

Comparing Perceived Injustices From Supervisors and Romantic Partners as Predictors of Aggression

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To examine the predictive effects of perceived injustice in two different interpersonal relationships (i.e., working relationship with a supervisor, romantic relationship with a partner) on aggression enacted in those relationships, we computed a series of multilevel regressions on 62 heterosexual couples with all 124 partners employed part-time and working for different supervisors. Higher levels of perceived supervisor injustice predicted higher supervisor-directed aggression, whereas higher levels of perceived partner injustice predicted lower supervisor-directed aggression. An interaction between perceived partner injustice and anger predicted higher levels of partner-directed aggression. Implications and recommendations for future research on the relationship specificity of perceived injustice are discussed.

Keywords: anger, interpersonal injustice, romantic relationships, spillover, workplace aggression

Over the past few decades, research on the topic of injustice has been widespread (e.g., Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). This body of research has largely focused on how different types of perceived injustice influence particular outcomes, indicating that perceived interpersonal injustice is related to feelings of anger or resentment, which may motivate individuals to reestablish a sense of justice (Bies, Shaprio, & Cummings, 1988; Greenberg, 1990; Homans, 1961; Cropanzano & Folger, 1989; Skarlicki & Folger,

1997). In this study, we examine perceptions of supervisory injustice and perceptions of romantic partner injustice as predictors of enacted aggression, testing whether there is potential for spillover between perceived injustice in one relationship and enacted aggression in another relationship.

Aggression Between Relationships and Contexts

Research in the workplace aggression domain has frequently explored aggression without specifying the specific target of the aggression (Hershcovis et al., 2007). In addition, examination of the predictors of aggression has often been limited to within a particular context (e.g., aggression within the context of work) or across relationships within a particular context (e.g., aggression directed at supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates), with the few exceptions (e.g., Greenberg & Barling, 1999; Inness, Leblanc, & Barling, 2008) considering multiple targets within the single context of work. Nevertheless, we cannot yet exclude the possibility that the determinants of aggression might spillover across contexts and across relationships, as perceived stressors and provocations (Anderson & Bushman, 2002) in one relationship or context might influence the enactment of aggression in another relationship or context (Marcus-Newhall, Pedersen, Carlson, & Miller, 2000).

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Displaced aggression occurs when a particular act of harm is directed at a secondary target, rather than the original source of provocation (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). The secondary target may be targeted as a result of his or her lower status than that of the instigator, and as result of being in a certain place at a particular time (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Bushman et al., 2005; Marcus-Newhall et al., 2000; Miller et al., 2003). To date, research that focuses on displaced workplace aggression has produced mixed results. There is evidence that supports the notion that aggression is target-specific (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Greenberg & Barling, 1999; Hershcovis et al., 2007; Inness, Barling, & Turner, 2005), while at the same time systematic studies of displaced aggression do exist (e.g., Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), showing displacement across contexts (e.g., community levels of aggression and aggression in workplaces embedded in that community; Dietz, Robinson, Folger, Baron, & Schultz, 2003; abusive supervision related to family undermining; Hoobler & Brass, 2006).

These studies focusing on displaced aggression lend support to the notion of spillover, yet there is a need to extend such research to test whether the predictors of aggression are related to the enactment of aggression across relationships. As pointed out by Barling, Dupré, and Kelloway (2009), "the most appropriate conclusion is target-specific and displaced aggression need not be antithetical: while there is considerable research support for target-specific aggression in response to perceived provocations, under some conditions, individuals may choose to displace their aggression away from the provocateur" (p. 682). Thus, in this study, we focus on the potential for cross-relationship spillover between perceived injustice and enacted aggression. We examine whether perceptions of injustice result in target-specific enacted aggression, spillover of enacted aggression, or both.

The Current Study

To date, research has not adequately addressed whether the factors that predict aggression in one relationship might result in aggression in another relationship. We extend existing research by considering aggression against two different targets: employees' aggression directed at supervisors and employees' aggression directed at romantic partners.

Although there are differences between any two interpersonal relationships on characteristics such as duration, power, and mutual investment, relationships with workplace supervisors and romantic part-

ners often occur in different life domains, with supervisors (Dupré & Barling, 2006) and partners (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009) playing salient and personally important roles in people's lives. We selected relationships with work supervisors and relationships with romantic partners for comparison in the current research study given that these relationships are sufficiently unique to demonstrate aggression in different relationships yet sufficiently similar to provide a comparison of parallel aggressive behaviors across relationships.

Interpersonal Injustice as a Predictor of Aggression

Research points to several psychosocial factors that predict enacted aggression, and here we focus on one that has received a substantial degree of empirical support, namely perceptions of interpersonal injustice. Perceived interpersonal provocation is a central motive in human aggression (Anderson & Bushman, 2002), and we argue that among the several dimensions of injustice, interpersonal injustice is the most fitting injustice construct to investigate in the context of aggression directed at one person by another (Hershcovis et al., 2007). Indeed, research supports the notion that when making evaluations about fairness, interpersonal issues are of great concern to employees (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), and tend to incite emotional and hostile reactions (Bies, 2001; Judge, Scott, & Ilies, 2006).

Interpersonal injustice is an individual's perception of the extent to which he or she is treated with a lack of respect, courtesy, and dignity by someone who is in a position to execute practices and procedures that relate to him or her (Colquitt et al., 2001). Individuals may restore this sense of perceived injustice through restitution (e.g., Bies et al., 1988; Greenberg, 1990), striking back against the source of the injustice (e.g., Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), or by taking part in deviant workplace behaviors (e.g., Krings & Facchin, 2009).

The role of perceived injustice in predicting aggression in both work and romantic relationships has received empirical support. Perceptions of interpersonal injustice predict aggression against a supervisor (e.g., Inness et al., 2005; Townsend, Phillips, & Elkins, 2000), with recent meta-analyses confirming its role as a substantial predictor of supervisor-targeted aggression (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Hershcovis et al., 2007). At the same time, research shows

that perceptions of injustice are important in predicting the quality of romantic relationships (e.g., Grote & Clark, 2001; Grote, Clark, & Moore, 2004), which is related to aggression between partners (e.g., Murphy, O'Farrell, Fals-Stewart, & Feehan, 2001; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981). Based on justice research (Bies & Moag, 1986; Tyler & Bies, 1990), we argue that interactions within romantic relationships are a critical source of perceived injustice, with recent findings in a study exploring the prediction of another form of aggressive behavior—sexual harassment—indicating that the likelihood of enacting behaviors characterized as sexual harassment are related to interactional justice but not to other forms of justice (i.e., distributive or procedural) (Krings & Facchin, 2009). We expect that the enactment of aggression against a specific target will be most strongly predicted by perceptions of injustice associated with that target.

Hypothesis 1: Supervisor injustice will predict supervisor-directed aggression more strongly (and in a positive direction) than it will predict partner-directed aggression, and likewise partner injustice will predict partner-directed aggression more strongly (and in a positive direction) than it will predict supervisor-directed aggression.

Perceived Injustice and Anger Interact To Predict Aggression

While interactional injustice plays a strong role in predicting aggression, some individuals have a greater propensity to behave aggressively than do others. Existing empirical research indicates that individual characteristics are related to the enactment of aggression (e.g., Greenberg & Barling, 1999; Neuman & Baron, 1998). In this study, we focus on anger, an individual difference that is related to aggressive behavior in both work (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Douglas & Martinko, 2001) and personal domains of life (e.g., Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward, & Tritt, 2004). Including anger as a predictor of aggression allows us to ascertain the potential for cross-relationship spillover between perceived injustice and enacted aggression with greater accuracy. We test the predictive strength of justice in combination with an individual difference that has been shown to account for variance in enacted aggression (see Glomb & Liao, 2003).

People with higher levels of outward expressions of anger tend to express their anger either physically

or verbally in aggressive behavior directed toward other persons or objects in the environment (Averill, 1982; Spielberger, 1999). In their study on interpersonal aggression in work groups, Glomb and Liao (2003) examined three individual difference variables, and found that outward expression of anger was the only individual difference to predict aggressive behavior at work. Research on romantic aggression among undergraduate students has found that aggressive individuals reported higher levels of outward expression of anger when compared to nonaggressive individuals (Dye & Eckhardt, 2000). We expect that given the same level of perceived interpersonal injustice, individuals with higher propensity to outwardly express anger will enact more target-specific aggression. More specifically, we expect that there will be an interaction between interpersonal injustice and outward expression of anger.

Hypothesis 2: Each relationship-specific injustice will be moderated by outward expression of anger in predicting target-specific enacted aggression. That is, when individuals who outwardly express their anger perceive injustice, enacted aggression will be higher than when individuals who are less likely to outwardly express their anger perceive the same level of injustice.

Method

Participants

Sixty-two men and 62 women, with an average age of 25.40 years (median = 25, $SD = 4.70$), with over half having been in their romantic relationship for over 2 years (Mean length of relationship = 36.97 months, Median = 24 months, $SD = 44.72$ months) agreed to participate in this study. These individuals had been working with their present supervisors on average for just less than 2 years ($M = 23.84$ months, Median = 15 months, $SD = 22.96$ months). All participants had completed high school, while 34% had completed college or trade school and 27% had completed university. Each member of a couple completed the survey alone under supervision of a researcher on university premises. Surveys were numbered so that partners could be matched as couples.

Sampling and Procedures

In the current study, individuals were approached informally and through print advertising in a mid-

sized Canadian city to participate in the current study *as a couple* if both members of the couple defined themselves as (1) in a heterosexual romantic relationship and (2) employed on a part-time basis. Print advertising was posted in places that are frequented by a diverse range of individuals (e.g., universities, libraries, community centers).

Our focus in this research is on partners in romantic relationships, each of whom are employed on a part-time basis and work for different supervisors. Evidence suggests that this population is an appropriate group in which to study aggression across relationships and contexts for two reasons. First, aggression emerges in romantic relationships before marriage (O'Leary, Barling, Arias, Rosenbaum, Malone, & Tiree, 1989). Aggression is common in adolescent dating relationships (Collins et al., 2009), with approximately 10–20% of teenagers (an age group even younger than the one sampled in the current study) reporting that they have been hit or slapped by their opposite sex partner by mid-adolescence (e.g., Silverman, Raj, & Clements, 2004; Wolfe, Wekerle, Scott, Straatman, & Grasley, 2004). Second, part-time employees experience similar levels of workplace aggression as full-time employees (Barling & Gallagher, 1996), with the prevalence of young workers' enactment of workplace aggression (Dupré, Inness, Connelly, Barling, & Hopton, 2006) and victimization in workplace aggression (Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006) similar to that of older employees.

Measures

Interpersonal injustice. Supervisor injustice was assessed using the scale developed by Donovan, Drasgow, and Munson (1998) designed to measure participants' perceptions of how supervisors treat employees. Thirteen items focusing on supervisor treatment were reworded to focus on specific supervisors, rather than on supervisors in the workplace in general. Examples items include "I am treated like a child by my supervisor" and "I am treated with respect by my supervisor" (reverse-scored). We extended the original 3-point response scale to a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) to facilitate greater variability in response. Partner injustice was measured using the same 13 items and response format, with items reworded to reflect the way the partner treats the participant. Internal consistency of these scales was very high in both instances with Cronbach's $\alpha = .96$ for supervisor injustice and .95 for partner injustice.

With the study sample composed of partners in romantic relationships, it is plausible that within-couple perceptions of partner injustice reflect a shared dynamic and that couples might be reliably differentiated on this basis. As partners in this sample hold different jobs and hence have different supervisors, this would not likely be the case with supervisor injustice. As expected, intraclass correlations (ICC) associated with supervisor injustice [ICC(1) = .13, ICC(2) = .24; $F(61, 124) = 1.31, p > .05$] were lower than those associated with partner injustice [ICC(1) = .72, ICC(2) = .83; $F(61, 124) = 6.04, p < .001$]. These results suggested that couples could be differentiated reliably on the basis of mean partner injustice scores, but not supervisor injustice scores. We include this couple-level source of variance in partner injustice in our analyses.

Anger expression. The 8-item 'anger-out' subscale of the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (Spielberger, 1999) was used to assess the frequency that anger is expressed outwardly. Participants report on a 4-point scale (1 = infrequently; 4 = frequently) how often they express feelings relating to their anger. The internal consistency of this scale was satisfactory (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$). As an individual difference variable, we expected that little if any variance in trait anger would be explained by couple membership. This was the case with the ICC(1) equal to zero.

Enacted aggression. To assess workplace aggression toward a supervisor, we used Greenberg and Barling's (1999) 22-item scale. Participants indicated the number of times they have engaged in a series of aggressive behaviors (both psychological and physical) toward their supervisor over the past year (0 = never, 1 = once, 2 = twice, 3 = 3–5 times, 4 = 6–10 times, 5 = 11–20 times, 6 = more than 20 times). We added three additional items to this scale ("Over the past year I transmitted damaging information about my supervisor," "Over the past year I cried to make my supervisor feel guilty," and "Over the last year I damaged or destroyed personal property of my supervisor") to sample a more comprehensive range of aggressive behaviors. This same scale was also used in a suitably reworded form to assess aggression toward a romantic partner. Responses to items were summed to form scores for each participant, as is consistent with previous research using this scale (Greenberg & Barling, 1999; Dupré & Barling, 2006; Dupré et al., 2006). As these measures are formative indexes of behaviors and not reflective scales, measures of internal consistency like Cronbach's α are not relevant (Bollen & Lennox, 1991).

To validate participants' self-reports of enacted aggression, we asked partners to indicate the degree of aggression their partners had directed at them. The correlation between male reports of aggression directed at female partners, and female reports of aggression experienced from their male partner was .85. The correlation between female reports of aggression directed at partners and male reports of aggression experienced was .58. Similar to other findings (e.g., Jouriles & O'Leary, 1985; Simpson & Christensen, 2005), these correlations between partners' reports of aggression indicate a high degree of agreement on prevalence.

Similar to the injustice perceptions, the ICCs associated with supervisor-targeted aggression (ICC(1) < 0.01) were lower than those associated with partner-targeted aggression, ICC(1) = .13, ICC(2) = .22; $F(61, 124) = 1.29, p > .05$. Although the results indicated that couples could be differentiated more reliably on the average ratings for partner-targeted aggression than supervisor-targeted aggression, the low ICC(2) value for partner-targeted aggression suggests that it is difficult to detect differences between couples using couple means (Bliese, 2000). As such, we treat partner-targeted aggression as an individual-level construct.

Control variables. We also control for a number of demographic and relationship characteristics in our analyses. First, prior research has shown that gender (Anderson & Bushman, 2002) and age (Baron, Neuman, & Geddes, 1999; Inness et al., 2005) are associated with enacting aggression. Second, research on aggression directed at workplace

supervisors (Dupré & Barling, 2006) showed that the length of time worked with a supervisor is associated with aggression directed at that supervisor. Third, aggression directed at partners in dating and marital relationships tends to escalate over time (Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; Schumacher & Leonard, 2005). As such, in predicting aggression directed at supervisors, we control for gender, age, and the time worked with the specific supervisor. Likewise, we control for gender, age, and length of the romantic relationship in predicting partner-directed aggression. Gender was coded as 0 = female and 1 = male.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

Descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and reliabilities appear in Table 1. One important caveat in interpreting these descriptive data is that the individual-level correlations do not account for the nonindependent nature of the data. Nevertheless, the strongest correlate of partner-targeted aggression is anger, followed by age, though both effects were of just small to medium size ($r = .23, p < .05$, and $r = -.20, p < .05$, respectively). Conversely, supervisor-targeted aggression was strongly related to both supervisor injustice ($r = .65, p < .05$) and to gender ($r = .55, p < .05$).

We examined whether there was a relationship between participants' aggression directed at supervisor and aggression directed at a partner and found only weak correlations ($r = -.12, p > .05$). The

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations for All Study Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Sex	.50	.50										
2. Age	25.40	4.57	.16*									
3. Relationship length ^a	36.97	44.72	.00	.58*								
4. Time with supervisor ^a	23.23	22.96	-.01	.51*	.45*							
5. Anger	2.19	.62	.25*	-.06	-.06	-.03						
6. Supervisor injustice	3.02	1.36	.20*	.14	.14	.12	.04					
7. Partner injustice	2.98	1.15	.04	.17	-.12	.06	.02	-.17				
8. Couple-level partner injustice	2.98	1.16	-.04	.17	.03	.03	.02	-.17	.93*			
9. Supervisor aggression	2.99	6.36	.55*	.08	-.11	-.08	.11	.65*	-.21*	-.19*		
10. Partner aggression	4.21	4.78	-.05	-.20*	-.07	.02	.23*	-.18*	.12	.12	-.12	—

Note. *N* = 124. Sex was coded as women = 0 and men = 1. Relationship length and couple-level injustice are both couple-level variables from 62 couples replicated to respective individuals, so the correlations and significance tests involving this variable given above should be viewed with caution.

^a In months.

* $p < .05$. Two-tailed tests applied.

partial correlation (controlling for age, gender, length of the relationship with the supervisor, and length of the relationship with the partner) was similarly low ($r_p = -.11, p > .05$).

Model Testing

We fitted a series of multilevel models using Mplus v3.0 structural equation modeling software (Muthén & Muthén, 2004), enabling us to account for both the hierarchical nature of the data (i.e., respondents nested within couples) and the nonindependence of partner-targeted aggression within couples, and allow the simultaneous prediction of multiple outcomes. All predictor variables except for gender were grand-mean centered before analysis (Hofmann & Gavin, 1998). The size of causal effects between our predictor variables and outcomes (i.e., supervisor- and partner-targeted aggression) were indicated by the estimated path (regression) coefficients (γ), with their significance (of difference from zero) examined by a simple z test.

For the baseline model (Model 1; see Figure 1), we simultaneously regressed supervisor- and partner-targeted aggression against individual-level predictors (i.e., age, gender, length of time with the supervisor for supervisor aggression only, anger, supervisor injustice, partner injustice, and the interaction terms of partner injustice and anger for partner aggression only, and supervisor injustice and anger for supervisor aggression only) and couple-level predictors (i.e., partner injustice and relationship length for partner aggression only). Correlated errors were allowed within couples, and all paths were freely estimated.¹ Models 2 and 3 represent comparable variations of Model 1.

Model 2 was based on Model 1 with the exceptions of the paths between supervisor injustice and supervisor-directed aggression and supervisor injustice and partner-directed aggression, which were fixed to be equal. If Model 2 is significantly worse fitting than Model 1, this implies a significant difference between the extent to which supervisor injustice predicts supervisor-directed aggression and to which it predicts partner-directed aggression.

Model 3 was based on Model 1 with the exceptions of the paths between partner injustice and supervisor-directed aggression, and between partner injustice and partner-directed aggression, which were fixed to be equal. If Model 3 is significantly worse fitting than Model 1, this implies that there is a significant difference between the extent to which partner injustice

predicts supervisor-targeted aggression and to which it predicts partner-directed aggression.

If Models 2 and 3 are both worse fitting than Model 1, and in Model 1 we find that (1) supervisor injustice has a stronger relationship with supervisor-targeted aggression than with partner-targeted aggression, and (2) partner injustice has a stronger relationship with partner-directed aggression than with supervisor-targeted aggression, this will provide support for Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 2 compares the fit of the three computed models using a test of differences in χ^2 (Hox, 2002), while Tables 3 and 4 show the parameter estimates of the baseline model.

Hypothesis 1 stated that supervisor- and partner injustices would predict relationship-specific aggression more strongly than nonrelationship-specific aggression. In comparing Models 1 and 2, fixing supervisor injustice to be equal on both supervisor-directed and partner-directed aggression yields a worse fitting model, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 33.26, p < .05$. In comparing Models 1 and 3, fixing partner injustice to be equal on both supervisor-directed and partner-directed aggression does not result in a worse fitting model, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 1.52, p > .05$.

In examining the parameter estimates, supervisor injustice was a positive predictor of supervisor-targeted aggression ($\gamma = 0.11, p < .01$), but had no tangible effect on partner-directed aggression ($\gamma = -.01, p > .05$). Partner injustice exerted a positive but nonsignificant effect on partner-directed aggression ($\gamma = .10, p > .05$), but did have a weak but statistically significant negative relationship with supervisor-directed aggression ($\gamma = -.04, p < .05$). These model comparisons and parameter estimates provide partial support for Hypothesis 1; supervisor injustice has the expected differential effect upon supervisor- and partner-directed aggression, and both relationship-specific aggression effects are positive.

Hypothesis 2 stated that each relationship-specific injustice will be moderated by the individual difference of outward expression of anger. There was again

¹ Model 1 was also tested allowing supervisor- and partner-targeted aggression to be correlated at the individual level. This did not significantly improve the model fit, and the estimated correlation was very small ($r < .01, p > .05$). As a result, we retained Model 1 as the baseline for comparison for our subsequent models with various paths fixed as equal.

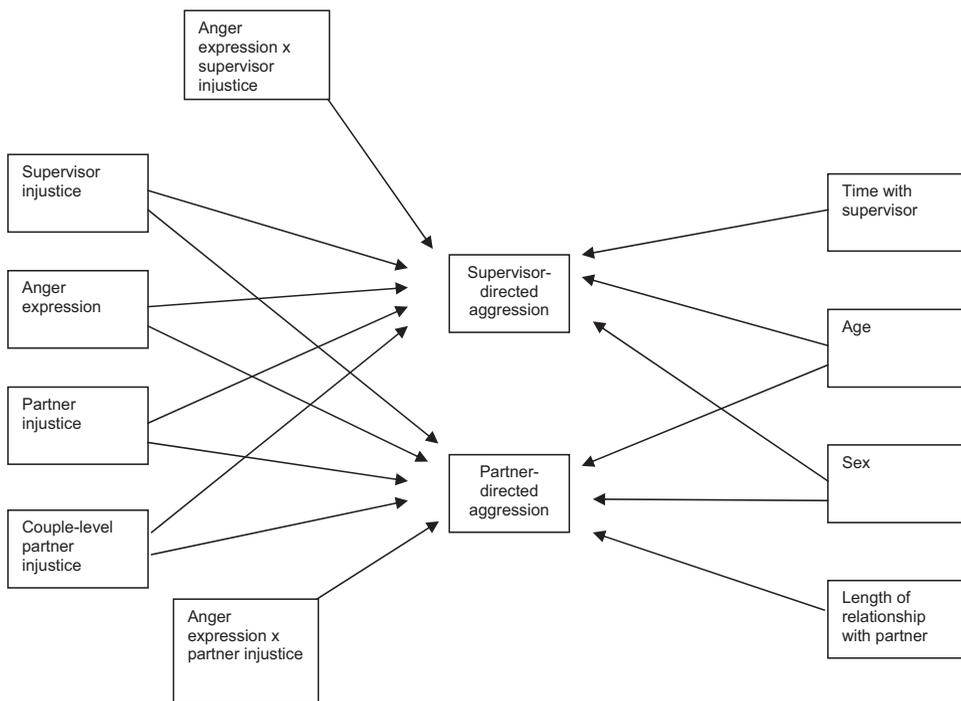


Figure 1. Baseline model.

partial support for this hypothesis. In the baseline model, the interaction term between supervisor injustice and anger on supervisor-directed aggression was nonsignificant ($\gamma < .01, p > .05$), whereas the interaction term between partner injustice and anger on partner-directed aggression was significant ($\gamma = .05, p < .01$).

The coefficients for the significant interaction term for anger and partner-injustice, and for the main effect of anger, indicate that the relationship between partner injustice and partner-directed aggression becomes a stronger positive one as levels of anger increase. We plotted this interaction by displaying the relationship between partner injustice and partner-

directed aggression at comparatively high and low values of anger (i.e., 1 *SD* above and below the mean; Aiken & West, 1991) in Figure 2.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to advance prior research by examining the potential for cross-relationship spillover between perceived injustice and enacted aggression. Researchers have discussed the need for testing whether the predictors of aggression are related to the enactment of aggression across relationships (Barling et al., 2009). There is research support for target-specific aggression in response to perceived provocations (Hershcovis et al., 2007), but also evidence that in some circumstances individuals may choose to displace their aggression away from the provocateur (e.g., Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007).

First, the results suggest the effect of supervisor injustice on supervisor-directed aggression is relationship-specific. The effect of partner injustice is less clear, with no direct effect on partner-directed aggression, and some evidence of spillover (in the form of a negative relationship) on supervisor-

Table 2
Comparison of Tested Models

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$ against Model 1
1	24.494	5	—
2	52.928	6	33.26*
3	26.544	6	1.52

* $p < .05$.

Table 3
Predictors of Supervisor-Targeted Aggression From Model 1

Variable	γ	SE	z
Intercept	0.027	0.069	0.394
Age	0.002	0.003	0.650
Sex	0.177	0.026	6.888***
Length of time with supervisor	-0.002	0.000	-3.963***
Anger	-0.008	0.011	-0.695
Supervisor injustice	0.110	0.014	7.677***
Partner injustice	-0.044	0.022	-1.988*
Couple-level partner injustice	0.015	0.018	0.830
Supervisor injustice \times Anger	0.003	0.012	0.211

Note. Sex was coded as women = 0 and men = 1.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Two-tailed test applied.

directed aggression. Second, there was a significant interaction between partner injustice and anger on partner-directed aggression. A third result of note in this study is the nonsignificant zero-order correlation between partner-directed and supervisor-directed aggression, providing additional support for the relationship specificity of aggression. Confidence in this finding is augmented for two reasons. First, the independence of partner-directed and supervisor-directed aggression holds even after controlling for salient control variables. Second, this result replicates Inness et al.'s (2005) finding of a nonsignificant correlation between aggression against two different supervisors in two different jobs among a sample of moonlighters. Nonetheless, while there is no significant link between partner-directed and supervisor-directed aggression in this study, perceived injustice in one relationship might lead to aggression in a different relationship.

Indeed, one finding that ran counter to our predictions was the relationship between partner injustice and supervisor-directed aggression. The association might imply a social support seeking mechanism by which unjust treatment in a romantic relationship encourages the victim to be less aggressive with others, such as supervisors, who can provide social support in another context in a time of need. Moreover, it may be possible that a threat in one relationship motivates compensatory perceptions and behaviors in another relationship (e.g., Hart, Shaver, & Goldenberg, 2005). Individuals may be motivated to create a positive relationship outside of the relationship that is arousing negative feelings. While this explanation goes beyond what the current data can test, the idea that the relationship spillover of perceived injustice behaviors can have a silver lining is an intriguing avenue for future research. Another explanation for this counterintuitive finding might be artifactual; that is, modeling the correlation between the two forms of aggression, allowing for the non-independence of observations within couples, or both, might make this relationship specific to this

Table 4
Predictors of Partner-Targeted Aggression From Model 1

Variable	γ	SE	Z
Intercept	0.557	0.145	3.832***
Age	-0.015	0.006	-2.638**
Sex	-0.056	0.052	-1.084
Length of time with partner	0.001	0.001	1.439
Anger	0.069	0.023	3.050**
Supervisor injustice	-0.012	0.023	-0.538
Partner injustice	0.099	0.060	1.642†
Couple-level partner injustice	-0.068	0.063	-1.070
Partner injustice \times Anger	0.049	0.018	2.765**

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Two-tailed test applied.

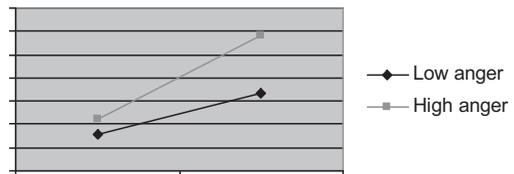


Figure 2. The moderating effect of anger on the relationship between perceptions of partner injustice (x-axis) and partner-directed aggression (y-axis).

sample. Replication of the study model in other samples is therefore warranted.

One explanation for the discrepancy in the role of anger in supervisor-subordinate versus romantic relationships could lie in the relative strengths of these two relationships. Prior research shows that weaker situations are characterized by stronger relationships between individual differences and aggression (Inness et al., 2005) and behavioral intentions (Beatty, Cleveland, & Murphy, 2001). In contrast, individual differences play less of a significant role in strong situations, and correlations between situational predictors and aggression are higher in stronger situations (Inness et al., 2005). This would be consistent with the notion that romantic relationships, in which the partners may continually redefine their norms, roles, and expectations, are weaker situations; supervisor-subordinate relationships might reflect a stronger situation as the norms, roles, and expectations for both parties are more strongly socially sanctioned and organizationally legitimized. This line of reasoning is also supported in work by Barrick and Mount (1993) who found that the relationship between personality and job performance was moderated by autonomy. They argue that personality traits tend to be most predictive of performance when situational influences are low and autonomy is high (i.e., weaker situations). Finally, people working part-time often maintain employment because of financial need, and given this, a working relationship in a part-time setting may be a stronger situation than a romantic relationship (especially in light of the age of this sample and relationship tenure).

Future Directions and Limitations

Several avenues for future research are apparent. First, we focused in this study on one individual difference and one situational predictor; future research might benefit from focusing on additional individual differences and situational predictors to exclude the possibility that this model is a function of variable selection. Second, external validity of the current model could be enhanced by using samples of full-time employees in marital relationships. While few differences exist between full-time and part-time employees (Barling & Gallagher, 1996), and aggression occurs in relationships well before marriage (e.g., Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin, & Kupper, 2001), marital and romantic relationships are likely to differ in terms of commitment.

Some limitations of the current study need to be noted. First, our study is limited by sample size

which is small relative to the model's complexity, both in terms of the total number of participants and the number of couples. As a result, we were unable to perform our analyses using latent variables and instead used observed scale mean scores at the risk of overextending the data. Second, although reliability of partner reports of aggression was assessed in this study, it is possible that the self-reported nature of the data might inflate the magnitude of the relationships between predictor and criterion variables. This said, the threat of common method variance is minimized to some extent by the relatively low correlation between some of the measured variables (Lindell & Whitney, 2001), along with the presence of significant interactions but not others (Wall, Jackson, Mullarkey, & Parker, 1996). Future research would benefit by examining the relationship between reports of experienced and perpetrated aggression between a target and perpetrator. Additionally, given the nature of our data collection, it is not possible for us to provide a response rate in relation to the number of people who were approached to participate. It is possible that the romantic couples who agree to take part in the study could differ in comparison to the broader population and future research should consider this issue.

Finally, we compared aggression within a romantic relationship with aggression against a supervisor. Romantic relationships assume equality between the partners, whereas supervisor-subordinate relationships are hierarchical in nature. Contrasting aggression within romantic relationships with aggression among work peers might provide different findings. Research findings show that the predictors of peer- and supervisor aggression do not necessarily overlap (Greenberg & Barling, 1999). However, because individuals may be less likely to confront problematic situations at work, especially when in less powerful positions (see Hershcovis & Barling, 2007), characteristics of the supervisor-subordinate relationship may result in more displaced aggression in the subordinate-personal relationship than vice versa (Hoobler & Brass, 2006). If this were the case, we would expect supervisor injustice to be related to partner aggression, but the relationship between these two variables was not significant. Moreover, supervisors generally have responsibility for more than one individual simultaneously, while partners in romantic relationships customarily date one individual at a time. Future research should control for such differences across relationships when making comparisons (Cooper & Richardson, 1986).

The findings from this study speak more generally to the many areas in which an interaction between different relationships could affect health-related outcomes. From an occupational health psychology perspective, it is important to be aware of this possibility. When an individual experiences or perceives something in her home or work environment that causes her to feel some sort of distress, anger, or unhappiness, it is possible that not only are there negative ramifications for this individual, but potentially for others as well. It is important that researchers and practitioners continue to focus on this possibility in an effort to understand the full realm of potential health effects that may result.

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Correction to Dupré et al. (2010)

In the article “Comparing Perceived Injustices From Supervisors and Romantic Partners as Predictors of Aggression” by Kathryne E. Dupré, Julian Barling, Nick Turner, and Chris B. Stride (*Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, September 20, 2010. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1037/a0020520), the order of authorship was listed incorrectly. The correct order of authorship follows:

Kathryne E. Dupré, Julian Barling, Nick Turner, and Chris B. Stride

All versions of this article have been corrected.

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