence of abusive supervision over time (Tepper et al., 2009). By showing how and why followers can rely on approach balancing operations to break the spiral of abuse, we challenge the current portrait of the follower as someone who is often defenseless in the face of abusive supervision. Our discussion of balancing operations offers a refreshing view of the follower as someone who is often agentic, strategic, and resourceful in the face of abusive supervision. Going further, our research also elevates the limited development and understanding of balancing operations in the literature by integrating the approach–avoidance motivation framework to show the differential effects of balancing operations. We hope that this approach–avoidance distinction of balancing operations, together with our developed scale, will encourage the proliferation of research on these unique follower coping strategies.

Third, we show how followers can break the spiral of abusive supervision over time through approach balancing operations. Research on how the abused follower might successfully turn the abusive relationship around over time is sorely needed. Approach balancing operations equip the abused follower with coping strategies to change this narrative. There has not been much attention on follower-centric strategies that effectively break the repeated cycle of abusive supervision (Simon et al.,

FIGURE 7
The Asymmetric Effect of Follower's Dependence on the Leader on Abusive Supervision (Study 2)



2015). While the coping strategy of quit intention (Tepper et al., 2009) might allow the abused followers to escape from the abusive relationships, this strategy does not provide much respite for followers who are still keen to stay in the organization.

Fourth, we shed light on the complex relationship between abusive supervision and leader's reconciliation by articulating how the follower might create the condition necessary for leader's reconciliation through approach balancing operations. The findings add to the current abusive supervision research because reconciliation from the perpetrator is regarded as one of the most effective solutions for mending strained relationships (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). The effectiveness of relationship restoration following abuse is higher if the leader takes the first step to making amends (Andiappan & Trevino, 2010). Unfortunately, the leader's effort to mend strained leader-follower relationships does not follow naturally after abuse (Andiappan & Trevino, 2010; Aquino et al., 2006). Our findings suggest that only when the leader realizes that the abused follower can be instrumental to his or her future attainment of valued goals and resources is the leader motivated to seek reconciliation. Because of these reasons, followers who engage in approach balancing operations are able to promote their leaders' reconciliation efforts following abusive supervision.

Last but not least, we make a significant contribution to the emerging literature on followership by highlighting a series of follower-centric strategies that are effective in protecting the abused follower from future abuse and paving the way for meaningful relationship restoration initiated by the perpetrator. Despite the call from numerous leadership scholars to examine the upward impact of follower behaviors on leaders (Popper, 2011; Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014), there has not been substantial progress in this area of research. Even when followers are featured in the theorizing, more often than not these studies have concentrated on leadership behaviors directing downward toward followers (e.g., shared leadership, self-leadership), instead of followership behaviors directing upward toward leaders. A followership perspective helps to "reverse the lens" (Shamir, 2007) by highlighting the role of the followers in creating and maintaining effective and functional leader-follower relationships. In particular, our discussion of balancing operations enriches this conversation by showing, both theoretically and empirically, how followers are able to steer away from the destructive, cyclical course of abusive supervision and even promote relationship restoration from their leaders. As they elevate the capability of the follower in the context of abusive supervision, approach balancing operations are

TABLE 9
OLS Regression Analyses (Study 2)

Predictor Variables	Dependent Variables				
	Leader's Dependence on Follower, Time 2 (Model 1)	Leader's Reconciliation, Time 3 (Model 2)	Leader's Reconciliation, Time 3 (Model 3)	Abusive Supervision, Time 3 (Model 4)	Abusive Supervision, Time 3 (Model 5)
Intercept	0.06 (0.04)	−0.08 (0.06)	−0.08 (0.06)	.02 (0.04)	.02 (0.04)
Control					
Leader–follower tenure ^a	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.04* (0.02)	−0.04* (0.02)	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)
Follower's dependence on leader, time 2	0.14* (0.05)	0.15* (0.08)	0.16* (0.08)	.07 (0.05)	.06 (0.05)
Independent Variables					
Block variable ^b , time 1	−0.45* (0.20)	0.85** (0.31)	0.93** (0.31)	.40* (0.17)	.33 (0.18)
Abusive supervision, time 2	0.43 (0.09)	−0.16 (0.08)	−0.16 (0.08)	.40** (0.05)	.41** (0.05)
Leader's dependence on follower, time 2			0.13* (0.06)		−0.01 (0.04)
Follower's approach balancing operations, time 1	0.26** (0.08)	0.10 (0.12)	0.09 (0.12)	.03 (0.07)	.04 (0.07)
Follower's avoidance balancing operations, time 1	−0.04 (0.07)	0.03 (0.11)	0.02 (0.11)	.26** (0.08)	.26** (0.08)
Abusive supervision, time 2 × follower's approach balancing operations, time 1	0.22* (0.10)	0.33* (0.15)	0.32* (0.15)	−0.26** (0.10)	−0.26* (0.10)
Abusive supervision, time 2 × follower's avoidance balancing operations, time 1	0.05 (0.12)	0.28 (0.19)	0.33 (0.18)	.02 (0.12)	−0.01 (0.12)
Abusive supervision, time 2 × leader's dependence on the follower, time 2			0.15* (0.07)		−0.08* (0.03)
R^2	0.31	0.08	0.11	.31	.32
ΔR^2	—	—	0.03	—	.01

^a Leader–follower tenure is captured in number of years.

^b We followed the block variable approach recommended by Edwards and Cable (2009) by combining the five polynomial terms in to a weighted linear combination, with the respective weights based on the estimated regression coefficients.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

important manifestations of followership behaviors in the workplace.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the aforementioned theoretical contributions and methodological strengths of this research, this study has several limitations, which may open up a series of interesting research directions. For example, we did not study the leader's strategies to counter the impact of the follower's balancing operations. Previous research has suggested that the potential loss of power may cause leaders with dominant personality to perceive talented followers as threats to their power (Mead & Maner, 2012). It is possible for the leader to engage in a battle with the follower who is utilizing balancing operations to change the state of power dependence. We encourage researchers to

examine this potential power conflict between the leader and the follower.

Second, this research focused on dyadic relations. Future studies can consider the effects of power dependence within the team with multiple followers under a leader. Followers are also influenced by the leader's treatment of other team members (Lau & Liden, 2008). Hence, researchers can explore the impact of a team leader's patterns of power dependence toward multiple followers.

Third, it is valuable to identify the antecedents and contingencies that may influence the follower's use of balancing operations.¹² For example, followers often

¹² We are grateful for an anonymous reviewer's comment on the need for future research to investigate the reasons behind the follower's choice of balancing operations as a coping strategy.

accept their subordinated positions because of the leader's power legitimacy (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Martorana, Galinsky, & Rao, 2005). Legitimacy is a key social process that explains the persistence and stability of power in social phenomena (Berger, Ridgeway, Fisek, & Norman, 1998) and shapes one's willingness to voluntarily defer to the power imbalance (Tyler, 1997). We posit that followers are more inclined to engage in balancing operations when they "redefine the situation [state of power dependence] as illegitimate" (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989: 139). Future research can investigate how contextual factors might influence the follower's engagement in balancing operations. In addition, future studies can shed light on the follower's choice of balancing operations. For example, in light of event system theory (Morgeson, Mitchell, & Liu, 2015), how will individual differences such as self-efficacy and locus of control interact with organizational events to predict the follower's use of different balancing operations?

Fourth, prior studies on moral self-regulation have indicated that people may engage in compensatory behaviors when their moral self-worth has been threatened (Sachdeva et al., 2009). For example, individuals tend to engage in more prosocial behaviors after experiencing a decrease in moral self-worth. Although we were able to address this alternative explanation in our auxiliary analyses for Study 1, we encourage future research to further investigate when moral licensing and cleansing may come into play in the context of abusive supervision.

Fifth, we tested our model with two independent studies (Studies 1 and 2) based in China. Individuals with collectivistic cultural values are inclined to avoid conflicts and proactive ways of dealing with aggressors (Tjosvold, 2008). Since we were able to find support for our theory in two Chinese samples with collectivistic cultural values, we expect to find similar, if not stronger, support in a sample with individualistic cultural values. We encourage future research to examine the effect of balancing operations in another cultural setting.

Practical Implications

Our research expands followers' repertoire of coping strategies to break the spiral of abuse. Other than leaving the organization (Tepper et al., 2009) or struggling to manage the personal consequences of abusive supervision (e.g., Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006; Mawritz et al., 2014; Tepper et al., 2007), approach balancing operations offer strategic solutions

to significantly change the follower's relationship with the leader. Given the prominence of abusive supervision in the workplace, this follower-centric research departs from the conventional thinking of organization-level interventions and places emphasis on the follower's own conscious, volitional attempts to regulate and respond to abusive supervision. Many of the issues leading to the emergence of abusive supervision in the workplace demand organization-level interventions (selection of leaders [Tepper, 2007]; zero-tolerance policy on abuse [Tepper et al., 2009]). Since these solutions are initiated at the organization level, they are often out of reach for abused followers. Despite the push to implement policies and practices that promote diversity and fairness, most organizations still do not hold all perpetrators of abusive supervision accountable (Courtright et al., 2015). Given that abusive behaviors tend to persist over time (Lian et al., 2014; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), we contend that followers should be equipped with a set of coping strategies that enable them to effectively break away from the spiral of abuse and to establish better relationships with leaders. Our research provides follower-centric solutions that will complement and enhance the current emphasis on organization-level solutions for abusive supervision.

In addition, our research suggests that leaders and followers should consider going beyond the structural aspect (i.e., positions in the organization) and consider the state of power in terms of its relational aspect. There are two meaningful implications of this notion. First, leaders and followers can consider their state of power dependence as a barometer to forecast abusive supervision. The current state of power dependence in a leader-follower dyad can help leaders and followers to determine whether the risk of abuse toward a particular follower is high. The idea is for both leaders and followers to be mindful of the power imbalance in the dyad before it becomes too polarized. Second, the mutual high dependence between managers and followers is characterized by positive interactions, reduced use of threats and coercion, and more importantly, enhanced stability and congeniality in the dyadic relationship (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). In this regard, organizations should implement human resource policies and practices (e.g., shared performance goals) that encourage their managers and followers to work together toward a state of mutual high dependence.

CONCLUSION

The abusive supervision literature has often depicted followers as defenseless victims, who often

cannot break the destructive spiral of abuse. Applying a power-dependence framework, we propose an agentic, resourceful, and strategic portrait of the follower in the context of abusive supervision. Through approach balancing operations, the follower is able to not only reduce the persistent effect of abusive supervision over time but also strengthen the likelihood of leader's future reconciliation. We hope that our findings will encourage follower-centric studies to uncover more creative and viable solutions for followers to effectively reduce the instances of abusive supervision in organizations.

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