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How objectifiers are granted power in the workplace

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Abstract

Objectification often has profound negative consequences for its victims, yet we argue that objectification may have positive ancillary implications for the perpetrators. Drawing from system justification theory, we posit that, especially in organizations characterized by higher power distance, objectifying supervisors would be afforded more power by their subordinates because they would deem such behaviour as more typical (i.e., descriptive justification) and more desirable (i.e., prescriptive justification). The results of two experiments ($N = 443$ and $N = 211$) showed that high (vs. low) power distance subordinates afforded less power to a non-objectifying supervisor (but not more power to an objectifying supervisor), and that prescriptive justification (but not descriptive justification) mediated the interaction effect of objectification and power distance on power affordance. In a field survey with dyads of supervisors and subordinates ($N = 122$), we found that subordinates with relatively high power distance orientations afforded power to their objectifying supervisors through prescriptive justification. Our research contributes to objectification literature by demonstrating when and how supervisor objectification can be rationalized and perpetuated through granting objectifiers power.

KEYWORDS
objectification, power affordance, power distance, system justification

1 | INTRODUCTION

Objectification, the treatment of human beings as instrumental tools (Gruenfeld et al., 2008), is omnipresent in everyday life. In the workplace, it is manifest when supervisors treat their subordinates as equivalent to inanimate machines, useful only for the production of labour that serves the purposes of the organization. The 996 working schedule, which refers to working from 9 am to 9 pm for 6 days per week, exemplifies how humans sometimes find themselves in a position that parallels a working machine (The Economist, 2019). Similarly, in response to COVID-19, some leaders prioritized wealth over the health of their employees, such that they urged employees to go to the workplace without safety measures in place (Lussenhop, 2020). Interestingly, those who objectify sometimes fare well in organizational contexts and are able to obtain powerful positions. This research thus examines when and why objectifying supervisors are afforded power by their subordinates.

We argue that power distance, the extent to which people accept the legitimacy of unequal power distribution (Hofstede, 1997; House et al., 2014), may co-determine when objectification is seen as justifiable behaviour. In a higher power distance context, the distance between the powerful and the powerless is larger, and such inequality is also more accepted by both the powerful and the powerless. As a consequence, in a high power distance context, supervisor

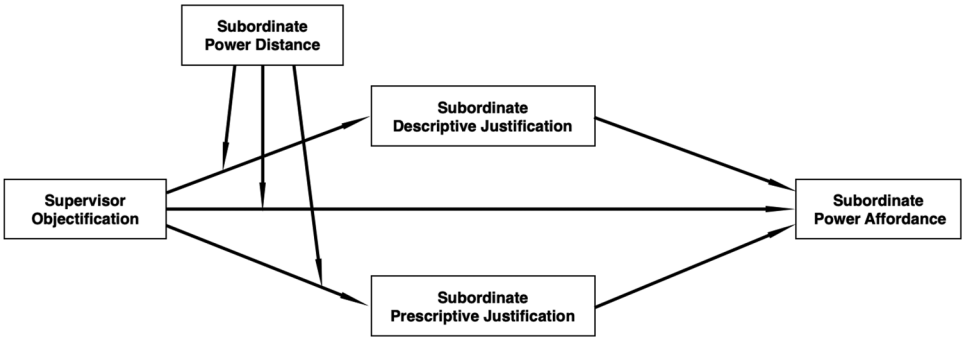

FIGURE 1 A mediated moderation model of objectification.

objectification is more likely to be seen as a behaviour that is typical and desirable (e.g., Lian et al., 2012), which may form the basis of further power acquisition. Notably, rather than taking a cross-cultural approach, this research examines objectification at the individual level of analysis. It aims to examine whether subordinate power distance orientation, as an individual level construct, moderates the extent to which supervisor objectification is justified, and furthermore the extent to which objectifying supervisors are afforded power.

Our research provides several theoretical contributions. First, we look beyond *sexual objectification*, the act of reducing a person to her or his sexual parts or functions as if they were capable of representing the entire person (Bartky, 1990), because objectification in the work context often takes other, more general, forms. Second, prior research showed that objectification had profound negative impacts on the victims who were perceived to be less competent, less warm, and less worthy of moral treatment (e.g., Heflick et al., 2011; Loughnan et al., 2010; Pacilli et al., 2017). However, much less attention has been devoted to the perpetrators of objectification. Indeed, we know little about how people respond to objectifiers. To address this deficiency, this research examines the behavioural consequences of objectification (i.e., power affordance) for the objectifiers. Third, our research also extends the power literature by examining when and why power may be bestowed upon those who engage in deviant behaviour. Previous research has examined power distance as a boundary condition for the impact of uncivil or abusive behaviour by high-ranking individuals and similar but different constructs, such as descriptive and injunctive norms and interpersonal justice, to explain the mitigating effect that high power distance had on the impact of high-ranking individuals' uncivil or abusive behaviour (Lian et al., 2012; Moon et al., 2018). The present research adds to power literature by studying how high versus low power distance subordinates grant power differently to the objectifying supervisor from a system justification theory perspective with a focus on power-related stereotypes (Jost, 2020). We posit that higher (vs. lower) power distance subordinates afford more power to their objectifying supervisor because those subordinates engage more in a post hoc rationalization, such that they believe that a supervisor *typically objectifies* (i.e., *descriptive justification*) and *should objectify* (i.e., *prescriptive justification*) employees (see Figure 1 for our research model). In the following sections, we first elaborate on what objectification is and then explain the theory of when and why objectifiers are afforded power.

1.1 | What is objectification?

Objectification can be seen as interpersonal behaviour in which at least one social target is treated like a tool instead of a human being by at least one agent (Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Nussbaum, 1995; Orehek & Weaverling, 2017). As such, we distinguish it from *self-objectification*—the treatment of oneself as an object to be looked at and evaluated (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The key attribute of objectification is *instrumentality*, by which the targets are reduced to tools ready for use by the objectifiers (Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Nussbaum, 1995; Orehek & Weaverling, 2017). For instance, in the 996 case, employees are defined by how instrumental they are to the employers' goals of speedy production and cost reduction: Those employees who can work 996 are valued, while those who are unable or unwilling to do so are derogated as "slackers" or even dismissed (Kuo, 2019). In other words, employees are seen as mere means to ends. Apart from instrumentality, objectification also entails the denial of humanity. That is, people are denied both *agency*—the capacity to plan and act—and *experience*—the capacity to sense and feel (e.g., Gray et al., 2007). Indeed, prior research showed that the objectified were attributed low agency and low experience by both themselves and others (e.g., Andrighetto et al., 2017; Loughnan et al., 2017). Objectification bears resemblance to dehumanization in terms of denial of agency and denial of experience (Haslam, 2006), but objectification is distinct from dehumanization in that objectification includes the notion of instrumentality (Gruenfeld et al., 2008). Dehumanization does not emphasize or involve instrumentality in its conceptualization.

Our research focuses on objectification that occurs between a supervisor (as the agent of objectification) and his or her subordinate (as the target who is objectified). Accordingly, an objectifying supervisor is someone who evaluates his or her subordinate based on the utility for accomplishing work tasks, while depriving the subordinate of self-regulation in work-related plans and actions and of feelings about work. The relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate is characterized by the fact that usually the supervisor has more power than the subordinate (Rus et al., 2010). Supervisors generally have more power because they outrank their subordinates and a higher rank often entails more control over resources (Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Wisse et al., 2019). However, a higher rank does not necessarily guarantee more power in a relational context. To the extent that a supervisor has control over the resources the subordinate values, the supervisor

has power (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). To explain why supervisors who objectify are granted power, we build on system justification theory (Jost, 2020; Jost & Banaji, 1994).

1.2 | The system justification model of objectification and power

System justification theory assumes that people tend to use ideas about groups and individuals to justify the way things are, "so that existing social arrangements are perceived as fair and legitimate, perhaps even natural and inevitable" (Jost & Hunyady, 2002, p. 119). System justification theory provides an explanation for how societal inequality persists and how unfair treatment, such as objectification, of the disadvantaged is legitimized.

1.2.1 | Power-related stereotypes and justification of objectification

People are inclined to use role-bound stereotypes to justify unfair social arrangements or misconduct (e.g., Haines & Jost, 2000; Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003). One such stereotype is that, in general, power holders are more self-oriented and uncaring than their powerless counterparts (Moya et al., 2017) and correspondingly more likely to exhibit objectifying behaviour. Notably, those role-bound stereotypes do not necessarily serve the purpose of depicting individuals in a certain role as being positive or negative, but rather as a means to indicate that they are well suited for their status (Haines & Jost, 2000). Derogating the powerless on the power-relevant dimensions (e.g., competence and achievement orientations) justifies the position that they have, so does compensating them on the dimensions that are less relevant to power (e.g., warmth and interpersonal orientation; Jost et al., 2005). Likewise, by derogating the powerful on the dimensions that are less relevant to power (e.g., warmth) and praising them on power-relevant dimensions (e.g., competence), their suitability for their roles is underscored (Moya et al., 2017). In a nutshell, supervisors, given their powerful positions, are often believed to be relatively cold and outcome-oriented, and perhaps therefore more prone to objectify others.

Consistent with people's power-related stereotypes, power indeed breeds objectification and dehumanization (Civile & Obhi, 2016; Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Xiao et al., 2019). For instance, Gruenfeld and colleagues (2008) found that power holders tended to approach a social target based on whether it was deemed useful. The powerful attribute fewer uniquely human traits to their powerless counterparts than vice versa (Capozza et al., 2012; Gwinn et al., 2013), and they view the powerless as objects for manipulation (Kipnis, 1972). Likewise, powerful people generally pay more attention to stereotypic and depersonalized information than do the powerless (e.g., Goodwin et al., 2000). Moreover, power positively predicts immoral behaviour (e.g., Dubois et al., 2015), prejudice (Richeson & Ambady, 2003), self-enhancement, and other-derogation (Georgesen & Harris, 2000). In short, there is evidence showing that the powerful, relative to the powerless, are more likely to objectify others.

Moreover, by applying these power-related stereotypes, people defend and bolster the existing state of affairs, even when doing so undermines the interest of the disadvantaged (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2004). Counter-intuitively, these system-justifying stereotypes are held both by the advantaged *and the disadvantaged* (Haines & Jost, 2000; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost et al., 2002). The powerless not only attribute greater superiority to the powerful to legitimize the status quo (Haines & Jost, 2000), but they further misremember explanations for their powerlessness as being more legitimate than they actually are (Jost et al., 2004). Low-status people legitimize power inequality to such an extent that they show less favouritism to themselves (e.g., choosing to interact with a member of high-status group over members of their own group), while high-status people exhibit more favouritism toward themselves (Jost & Burgess, 2000; Jost et al., 2002). Notably, the adoption of system-justifying stereotypes has behavioural implications, insofar as it leads people to support (as opposed to challenge) the status quo (Calogero, 2013; Calogero & Jost, 2011). We therefore argue that subordinates are likely to rationalize and perpetuate supervisor objectification by granting power to an objectifying supervisor.

1.2.2 | Power distance as the moderator

The effects of supervisor objectification can vary from one culture to another or from one individual with a specific cultural value to another. In this respect, the concept of power distance is especially relevant to the current research, given both its system-justifying functions (Jost & Hunyady, 2005) and its implications for how negative supervisory behaviours are appraised (Lian et al., 2012; Tepper, 2007). Power distance reflects the degree to which individuals accept inequality of power distribution existing in a society or an organization (Hofstede, 1997; House et al., 2014). Those inequalities of power distribution not only concern what one *perceives* to be the case but also what one *desires* to be the case (Hofstede, 1997). In a high, relative to low, power distance work environment, supervisors expect and demand more obedience (Farh et al., 2007), and subordinates are more inclined to have an unquestioning and submissive attitude toward their supervisors (Khatri, 2009). Such power asymmetry can be conducive to supervisor mistreatment of subordinates (Son Hing et al., 2007). Indeed, not only does high power distance allow and even facilitate supervisors' unfair treatment of their subordinates (Aryee et al., 2007; Zhang & Bednall, 2016), but it also has the effect that subordinates place less weight on the quality of their treatment by supervisors (e.g., whether or not they are treated with dignity; Tyler et al., 2000) and are less likely to view supervisor mistreatment as interpersonally unfair (Lian et al., 2012; Vogel et al., 2015).

According to system justification theory, people who have a higher power distance orientation tend to justify and maintain larger power differences between those in supervisor positions and those in subordinate positions, in part by endorsing power-related stereotypes or

the differential roles prescribed for each (Jost, 2020). When supervisors objectify subordinates, subordinates higher (vs. lower) in power distance are more likely to regard it as indicative of power differences and to reinforce such power differences. Moreover, because power distance reduces one's uncertainty by offering a predictable, structured order and a clear rule about who should do what (Friesen et al., 2014; Lind & Van den Bos, 2002), higher power distance subordinates are less in need of fairness or fairness-related signals (Thau et al., 2009). In other words, higher power distance subordinates are more likely to rationalize and maintain supervisor objectification.

On the basis of the above, upholding power-related stereotypes and power differentials, subordinates higher (vs. lower) in power distance are more likely to afford power willingly to an objectifying supervisor. Supporting this account, prior research showed that subordinates high (vs. low) in power distance were not only more acquiescent to abusive supervision (Lian et al., 2012), but they were also more supportive of the abusive supervisor, such that they showed more trust in their supervisor and constructive effort at work (Lee et al., 2000; Vogel et al., 2015). Likewise, the negative effects of abusive supervision on employee psychological health and job satisfaction were weaker for employees higher in power distance (Lin et al., 2013). We therefore hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1. The relation between supervisor objectification and power affordance is moderated by subordinate power distance, such that relative to low power distance subordinates, high power distance subordinates afford more power to an objectifying supervisor and less power to a non-objectifying supervisor.

1.2.3 | Descriptive justification versus prescriptive justification as the mediator

Why are subordinates who are higher in power distance more likely to afford power to an objectifying supervisor? As shown in Figure 1, we argue that it is in part because higher power distance subordinates descriptively and prescriptively justify supervisor objectification (cf. Hu et al., 2016; see also Abrams et al., 2013; Moon et al., 2018). By descriptive justification, we mean the extent to which subordinates think that it is typical for a powerful supervisor to objectify employees; by prescriptive justification, we mean the extent to which subordinates think that it is desirable for a powerful supervisor to objectify employees. Although descriptive and prescriptive terms are closely intertwined, such that people automatically associate commonness of an event with its desirability (Eriksson et al., 2015; Lindström et al., 2018), differentiating between the two constructs can advance our understanding of the link between objectification and power affordance.

According to system justification theory, higher power distance subordinates have a greater tendency to uphold power-related stereotypes or role differentials (Jost, 2020; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). That is, higher power distance subordinates may afford more power to an objectifying supervisor because they believe that a powerful supervisor objectifies and should objectify employees. This also aligns with the normative nature of power distance, in that power distance as a value construct indicates what is common and desirable (Hofstede, 1997). As higher power distance subordinates prefer well-defined roles and clear instructions given by supervisors (Daniels & Greguras, 2014), they are also more likely to perceive objectification as both typical and desirable supervisory behaviour. By contrast, because lower power distance subordinates value more people-oriented and less task-oriented supervisory behaviour (Daniels & Greguras, 2014), they are less likely to justify objectification in either descriptive or prescriptive terms. We therefore hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2. Subordinates' descriptive and prescriptive justification mediate the moderating effect of power distance on the relation between supervisor objectification and power affordance, such that with increasing power distance, supervisor objectification predicts greater power affordance through descriptive justification (a) and prescriptive justification (b).

1.3 | Study Overview

We opted for a multi-study, multi-method test of our hypotheses. To establish causality, we conducted two experiments in which we manipulated power distance and objectification with self-designed scenarios (Study 1, $N = 443$) or video clips (Study 2, $N = 211$). We then measured descriptive justification, prescriptive justification, and power affordance. In Study 2 we also included a behavioural measure of power affordance. To increase external validity, we conducted a field survey (Study 3, $N = 122$) with dyads of supervisors and subordinates. Supervisors rated the extent to which they engaged in objectifying behaviour, while their subordinates indicated power distance, descriptive and prescriptive justification, and power affordance. University ethics approval was obtained prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained, and participation was voluntary and confidential in all three studies. We used SPSS for all data analyses except for confirmatory factor analyses, for which Mplus was used.

2 | STUDY 1

2.1 | Method

2.1.1 | Participants and design

We used a 2 (objectification: non-objectification vs. objectification) × 3 (power distance: low vs. control vs. high) between-subjects design. A prior power analyses using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) revealed that, given an alpha of .05, a power of 0.80, and an effect size (f) of 0.14 as suggested by prior research with a similar model (Lian et al., 2012), a sample size of 387 would be required. Considering that we used a novel manipulation of objectification, we increased the number to 443 participants. We recruited participants from Prolific, a

crowdsourcing platform that provided high data quality, especially in terms of reproducibility of known effects and participants' naivety to experimental tasks (Peer et al., 2017). A total of 409 British employees fulfilled our criteria for participation (working either full or part time, with a 95% Prolific approval rate, and using a computer). To further ensure data quality and in line with the recommendations by Meade & Craig (2012), we removed all data of participants who failed instructed response items ($n = 36$), indicated that their data should not be used ($n = 24$), showed zero variance in responses (i.e., straight-lining; $n = 12$), reported a malfunction during the experiment ($n = 1$), or were an extreme multivariate outlier as indicated by Cook's distance ($n = 1$).[1] The final sample consisted of 328 participants (199 women and 129 men) with a mean age at 39.52 ($SD = 10.99$).[2] The majority of participants were Caucasian (94.2%), had an undergraduate degree (41.5%), and had a personal annual income ranging from £20,000 to £29,999 (30.8%). The most typical industries in which participants worked were education (14.3%), science and technology (11.6%), health care (11.3%), and retail (11.0%). Most participants worked 33 to 40 hours per week (57.9%).

2.1.2 | Procedure and materials

After answering the questions pertaining to demographics, participants were informed that they would read a description of a work situation. They were asked to imagine that they were working in a reputable company that could be seen as an industry leader in the fast-moving consumer goods sector and that was currently expanding operations in several countries around the globe. Then participants were randomly assigned to one of three power distance conditions. Next, all participants were introduced to their supervisor, named Bill, in the scenario. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two objectification conditions, in which they read a dialogue between Bill and one of Bill's colleagues. All participants were then asked to fill out Descriptive Justification, Prescriptive Justification, and Power Affordance Scales. Finally, participants were debriefed and compensated (£0.70).

2.1.3 | Power distance manipulation, manipulation check, and measure

We adopted the power distance manipulation developed by Moon, Weick, and Uskul (2018). Specifically, after a short introduction of the company, participants in the low power distance condition read, for instance: "Those in authority treat juniors with respect and do not pull rank." In the high power distance condition, participants read, for instance: "Those in authority openly demonstrate their rank and expect those in junior positions to be aware of the existing ranks and show respect towards seniors." Participants in the low and high power distance conditions then completed a two-item power distance manipulation check ("Power is distributed unequally between the seniors and the juniors in this organisation," "This organisation has a hierarchical structure"; 1 = *disagree strongly*, 7 = *agree strongly*; $\alpha = .94$). Participants in the control condition received no information regarding power distance. Instead, they completed the six-item Power Distance Scale (Clugston et al., 2000; $\alpha = .57$) as a filler task. They indicated their chronic power distance orientation by indicating the extent to which they agreed (1 = *disagree strongly*, 7 = *agree strongly*) with statements like "Supervisors should make most decisions without consulting subordinates."

2.1.4 | Objectification manipulation and manipulation check

To manipulate objectification, we presented participants with a dialogue in which the supervisor Bill made either objectifying or non-objectifying remarks regarding employees. This dialogue was developed based on items from Gruenfeld and colleagues' (2008) Objectification Scale (see Appendix A for the full text of the dialogue). Note that all three attributes of objectification were incorporated in the dialogue. For instance, in the objectification condition, Bill evaluated employees based on their instrumental value by saying "Let's try to see which muppets we could use for this new project" (vs. "Let's try to see which employees we could involve in this new project"); Bill also deprived employees of agency by saying "We don't want any 'suggestions' about how to do the work" (vs. "We want her to voice her opinion about how to do the work"); Bill also showed denial of experience by saying "It does not improve efficiency to discuss personal life at work" (vs. "It is always nice to get to know a bit more about people's personal lives"). After the objectification manipulation, participants completed a four-item objectification manipulation check ($\alpha = .94$) by indicating how much they agreed (1 = *disagree strongly*, 7 = *agree strongly*) with the statements: "Bill treats employees as objects rather than human beings"; "Bill ignores employees' thoughts and feelings"; "Bill treats employees as means to reach goals"; "Bill tends to contact employees only when he needs something from them."

2.1.5 | Descriptive and prescriptive justification measures

Following the example of similar measures used by Moon et al.'s (2018), we developed a three-item Descriptive Justification Scale ($\alpha = .91$). Participants were asked to estimate "how common/typical/likely it is that a powerful supervisor in this organization treats his/her employees as Bill does" on a seven-point scale (1 = *very uncommon/untypical/unlikely*, 7 = *very common/typical/likely*). The four-item Prescriptive Justification Scale ($\alpha = .98$) asked participants to indicate "how appropriate/acceptable/proper/desirable is it for a powerful supervisor to treat employees in the way that Bill does in this organization" on a seven-point scale (1 = *completely*

[1] Three participants were identified as careless in two of the listed respects.
[2] The inclusion of careless responses did not change the pattern of results in Study 1.

inappropriate/unacceptable/improper/undesirable, 7 = *perfectly appropriate/acceptable/proper/desirable*).

2.1.6 | Power affordance measure

We formed a seven-item Power Affordance Scale (α = .98) by using items from previous power-related scales (Caza et al., 2011; Mayer & Davis, 1999; Platow et al., 1998). Participants indicated the extent to which they would be (1 = *definitely not*, 7 = *definitely*) in favour of Bill having power as indicated by their responses to items such as: "If a vote were to be held, I'd like to vote for Bill as my leader again," and "I would let Bill have influence over job issues that are important to me" (see Appendix B for the complete scale).

2.2 | Results and Discussion

2.2.1 | Manipulation checks

As expected, participants in the high power distance condition ($M = 6.27, SD = 0.84$) indicated that the organization had a more hierarchical structure than did participants in the low power distance condition (M = 2.32, SD = 1.28), t (170.24) = −26.64, $p < .001$, d = −3.71, 95% CI [−4.15, −3.27]. A 2 (objectification: non-objectification vs. objectification) × 3 (power distance: control vs. low vs. high) ANOVA confirmed that participants evaluated their objectifying supervisor (M = 6.71, SD = 0.47) as exhibiting more objectifying behaviours than the non-objectifying supervisor (M = 3.74, SD = 1.44), F (1, 322) = 685.12, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = 0.68. A main effect of power distance was also observed, F (2, 322) = 8.81, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = 0.05. In addition, an interaction effect indicated that the difference between objectification and non-objectification was significant within each power distance condition, albeit less pronounced in the high power distance condition than in the low power distance and control conditions, F (2, 322) = 6.36, p = .002, η_p^2 = 0.04. This effect seemed unsurprising given the nature of power distance. Moreover, given the relatively small effect size, we concluded that our manipulations were successful.

2.2.2 | Power affordance

To test whether objectification and power distance interacted in affecting power affordance (Hypothesis 1), we conducted a 2 × 3 ANOVA on power affordance. A main effect of objectification was observed, F (1, 322) = 414.13, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = 0.56, indicating that relative to an objectifying supervisor (M = 1.42, SD = 0.63), a non-objectifying supervisor (M = 4.30, SD = 1.72) was afforded more power. A main effect of power distance was also observed, F (2, 322) = 3.04, p = .049, η_p^2 = 0.02. Most importantly, the interaction term was significant, F (2, 322) = 3.26, p = .040, η_p^2 = 0.02. Pairwise comparisons (Bonferroni tests) further revealed that, although participants afforded more power to a non-objectifying supervisor than to an objectifying supervisor in each power distance condition, compared with participants in the low power distance condition, participants in the high power distance condition afforded less power to a non-objectifying supervisor (r = −0.25) but did not afford more power to an objectifying supervisor (r = 0.01; see Table 1). The results supported the non-objectification part of Hypothesis 1.

2.2.3 | A mediated moderation model

We tested the first-stage mediated moderation model (i.e., Hypothesis 2) by using PROCESS Model 8 (Hayes, 2018) with 95% CI and 5,000 bootstrap iterations using the percentile method. We entered objectification (0 = non-objectification, 1 = objectification) as the independent variable, power distance (−1 = low power distance, 0 = control condition, 1 = high power distance) as the moderator, and descriptive and prescriptive justifications as the mediators.

The regression and ANOVA results consistently showed that objectification and power distance interactively predicted both descriptive justification, F (2, 322) = 8.56, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = 0.05, and prescriptive justification, F (2, 322) = 3.99, p = .019, η_p^2 = 0.02. As shown in Table 1, compared with participants in the low power distance condition, participants in the high power distance condition considered objectification as more typical (r = 0.56; but not more desirable, r = 0.06) supervisory behaviour (i.e., descriptive justification) and non-objectification as less desirable (r = −0.26; but not less typical, r = 0.11) supervisory behaviour (i.e., prescriptive justification).

As can be seen in Table 2, the full model accounted for a substantial amount of variance in power affordance. A negative direct effect of objectification indicated that an objectifying supervisor was afforded less power than a non-objectifying supervisor. Objectification and power distance did not interact in predicting power affordance directly in this model, F (1, 322) = 0.99, p = .321, η_p^2 = 0.003. Contrary to our prediction (Hypothesis 2a), the mediated moderation effect via descriptive justification turned out to be negative, *index* = −0.06, bootstrap SE = 0.03, bootstrap CI [−0.13, −0.01]. This showed that, with larger power distance, subordinates afforded less power to an objectifying supervisor, because objectification was seen as more typical supervisory behaviour. Only in a low power distance organization did subordinates afford power to an objectifying supervisor because of descriptive justification (see the bottom of Table 2). In contrast, supporting Hypothesis 2b, we found a positive mediated moderation effect via prescriptive justification, *index* = 0.41, bootstrap SE = 0.14, bootstrap CI [0.12, 0.69]. Although the indirect effects via prescriptive justification were significantly negative across three levels of power distance, the negative effect of supervisor objectification on power affordance through prescriptive justification was weaker for subordinates high (vs. low) in power distance.

To summarize, the results of Study 1 provided support for part of the model (see Figure 1), namely a positive mediated moderation effect of objectification on power affordance via prescriptive justification. We found that the negative effect of objectification on power affordance via prescriptive justification was weaker for high

TABLE 1 Mean scores (with SDs in parentheses) for descriptive justification, prescriptive justification, and power affordance in Study 1

		Descriptive justification	Prescriptive justification	Power affordance
Non-objectification	Low power distance ($n = 54$)	4.22_{a} (1.47)	4.56_{a} (1.62)	4.77_{a} (1.69)
	Control ($n = 50$)	4.29_{a} (1.54)	$4.07_{a, b}$ (1.66)	$4.30_{a, b}$ (1.62)
	High power distance ($n = 62$)	4.55_{a} (1.46)	3.73_{b} (1.47)	3.90_{b} (1.74)
Objectification	Low power distance ($n = 48$)	3.08_{b} (1.47)	1.39_{c} (0.74)	1.45_{c} (0.54)
	Control ($n = 60$)	4.39_{a} (1.53)	1.25_{c} (0.47)	1.36_{c} (0.53)
	High power distance ($n = 54$)	5.03_{a} (1.43)	1.49_{c} (0.87)	1.47_{c} (0.80)

Means with different subscripts within columns differ significantly at $p < .05$ (Bonferroni-corrected).

TABLE 2 Model coefficients for the effects of objectification on power affordance through descriptive justification and prescriptive justification as a function of power distance (Study 1)

	Descriptive justification		Prescriptive justification		Power affordance	
Predictor	***b* (*SE*)**	**95% CI**	***b* (*SE*)**	**95% CI**	***b* (*SE*)**	**95% CI**
Objectification	−0.18 (0.16)	[−0.50, 0.15]	−2.75*** (0.14)	[−3.02, −2.49]	−0.52*** (0.12)	[−0.75, −0.29]
Descriptive justification					−0.08** (0.03)	[−0.13, −0.02]
Prescriptive justification					0.87*** (0.03)	[0.81, 0.93]
Power distance	0.17 (0.14)	[−0.10, 0.44]	−0.42*** (0.11)	[−0.64, −0.19]	−0.06 (0.07)	[−0.19, 0.07]
Objectification × power distance	0.80*** (0.20)	[0.40, 1.19]	0.47** (0.17)	[0.14, 0.80]	0.10 (0.10)	[−0.10, 0.29]
Constant	4.36*** (0.12)	[4.13, 4.58]	4.12*** (0.10)	[3.94, 4.31]	1.07*** (0.18)	[0.71, 1.43]
R^2	0.12		0.56		0.87	
F	15.20***		140.15***		445.16***	

The conditional indirect effects of objectification on power affordance

Moderator:	Mediator: Descriptive justification			Mediator: Prescriptive justification		
Power distance	**Effect**	**Bootstrap SE**	**95% Bootst. CI**	**Effect**	**Bootstrap SE**	**95% Bootst. CI**
High	−0.05	0.03	[−0.12, −0.004]	−1.99	0.20	[−2.38, −1.60]
Control	0.01	0.01	[−0.01, 0.04]	−2.39	0.16	[−2.71, −2.08]
Low	0.07	0.04	[0.01, 0.15]	−2.80	0.23	[−3.27, −2.34]

** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

(relative to low) power distance subordinates. This indicates that, with power distance continually increasing, supervisor objectification may predict greater power affordance through prescriptive justification. We did not find that compared with low power distance subordinates, those high power distance subordinates would afford more power to an objectifying supervisor directly or indirectly through descriptive justification.

3 | STUDY 2

Study 2 sought to replicate the findings of Study 1, adding a behavioural measure of power affordance—the extent to which participants would grant their supervisor the power to evaluate their task performance and to determine the monetary reward for their task performance. A pilot study reported below was first conducted to validate two videos as successful manipulation of objectification.

3.1 | Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to assess the construct validity of the objectification videos. We used a one-factor (non-objectification versus objectification) between-subjects design in which 40 women and 19 men with the mean age at 36.39 ($SD = 10.60$) were randomly assigned to view either the objectification or the non-objectification video, and then provided ratings on objectification manipulation checks ($\alpha = .95$; the same scale of Study 1) and relevant measures as described below. We created two video clips that portrayed a supervisor who either objectified or did not objectify subordinates using the script from Study 1, with minor adaptations to fit the study context. Two British male doctorate students in management were recruited as the actors and were allegedly discussing the recruitment of students for a project. In both conditions, the actors wore the same blue shirts and sat in the same business meeting room, on the same chairs, and behind the same table. Camera perspective was identical in two videos.

The two videos were similar in terms of length, word count, the actors' vocal tone, facial expressions and body movement.

As intended, participants indicated that the objectifying supervisor ($M = 6.22$, $SD = 0.82$) exhibited more objectifying behaviours than the non-objectifying supervisor ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.20$), t (51.42) = 11.71, $p < .001$, $d = 3.03$, 95% CI [2.27, 3.78]. Participants also perceived the objectifying supervisor ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.52$) to be more dominant than the non-objectifying supervisor ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.84$), t (48.82) = 5.80, $p < .001$, $d = 1.50$, 95% CI [.91, 2.07]. In addition, compared with the non-objectifying one, the objectifying supervisor was perceived to be less trustworthy (t (57) = −5.14, $p < .001$, $d = -1.34$, 95% CI [−1.90, −.77]), liked (t (57) = −4.70, $p < .001$, $d = -1.22$, 95% CI [−1.78, −.66]), competent (t (57) = −2.05, $p = 0.045$, $d = -0.53$, 95% CI [−1.05, −.01]), and warm (t (57) = −7.89, $p < .001$, $d = -2.05$, 95% CI [−2.68, −1.41]). The videos did not differ in how prestigious, economically successful, well-educated, masculine, physically attractive, or young/old the leader appeared as indicated by the t-test. Given the results, the videos can be considered successful in manipulating objectification.

3.2 | Focal study method

3.2.1 | Participants and design

A total of 211 participants from a university located in northern England were randomly assigned to one condition of a 2 (objectification: non-objectification vs. objectification) × 2 (power distance: low vs. high) between-subjects design.[3] Participants were recruited through university-wide email advertisements, flyers, and social media. To ensure data quality, we removed the responses from eight participants who did not watch the video as required, and eight participants who knew (one of) the actors, six participants who were extreme multivariate outliers as indicated by Cook's distance, and 21 participants who were identified as suspicious for various reasons, such as that some restarted the computer program accidentally in the middle of the experiment.[4] Our final sample consisted of 174 participants (114 females, 60 males) with a mean age of 23.94 ($SD = 6.72$). Sensitivity power analyses using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) revealed that, given an alpha of .05, a power of 0.80, and a sample size of 174, the detectable effect size (f) would be 0.21. The majority of participants were students (87.4%), and 12.6% of them were university staff. Half of the final sample were Caucasian, 40.8% were Asian, and the remaining 9.2% had various other ethnic backgrounds.[5]

[3] A control condition for power distance was not included in Study 2 for the following reasons: (a) Our hypotheses focus on the comparison between low and high power distance; (b) we had limited budget and did not have easy access to a large pool of participants (unlike Study 1).

[4] Six responses were identified as invalid in more than one respect. The inclusion of the responses from suspicious participants did not change the pattern of results. Please see the details for how participants were identified as suspicious and the comparisons of the results excluding and including the suspicious participants in Tables S1 and S2 , respectively.

[5] Including any demographic variable as a control variable did not change the pattern of results that we reported.

3.2.2 | Procedure and materials

All participants were informed that they would participate in a computer-mediated study on "social interaction in the workplace" and were seated individually behind computers that were used to present all instructions, stimuli, and dependent measures. Participants were told that "by participating in this study you have become a member of Mirror," "a simulated organisation established to study business decision-making processes." They read the profile of Mirror that described either high or low power distance. To increase psychological realness, we created and presented a logo of Mirror (Callahan & Ledgerwood, 2016) and presented participants with some general information about Mirror (e.g., the number of local students involved in Mirror).

After completing a power distance manipulation check, participants were asked to review a part of the decision-making process in which their supervisor, Bill, was involved by watching one of the two videos that were developed to manipulate objectification and were validated in a pilot study. After completing the objectification manipulation check, participants filled out the Descriptive and Prescriptive Justification Scales. Then, they were asked to complete two job-related tasks, which would be evaluated in order to assess whether or not they could get a bonus. How much power participants granted to their supervisor over the evaluation of their task performance served as the behavioural measure of power affordance. Finally, participants filled out the Power Affordance Scale. Participants also answered demographic questions (gender, age, etc.). Participants were compensated and debriefed. Each participant was compensated £5 for the participation and had the chance to win a £25 Amazon gift card contingent on task performance.

3.2.3 | Power distance manipulation and manipulation check

We adapted the power distance manipulation of Study 1, which was originally developed by Moon et al. (2018). The power distance was manipulated in the description of Mirror and included the following four elements: First, "our culture" provided detailed descriptions of power distance that were similar to Study 1; second, the "code of conduct" summarized the keywords "deference, authority, and hierarchy" for high power distance, or "autonomy, equality, and fairness" for low power distance; third, a "star employee" further emphasized the importance of "respecting" (i.e., high power distance) or "challenging" (i.e., low power distance) the decisions of those in authority; and fourth, the "organization chart" graphically showed positions along a vertical (i.e., high power distance) or horizontal (i.e., low power distance) axis. Participants completed a four-item power distance manipulation check (Moon et al., 2018; $\alpha = .90$) by indicating how much they agreed (1 = *disagree strongly*, 7 = *agree strongly*) with statements like "This organization has a hierarchical structure."

3.2.4 | Objectification manipulation and manipulation check

The objectification manipulation was introduced by informing participants that they needed to watch and review a video of a decision-making process in which their supervisor Bill was involved (see the pilot section for more details). In each video, Bill discussed the recruitment of students for a new project with his colleague, and he made either objectifying or non-objectifying remarks about students. After watching the video, participants completed a four-item objectification manipulation check ($\alpha = .87$), which was identical to Study 1.

3.2.5 | Measures

Descriptive justification ($\alpha = .82$) and prescriptive justification ($\alpha = .93$) measures were the same as Study 1. For power affordance we developed a behavioural measure and also used a self-report scale. For the behavioural measure, we first asked participants to complete two job-related tasks (viz., proofreading and self-presentation), and they were told that their performance in each task would be evaluated and scored separately by both their supervisor Bill and an algorithm (as a neutral competitor). For each task that was evaluated, the scores given by Bill and by the algorithm would be combined, and the composite score would determine their chance of winning a £25 Amazon gift card. The behavioural component was that participants could decide how much power they would like to give to Bill (or the algorithm) by allocating the weight (0 = *none at all*, 100 = *a great deal*) to Bill and the algorithm for each task score. As participants performed two weight allocation tasks, this behavioural measure of power affordance had two items ($\alpha = .63$).[6] Afterwards, participants filled out the conventional Power Affordance Scale ($\alpha = .92$), of which seven items were adopted from Study 1's Power Affordance Scale and a new item was added specific to this experiment "I'd like Bill to lead the new project." As expected, the two power affordance measures were positively correlated, $r = 0.33$, $p < .001$.

3.3 | Results and discussion

3.3.1 | Manipulation checks

As expected, participants in the high power distance condition ($M = 6.08$, $SD = 0.85$) perceived the organization to have higher power distance than did participants in the low power distance condition ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.13$), $t(154.15) = -20.22$, $p < .001$, $d = -3.10$, 95% CI [−3.54, −2.65]. Moreover, a 2 × 2 ANOVA confirmed the main effect of objectification, such that participants perceived an objectifying supervisor ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 0.99$) as exhibiting more objectifying behaviours, relative to the non-objectifying supervisor ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.33$), $F(1, 170) = 144.80$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.46$. Similar to Study 1, two smaller additional effects were found: A main effect of power distance, $F(1, 170) = 6.91$, $p = .009$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.04$, and an interaction effect, $F(1, 170) = 11.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.06$, revealing that, although the difference between objectification and non-objectification was significant at each power distance level, the difference was smaller in the high power distance condition ($p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.19$), relative to the low power distance condition ($p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.40$).

3.3.2 | Power affordance

To test whether objectification and power distance would jointly predict power affordance (Hypothesis 1), we conducted a 2 × 2 ANOVA for each power affordance measure. A main effect of objectification was observed for the self-report power affordance measure, $F(1, 170) = 39.37$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.19$, indicating that relative to an objectifying supervisor ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.11$), a non-objectifying supervisor ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.30$) was afforded more power. This main effect was not observed for the behavioural power affordance measure, $F(1, 170) = 0.99$, $p = .321$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$. No main effect of power distance attained significance for self-report, $F(1, 170) = 0.97$, $p = .327$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$, or behavioural measure, $F(1, 170) = 0.08$, $p = .783$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.00$, of power affordance. Most importantly, the interaction term was significant for both the behavioural measure, $F(1, 170) = 6.26$, $p = .013$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.04$, and self-report measure, $F(1, 170) = 6.62$, $p = .011$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.04$, of power affordance. As shown in Table 3, participants in the high power distance condition afforded less power to a non-objectifying supervisor than did participants in the low power distance condition for the self-report measure ($r = -0.24$) but not for the behavioural measure ($r = -0.19$); participants in the high power distance condition did not afford more power to an objectifying supervisor than did participants in the low power distance condition (self-report measure: $r = 0.13$; behavioural measure: $r = 0.18$). The results supported the non-objectification part of Hypothesis 1.

3.3.3 | Mediated moderation models

We then tested the first-stage mediated moderation model for each power affordance measure (i.e., Hypothesis 2). As in Study 1, we utilized Hayes' (2018) PROCESS Model 8 with 95% CI and 5,000 bootstrap iterations using the percentile method. We consistently entered objectification (0 = non-objectification, 1 = objectification) as the independent variable, power distance (0 = low power distance, 1 = high power distance) as the moderator, and two types of justification as the mediators.

As can be seen in Table 4, objectification and power distance interactively predicted prescriptive justification but not descriptive justification. As shown in Table 3, participants in the high power distance condition did not perceive objectification as more appropriate ($r = 0.14$) or non-objectification as less appropriate ($r = -0.18$)

[6] Except for the behavioural measure of power affordance (101-point scale), all of measures in Study 2 were seven-point Likert scales.

TABLE 3 Mean scores (with SDs in parentheses) for descriptive justification, prescriptive justification, and power affordance in Study 2

		Descriptive justification	Prescriptive justification	Behavioural power affordance	Self-report power affordance
Non-objectification	Low power distance ($n = 35$)	4.90_{a} (1.09)	4.21_{a} (1.48)	59.33_{a} (22.85)	4.20_{a} (1.21)
	High power distance ($n = 50$)	$5.17_{a, b}$ (1.20)	3.69_{a} (1.37)	$51.54_{a, b}$ (16.54)	3.55_{c} (1.31)
Objectification	Low power distance ($n = 49$)	4.65_{a} (1.35)	2.14_{b} (1.05)	49.52_{b} (17.76)	2.58_{b} (1.00)
	High power distance ($n = 40$)	5.32_{b} (1.13)	2.46_{b} (1.23)	$55.76_{a, b}$ (16.51)	2.87_{b} (1.24)

Means with different subscripts within columns differ significantly at $p < .05$ (Bonferroni-corrected).

than did participants in the low power distance condition. In both power distance conditions supervisor objectification was regarded as inappropriate, but the difference between objectification and non-objectification in prescriptive justification was smaller for participants in the high power distance condition, F (1, 170) = 20.41, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.11$, $r = -0.42$, than for those in the low power distance condition, F (1, 170) = 52.91, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.24$, $r = -0.63$.

For the behavioural measure of power affordance, as can be seen in Table 4, the whole model accounted for 10.29% of the variance. Objectification and power distance interacted in directly predicting power affordance, F (1, 168) = 4.13, $p = .044$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$, with a reduced effect size from the previous one. The direct effect of objectification on power affordance was positive in the high power distance condition ($b = 8.64$, $SE = 4.00$, $t = 2.16$, $p = .032$, CI [0.75, 16.53]), but no such effect in the low power distance condition ($b = -2.65$, $SE = 4.56$, $t = -0.58$, $p = .562$, CI [−11.66, 6.35]); participants in the high power distance condition did not afford more power to an objectifying supervisor ($b = 5.50$, $SE = 3.90$, $t = 1.41$, $p = .160$, CI [−2.19, 13.19]) or less power to a non-objectifying supervisor ($b = -5.80$, $SE = 3.97$, $t = -1.46$, $p = .146$, CI [−13.63, 2.03]) than did participants in the low power distance condition.

As hypothesized, we found a positive indirect effect of objectification on power affordance through prescriptive justification, index = 2.95, bootstrap SE = 1.82, bootstrap CI [0.15, 7.10]. Similar to Study 1's findings, although the indirect effects of objectification on power affordance via prescriptive justification were significantly negative at both low and high levels of power distance (see the bottom of Table 4), these negative indirect effects were weaker for subordinates high (vs. low) in power distance. Yet no indirect effect via descriptive justification was found, *index* = −.22, Bootstrap SE = 0.68, Bootstrap CI [−1.91, 0.94].

The pattern of results was similar for the self-report measure of power affordance. As can be seen in Table 4, the full model accounted for a substantial amount of variance (64.87%). Objectification and power distance did not interact in directly predicting power affordance in this model, F (1, 168) = 1.82, $p = .179$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$. As hypothesized, there was a positive mediated moderation effect of objectification on power affordance via prescriptive justification, index = 0.58, bootstrap SE = 0.28, bootstrap CI [0.03, 1.13]. As before, although the indirect effects via prescriptive justification were negative at both low and high levels of power distance, these negative indirect effects were weaker for high (relative to low) power distance subordinates. Again, no indirect effect via descriptive justification was found, index = 0.02, bootstrap SE = 0.03, bootstrap CI [−0.05, 0.09]. Those results supported Hypothesis 2b but not Hypothesis 2a.

To summarize, we found that, compared with high power distance subordinates, low power distance subordinates afforded less power to an objectifying supervisor because of less prescriptive justification. The positive indirect effect via prescriptive justification indicated that with power distance increasing, supervisor objectification could predict greater power affordance through prescriptive justification. Study 2 further established the uniqueness of prescriptive justification mechanism in explaining the interaction effect of objectification and power distance on power affordance. Notably, those results held for both the behavioural and the self-report measures of power affordance. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, Study 2 provided support for non-objectification (but not objectification) part of Hypothesis 1 and for Hypothesis 2b. Again Study 2 provided no support for Hypothesis 2a.

4 | STUDY 3

Study 3 sought to examine our mediated moderation model in a real-life work context. By conducting this field study, we examined whether our model could be applied to chronic power distance relative to primed power distance in Studies 1 and 2. More importantly, we assessed whether our model could generalize to the supervisor-subordinate dyads that had regular face-to-face interactions.

4.1 | Respondents

The sample consisted of 122 supervisor-subordinate dyads (66.3% response rate) working in the Netherlands. After removing the data from dyads that had missing data for a whole scale or more (five dyads) or were detected as a multivariate outlier as indicated by Cook's distance (one dyad), our final sample contained 116 supervisor-subordinate dyads. Sensitivity power analyses using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) revealed that, given an alpha of .05, a power of 0.80, and a sample size of 116, the detectable effect size (f^2) would be 0.07 for the regression with 7 to 9 predictors. In the final sample, subordinates (64 women, 52 men) had a mean age of 32.72 ($SD = 12.32$), while supervisors (34 women, 81 men, 1 missing data) had a mean age of 43.33

TABLE 4 Model coefficients for the effects of objectification on power affordance through descriptive justification and prescriptive justification as a function of power distance (Study 2)

	Descriptive justification		Prescriptive justification		Behavioural power affordance		Self-report power affordance	
Predictor	***b* (*SE*)**	**95% CI**	***b* (*SE*)**	**95% CI**	***b* (*SE*)**	**95% CI**	***b* (*SE*)**	**95% CI**
Obj	−0.26 (0.27)	[−0.79, 0.27]	−2.06*** (0.28)	[−2.62, −1.50]	−2.65 (4.56)	[−11.66, 6.35]	−0.16 (0.20)	[−0.56, 0.24]
DJ					−0.54 (1.15)	[−2.80, 1.73]	0.05 (0.05)	[−0.05, 0.15]
PJ					3.53** (1.08)	[1.40, 5.67]	0.71*** (0.05)	[0.60, 0.79]
PD	0.27 (0.27)	[−0.26, 0.79]	−0.52+ (0.28)	[−1.08, 0.04]	−5.80 (3.97)	[−13.63, 2.03]	−0.30+ (0.18)	[−0.65, 0.05]
Obj × PD	0.40 (0.37)	[−0.33, 1.13]	0.84* (0.39)	[0.06, 1.61]	11.30* (5.56)	[0.32, 22.27]	0.34 (.25)	[−0.16, 0.83]
Constant	4.90*** (0.20)	[4.50, 5.31]	4.21*** (0.22)	[3.78, 4.64]	47.11*** (8.39)	[30.55, 63.66]	1.02** (0.38)	[0.28, 1.77]
R^2	0.05		0.30		0.10		0.65	
F	2.73*		24.60***		3.85**		62.04***	

The conditional indirect effects of objectification on behavioural power affordance

	Mediator: Descriptive justification			Mediator: Prescriptive justification		
Moderator: PD	**Effect**	**Bootstrap SE**	**95% Bootst. CI**	**Effect**	**Bootstrap SE**	**95% Bootst. CI**
High	−0.08	0.37	[−1.01, 0.57]	−4.34	1.88	[−8.52, −1.06]
Low	0.14	0.46	[−0.68, 1.24]	−7.29	2.85	[−13.28, −1.91]

The conditional indirect effects of objectification on self-report power affordance

	Mediator: Descriptive justification			Mediator: Prescriptive justification		
Moderator: PD	**Effect**	**Bootstrap SE**	**95% Bootst. CI**	**Effect**	**Bootstrap SE**	**95% Bootst. CI**
High	0.01	0.02	[−0.03, 0.05]	−0.86	0.21	[−1.27, −0.45]
Low	−0.01	0.02	[−0.07, 0.03]	−1.44	0.22	[−1.90, −1.01]

Abbreviations: Obj, objectification; DJ, descriptive justification; PJ, prescriptive justification; PD, power distance.
+ $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

(*SD* = 12.36). Most of the respondents worked in catering (18.3%), construction and retail (17.3%), or business services (16.3%). Respondents typically had a higher education degree (a bachelor degree or higher; 52.6% subordinates, 68.1% supervisors), worked more than 33 hours per week (47.8% subordinates, 79.1% supervisors), had worked in the current organization for 5 years or more (28.4% subordinates, 52.6% supervisors), and had been in the current supervisory relationship for more than 2 years (52.6%).

4.2 | Procedure and measures

4.2.1 | Procedure

Data were collected as part of a study on the role of social interaction in the workplace. Graduate students recruited respondents by using their work environment and personal network, and by visiting local businesses. Potential respondents were approached via e-mail, phone, or face-to-face contact. Envelops with paper-and-pencil questionnaires were distributed in pairs to employees and their direct supervisors. Each pair was numbered so as to enable the matching of supervisor-subordinate data. Those individuals willing to participate in the study were asked to fill in the questionnaires without consulting their colleagues, subordinates, or supervisors, and to return the questionnaires in the enclosed envelope. This envelope was subsequently either picked up or returned by mail. Because people often filled in the questionnaires during work hours, we kept the survey short. Moreover, we stressed the fact that participation in the study was voluntary and that data would be treated confidentially. Supervisors filled out the Objectification Scale, while subordinates completed the Power Distance, Descriptive and Prescriptive Justification, and Power Affordance Scales. Both supervisors and subordinates answered demographical questions.

4.2.2 | Measures

We used an adapted version of the *Objectification Scale* (Gruenfeld et al., 2008; α = .70) to measure supervisors' objectification of their subordinates.[7] Supervisors indicated the extent to which they agreed (1 = *disagree strongly*, 7 = *agree strongly*) with statements like: "I think more about what employees can do for me than what I can do for them." The six-item *Power Distance Scale* (Clugston et al., 2000; α = .73) was used to measure the extent to which subordinates accepted that power was distributed unequally. Subordinates indicated how much they agreed (1 = *disagree strongly*, 6 = *agree strongly*) with statements like: "Managers should make most decisions without consulting subordinates." A three-item *Descriptive Justification Scale* (α = .68) asked subordinates the extent to which they agreed (1 = *disagree strongly*, 6 = *agree strongly*) with the following statements: (a) "The powerful usually treat employees as objects rather than human beings"; (b) "Power holders normally use employees as means to reach their goals"; (c) "It is common in this workplace that people in high power positions ignore employees' needs and interests." A four-item *Prescriptive Justification Scale* (α = .61) asked subordinates to indicate the extent to which they agreed (1 = *disagree strongly*, 6 = *agree strongly*) with the following statements: (a) "Those who possess power should use employees as tools to achieve their goals"; (b) "It is acceptable for the powerful to limit employees' autonomy"; (c) "Supervisors in power positions should consider employees' thoughts and feelings" (reverse-coded); (d) "It is appropriate for power holders to contact employees primarily when they have tasks for them."

To assess subordinates' willingness to afford power to their supervisor, we used an adapted version of the four-item *Perceived Organizational Power Scale* (Caza et al., 2011; α = .73). Instead of asking respondents to rate their own power as in the original scale, we asked subordinates to rate how powerful they would like their supervisor to be in their workplace. Subordinates indicated the extent to which they agreed (1 = *disagree strongly*, 6 = *agree strongly*) with the statements like: "I'd like my supervisor to be at the top of the power hierarchy in this workplace."

4.2.3 | Control variables

We controlled for supervisors' gender (0 = female, 1 = male) and age (in years), as it was possible that men (vs. women; e.g., Dobbins et al., 1990) and older people (vs. younger ones; see Khatri, 2009) could have been regarded as more powerful. We also controlled for subordinates' self-report weekly work time (1 = *8 h or less*, 2 = *9–16 h*, 3 = *17–24 h*, 4 = *25–32 h*, 5 = *33–40 h*) and contact frequency with their supervisor (1 = *rarely or never*, 5 = *very often*), because people who spent more time at work or with their supervisor were more likely to justify their supervisor's objectifying behaviour and support their supervisor in order to diminish cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957).

4.3 | Results and discussion

4.3.1 | Preliminary analyses

We first ran three confirmatory factor analyses. We compared a five-factor solution (Model 1: one factor for each variable) to a four-factor solution (Model 2: descriptive justification and prescriptive justification load on one factor) and a one-factor solution (Model 3: all items load on one factor).[8] Model fit revealed the five-factor

[7] Due to the poor reliability of the original 10-item scale (α = .52), factor analysis and reliability analysis were conducted and, accordingly, five items were removed in this study (items 1, 2, 3, 8, and 9 were retained).

[8] Two modifications were made to each model: the errors of two objectification indicators (i.e., items 8 and 9) were allowed to covary, because both indicators described the scenario that involved change of job; the errors of a descriptive justification indicator (i.e., item (b), see Measures) and a prescriptive justification indicator (i.e., item (a), see Measures) were also allowed to covary, because the two indicators had the same content, and only differed in the descriptive or prescriptive term.

TABLE 5 Correlations among Study 3 variables

Measure	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1. Objectification	3.66	0.97				
2. Power distance	2.55	0.77	0.14			
3. Descriptive justification	3.08	0.92	0.04	0.10		
4. Prescriptive justification	2.56	0.75	0.25**	0.41***	0.29**	
5. Power affordance	4.07	0.77	−0.21*	0.18*	−0.18	0.16

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

solution to be superior to the four- and one-factor solutions (Model 1: $\chi^2(197) = 273.54$, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.89, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.06, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.08; Model 2: $\chi^2(201) = 352.54$, CFI = 0.78, RMSEA = 0.08, SRMR = 0.09; Model 3: $\chi^2(207) = 566.85$, CFI = 0.48, RMSEA = 0.12, SRMR = 0.12). These results indicated that the factor structure was appropriate, and that the two types of justification were empirically distinct from each other. Table 5 reports descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables. The more supervisors objectified their subordinates, the less subordinates were willing to afford power to their supervisors ($r = -0.21$, $p = .023$). Despite the positive association between two types of justification ($r = 0.29$, $p = .002$), descriptive justification ($r = -0.18$, $p = .056$) and prescriptive justification ($r = 0.16$, $p = .093$) were related to power affordance in different ways.

4.3.2 | Power affordance

To examine whether power distance would moderate the relation between objectification and power affordance (Hypothesis 1), we conducted the regressions with four control variables, mean-centered objectification, mean-centered power distance, and their interaction as the predictors. None of the control variables exerted a main effect on power affordance. Objectification was negatively related to power affordance, $b = -0.21$, SE = 0.08, $t = -2.74$, $p = 0.007$, CI [−0.37, −0.06], whereas power distance was positively related to power affordance, $b = 0.20$, SE = 0.09, $t = 2.18$, $p = .031$, CI [0.02, 0.39]. However, the interaction term was not significant, $b = 0.05$, SE = 0.11, $t = 0.41$, $p = .681$, CI [−0.17, 0.27]. Table 6 shows simple main effects. We thus did not find evidence in support of Hypothesis 1.

4.3.3 | A mediated moderation model

We examined the first-stage mediated moderation model (i.e., Hypothesis 2) by using Hayes' (2018) PROCESS Model 8 with 95% CI and 5,000 bootstrap iterations using the percentile method. We entered objectification as the independent variable, power distance as the moderator, and two types of justification as the mediators.

TABLE 6 The simple main effects of objectification and power distance on descriptive justification, prescriptive justification, and power affordance in Study 3

		Descriptive justification				Prescriptive justification				Power affordance			
		b	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI	*b*	*SE*	*t*	95% CI
Objectification	Low power distance (−SD)	0.01	0.14	0.05	[−0.26, 0.27]	−0.01	0.09	−0.16	[−0.19, 0.16]	−0.25	0.11	−2.27*	[−0.46, −0.03]
	High power distance (+SD)	0.06	0.15	0.40	[−0.24, 0.36]	0.29	0.10	2.88**	[0.09, 0.49]	−0.18	0.12	−1.45	[−0.42, 0.07]
Power distance	Low objectification (−SD)	0.10	0.19	0.53	[−0.27, 0.47]	0.17	0.13	1.38	[−0.08, 0.42]	0.16	0.15	1.05	[−0.14, 0.46]
	High objectification (+SD)	0.17	0.16	1.03	[−0.15, 0.49]	0.55	0.11	5.10***	[0.34, 0.76]	0.25	0.13	1.89+	[−0.01, 0.51]

+ $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 7 Model coefficients for the effects of objectification on power affordance through descriptive justification and prescriptive justification as a function of power distance (Study 3)

	Descriptive justification		Prescriptive justification		Power affordance	
Predictor	***b* (*SE*)**	**95% CI**	***b* (*SE*)**	**95% CI**	***b* (*SE*)**	**95% CI**
Objectification	0.03 (0.10)	[−0.16, 0.22]	0.14* (0.06)	[0.01, 0.26]	−0.24** (0.08)	[−0.40, −0.09]
Descriptive justification					−0.19* (0.08)	[−0.35, −0.03]
Prescriptive justification					0.28* (0.12)	[0.04, 0.52]
Power distance	0.13 (0.12)	[−0.10, 0.36]	0.36*** (0.08)	[0.21, 0.51]	0.13 (0.10)	[−0.07, 0.32]
Objectification × Power distance	0.03 (0.14)	[−0.24, 0.31]	0.20* (0.09)	[0.01, 0.38]	−0.003 (0.11)	[−0.22, 0.22]
Supervisor gender	0.39+ (0.20)	[−0.02, 0.79]	0.34* (0.14)	[0.08, 0.61]	−0.14 (0.17)	[−0.47, 0.19]
Supervisor age	−0.003 (0.01)	[−0.02, 0.01]	−0.02** (0.01)	[−0.03, −0.01]	0.01 (0.01)	[−0.005, 0.02]
Subordinate weekly work time	−0.13+ (0.08)	[−0.28, 0.02]	0.08 (0.05)	[−0.02, 0.18]	0.02 (0.06)	[−0.10, 0.14]
Supervisor-subordinate contact frequency	0.000 (0.09)	[−0.18, 0.18]	−0.09 (0.06)	[−0.21, 0.03]	−0.01 (0.07)	[−0.16, 0.13]
Constant	3.44*** (0.48)	[2.50, 4.39]	3.01*** (0.32)	[2.39, 3.64]	3.67*** (0.54)	[2.60, 4.74]
R^2	0.07		0.38		0.20	
F	1.18		9.05***		2.80**	

The conditional indirect effects of objectification on power affordance

	Mediator: Descriptive justification			Mediator: Prescriptive justification		
Moderator: Power distance	**Effect**	**Bootstrap SE**	**95% Bootstrap CI**	**Effect**	**Bootstrap SE**	**95% Bootstrap CI**
High (+SD)	−0.01	0.03	[−0.07, 0.05]	0.08	0.04	[0.01, 0.18]
Mean	−0.01	0.02	[−0.04, 0.03]	0.04	0.02	[−0.001, 0.09]
Low (−SD)	−0.001	0.03	[−0.06, 0.05]	−0.004	0.03	[−0.07, 0.06]

+ $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

As can be seen in Table 7, objectification and power distance interactively predicted prescriptive justification but not descriptive justification. As shown in Table 6, for high power distance subordinates, supervisor objectification positively predicted subordinate prescriptive justification ($r = .26$), whereas for low power distance subordinates, objectification did not predict prescriptive justification ($r = -.02$). High power distance subordinates showed more prescriptive justification for a high level of supervisor objectification than low power distance subordinates ($r = .43$), but subordinate power distance did not predict prescriptive justification when the supervisor reported a low level of objectification ($r = .13$).

Objectification exerted a negative direct effect on power affordance and did not interact with power distance in directly predicting power affordance. The conditional indirect effect of objectification on power affordance via prescriptive justification was positive but not significant, *index* = 0.05, bootstrap SE = 0.04, bootstrap CI [−0.003, 0.14]. Supervisor objectification predicted power affordance via prescriptive justification when subordinate power distance was high, but not when power distance was low or moderate (see the bottom of Table 7). The conditional indirect effect of objectification on power affordance via descriptive justification was not significant, *index* = −0.01, bootstrap SE = 0.03, bootstrap CI [−0.06, 0.06].

To summarize, we found that subordinates who had a relatively high power distance orientation afforded power to their objectifying supervisor through prescriptive justification, that is because they considered objectification as desirable supervisory behaviour. Study 3 provided some support for Hypothesis 2b but no support for Hypothesis 2a or Hypothesis 1.

To help understand the implications of all three studies, we conducted a mini-meta-analysis using the fixed effects approach for each simple main effect across all three studies (Goh, Hall, & Rosenthal, 2016). As can be seen in Table 8, although an objectifying supervisor was perceived as less desirable and afforded less power than a non-objectifying supervisor by both high and low power distance subordinates, high (relative to low) power distance subordinates perceived supervisor objectification as more typical and more desirable, and they afforded more power to the objectifying supervisor. When the supervisor showed a relatively low level of objectification, subordinate power distance was negatively related to power affordance. Figure 2 shows a summary of the results regarding the mediated moderation effect of objectification on power affordance through descriptive and prescriptive justification across three studies.

5 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

In this article, we examined whether the effect of supervisor objectification on power affordance was moderated by power distance. In

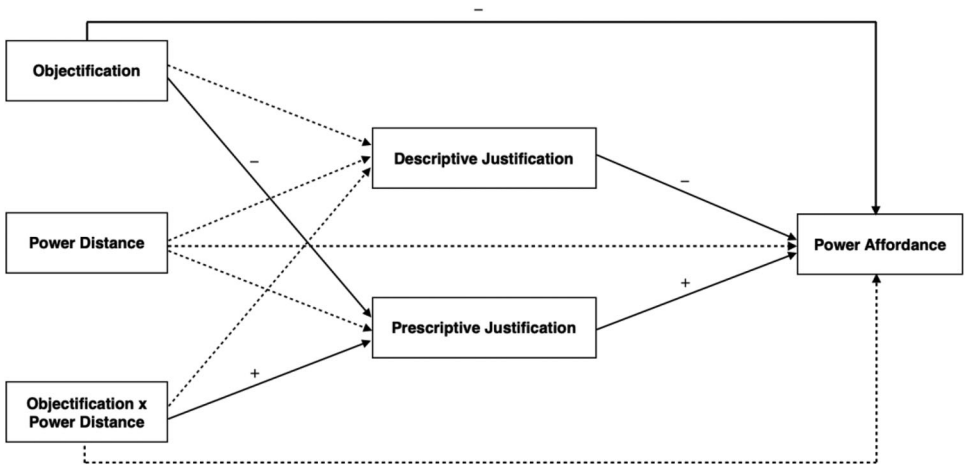

FIGURE 2 Results summary for the mediated moderation effect of objectification on power affordance. All solid lines in the figure indicate significant paths that are confirmed in at least two studies, and dashed lines signify otherwise.

Studies 1 and 2, we found that compared with subordinates in the low power distance condition, subordinates in the high power distance condition afforded less power to a non-objectifying supervisor (but not more power to an objectifying supervisor), and that prescriptive justification (but not descriptive justification) mediated the interaction effect of objectification and power distance on power affordance, such that the negative effects of objectification on power affordance via prescriptive justification were weaker for high (relative to low) power distance subordinates. In Study 3, we found that subordinates who had a relatively high power distance orientation afforded power to their objectifying supervisor through prescriptive justification—that is because they considered objectification as desirable supervisory behaviour. A mini-meta-analysis of the three studies showed that high (relative to low) power distance subordinates perceived supervisor objectification as more typical and more desirable and afforded more power to the objectifying supervisor.

5.1 | Implications for objectification and power

Our research has a number of implications for understanding objectification, power, and the relationship between the two. First, despite all negative impacts that objectification has on victims, our studies show that perpetrators of objectification can be granted power in a relatively high power distance context because subordinates tend to perceive objectification as appropriate supervisory behaviour. In doing so, those subordinates are more likely to support rather than challenge the status quo—supervisors treat employees as tools as lacking in agency and experience. Those findings suggest that subordinates in a relatively high power distance organization may rationalize supervisor objectification and perpetuate it by granting power to an objectifying supervisor. Our research contributes to the objectification literature by demonstrating when and how objectification can be legitimized and perpetuated.

Second, our work contributes to the power literature by demonstrating when and how an objectifier can be granted power. It is assumed that people who exhibit aggressive or abusive behaviour fail to attain status (Ridgeway, 1987). Research shows that although people believe that the powerful engage in more unethical behaviour than the powerless, people expect that the powerful should behave more ethically than the powerless (Hu et al., 2016). Compared to the powerless, power holders bear a greater responsibility to advance common good (Keltner et al., 2008; Tost, 2015; Wood & Harms, 2017), so it is less desirable to see power holders violate norms. Correspondingly, compared to the powerless, power holders are less trusted and are given less leniency, when both of them commit the same transgression (e.g., falsifying details in a report or contract; Kim et al., 2017).

However, we suggest that this effect might not hold in a high power distance context or for high power distance individuals. Consistent with Moon et al.'s (2018) findings, our studies showed that the effects of negative supervisory behaviour differed for high and low power distance subordinates and that perceived appropriateness (but not perceived commonness) explained the different effects of negative supervisory behaviour for high relative to low power distance subordinates. The present research extends prior work by focusing on power affordance as the key outcome variable and by illustrating that in addition to experiencing less discomfort with the seniors' incivility (Moon et al., 2018), higher power distance subordinates could afford more power to an objectifying supervisor through prescriptive justification.

Third, in a broader sense, our work suggests that objectification and power can be intertwined and have the potential to reinforce each other. That is, power fosters objectification of others (Civile & Obhi, 2016; Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Landau et al., 2012; Xiao et al., 2019), and by doing so objectifiers can also enhance their power. This view coincides with Foucault's (2007) conception of biopower—achieving the control over populations by reducing humans to biological parts or functions. Particularly, reducing humans to labour value facilitates the regulations imposed on humans. For example, in response to COVID-19, some politicians urged people to go to work without safety measures put in place, while visiting families or friends was prohibited (BBC News, 2020; Prime Minister's Office and The Rt Hon Boris

TABLE 8 Results of mini-meta-analyses of the simple main effects of objectification and power distance on descriptive justification, prescriptive justification, and power affordance across three studies

		Descriptive justification				Prescriptive justification				Power affordance			
		r	SE	*Z*	95% CI	*r*	SE	*Z*	95% CI	*r*	SE	*Z*	95% CI
High (vs. low) objectification	Low power distance	−0.15	0.06	−2.64	[−0.26, −0.04]	−0.52	0.06	−9.75	[−0.60, −0.43]	−0.52	0.06	−9.68	[−0.60, −0.43]
	High power distance	0.09	0.06	1.58	[−0.02, 0.20]	−0.32	0.06	−5.78	[−0.41, −0.21]	−0.34	0.06	−6.27	[−0.44, −0.24]
High (vs. low) power distance	Low objectification	0.09	0.06	1.55	[−0.02, 0.20]	−0.10	0.06	−1.76	[−0.21, 0.01]	−0.12	0.06	−2.06	[−0.23, −0.01]
	High objectification	0.31	0.06	5.57	[0.21, 0.41]	0.23	0.06	3.98	[0.12, 0.33]	0.12	0.06	2.00	[0.002, 0.23]

Johnson MP, 2020). That is to say, it was deemed unsafe for a family member to visit one's house, yet it was indicated as safe for a cleaner to go clean a client's house. It shows how some leaders objectify people and achieve control over people by objectification. Admittedly, relative to slavery, the modern forms of objectification are more nuanced, but it is commonplace and worrying (Haslam, 2006). Our work contributes to the understanding of an important yet insufficiently studied phenomenon.

5.2 | Implications for power distance

Our research also contributes to power distance literature. Our results regarding the moderating effects of power distance on the relations between objectification and prescriptive justification and between objectification and power affordance suggest that power distance has a system-justifying function. Our studies found that subordinates afforded less power to an objectifying supervisor than to a non-objectifying supervisor, because they perceived objectification as less appropriate supervisory behaviour. However, those perceptual and behavioural differences between objectification and non-objectification were smaller for subordinates who were higher in power distance. In doing so, subordinates who are higher in power distance are more likely to maintain the status quo, even when it implies the treatment of fellow humans as instrumental tools.

In addition, our findings echo prior researchers' views that power distance can alter people's moral reasoning and judgment (Hofstede, 1997; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Our studies found that although both high and low power distance subordinates believed that it was unacceptable for a supervisor to objectify employees, the difference between objectification and non-objectification in prescriptive judgment was smaller for high power distance subordinates. This result suggests that high power distance individuals may hold a somewhat different value system than that of low power distance counterparts. It also suggests a possibility that power prevails over moral judgment for high power distance individuals.

5.3 | Limitations and future research

The results of the three studies varied in the extent to which they supported Hypothesis 1. Studies 1 and 2 provided partial support for Hypothesis 1, such that high (vs. low) power distance subordinates afforded less power to a non-objectifying supervisor (but no more power to an objectifying supervisor), but the interaction effect of objectification and power distance on power affordance was not observed in Study 3. This issue could be caused by, among other things, the small sample size of Study 3, an overall low power distance orientation of the respondents in Study 3 (the mean score 2.55 was below the middle point of the 6-point Likert scale), and/or the measure of objectification in Study 3 differing from the relatively stronger manipulation of objectification in Studies 1 and 2. On a related issue, we

argue that objectification is distinguishable from abusive supervision by including the unique attribute of instrumentality, but it remains unclear how much our current operationalization of objectification, particularly that of Studies 1 and 2, might be associated with abusive supervision. This might explain the failure to observe the objectification part of Hypothesis 1. Future research could consider whether people would perceive and react to a more objectifying but less abusive supervisory behaviour differently from a less objectifying but more abusive supervisory behaviour. It is likely that a supervisor who focuses on instrumental value of employees but does not abuse employees is regarded as interpersonally fair and gains power and other favourable outcomes (cf. Lian et al., 2012).

Although we argued that high (vs. low) power distance subordinates would grant more power to an objectifying supervisor through prescriptive justification (Hypothesis 2b), the results of Studies 1 and 2 suggested that the effects of objectification on power affordance via prescriptive justification were negative for both high and low power distance subordinates. A positive mediated moderation effect indicated that the negative effects of objectification on power affordance via prescriptive justification were weaker for high (vs. low) power distance subordinates, and that with continually increasing power distance, the indirect effects could potentially become positive. The results of Study 3 suggested that subordinates who had a relatively high power distance orientation afforded power to their objectifying supervisor through prescriptive justification. Those discrepancies could be caused by the different operationalization of objectification between the experiments and field study as discussed above, and by the fact that the studies were conducted in the United Kingdom and Netherlands, both featuring a relatively low power distance culture (Hofstede, 1997; House et al., 2014). Future research could examine whether objectifying supervisors would be granted power in other high power distance cultural contexts for generalizability or by taking a cross-cultural approach.

We did not find evidence that descriptive justification would mediate the interaction effect of objectification and power distance on power affordance. That is, Hypothesis 2a was not supported. This issue could be caused by, among other things, the fact that objectification was not very common among the respondents of the field study (the mean was below the middle point) or by the difficulty that participants might have in making such inferences in an experimental context.

There were some other limitations of the field study. First, the field study was cross-sectional and could not inform whether the relationship between objectification and power affordance would be observed over time or as a within-person phenomenon. Second, we did not measure or control for supervisor occupational status. Considering that individuals of higher (vs. lower) occupational status enjoy more legitimacy in what they do in the organization (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), their objectifying behaviour is more likely to be justified. However, it is also likely that objectifying people lose their status when they objectify others in order to achieve their own goals rather than organizational goals. Future research could consider how one's occupational status might affect people's perception of and reaction to objectification and how objectification might also affect one's status.

5.4 | Practical implications

Our research has some important practical implications regarding objectification in the workplace and beyond. As our studies show that subordinates working in a lower power distance organization are more likely to object to an objectifying supervisor, we suggest that organizations strive to create a low power distance culture whereby subordinates can be protected from objectification. Subordinates can also benefit from a system where they can safely disclosure supervisory misconduct and challenge supervisors' authority. On the other hand, it is sometimes the individuals who are attracted to, are selected by, and remain in a work environment that determine the environment (Schneider, 1987). As shown in our research, low (relative to high) power distance individuals are less likely to create a work environment where objectification can be legitimized and perpetuated. Thus, in this respect, seeking or selecting the "right" people can be crucial to curb objectification in the workplace.

Our research has some implications for the ways in which leaders may deal with the challenges posed by COVID-19. As leaders around the world are fighting the COVID-19 epidemic, they face very different challenges. Some are criticized for hard protective measures that they put in place, such that people feel that they are treated as children, whereas others are criticized for their soft measures, such that people feel that they are objectified and not protected for the sake of economy. Our studies suggest that people in high power distance countries may more willingly accept and comply with the regulations that leaders make; people in low power distance countries may demand more autonomy, sympathy, and a rationale for the decisions that leaders make, otherwise they may feel treated either as children as lacking autonomy or as tools as lacking human right. Nevertheless, regardless of power distance levels, we suggest that leaders act responsibly and respect each individual life, as our studies show that compared with an objectifying leader, a non-objectifying leader is always perceived as more desirable and granted more power.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

All data and materials used in the present research are available upon request. Public data archiving/sharing is not appropriate in this case for the following reasons: (a) Such statement was not made in the ethic approval documents; (b) Participants were neither informed of nor consented to public data archiving/sharing; (c) Public data archiving/sharing would especially violate the rights of the participants and

actors of Study 2, as those participants disclosed personal information in their responses and the actors showed their faces.

TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

All data, materials, and analyses for the present research are available from the corresponding author upon request.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The present research adheres to ethical guidelines specified in the APA Code of Conduct, author's national ethics guidelines, and authors' institutional ethics guidelines. Ethical approval was obtained for the present research from the first author's institutional ethics committee (Durham University Business School) before data collection. All participants gave their informed consent prior to their inclusion in all studies.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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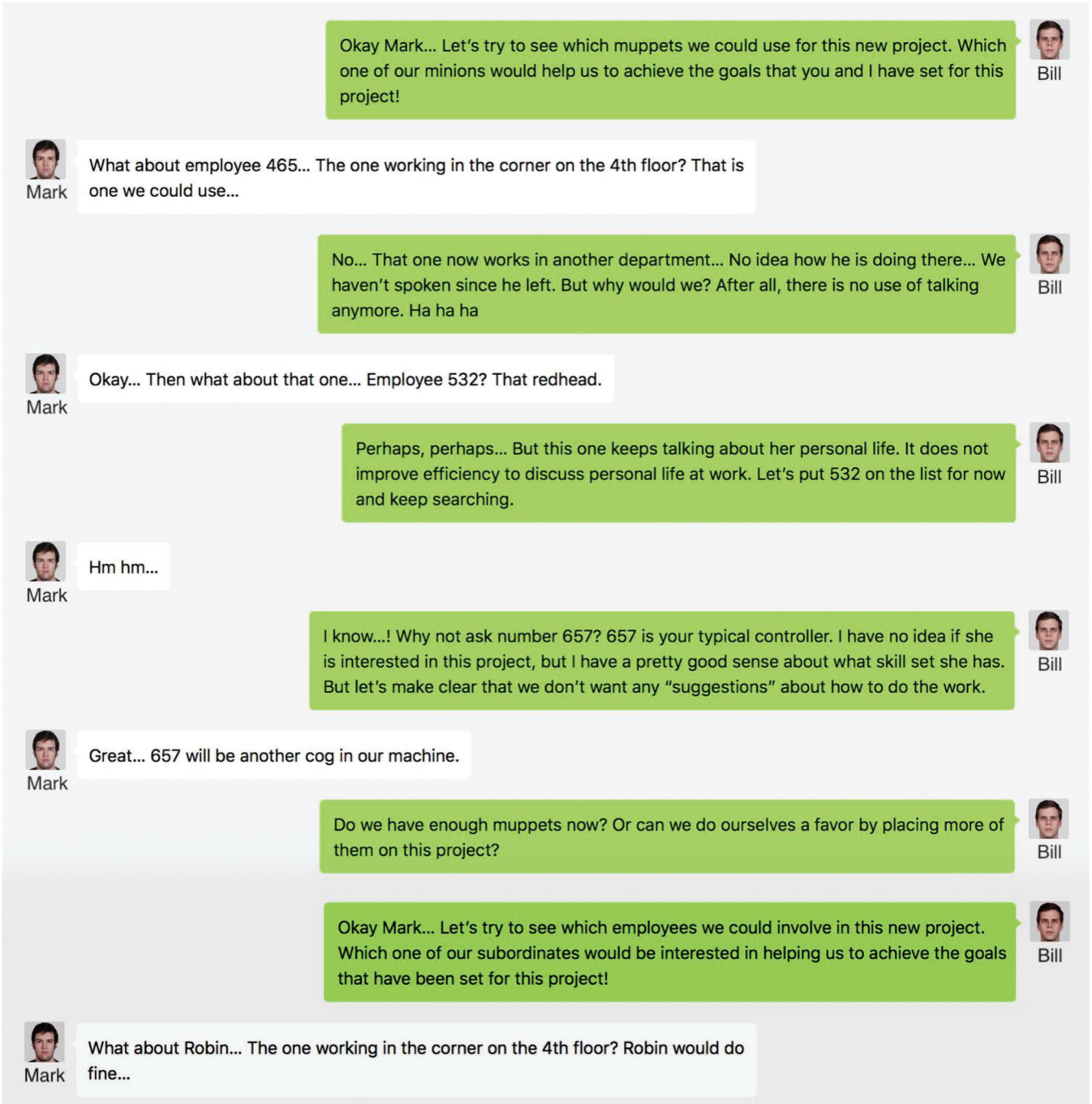
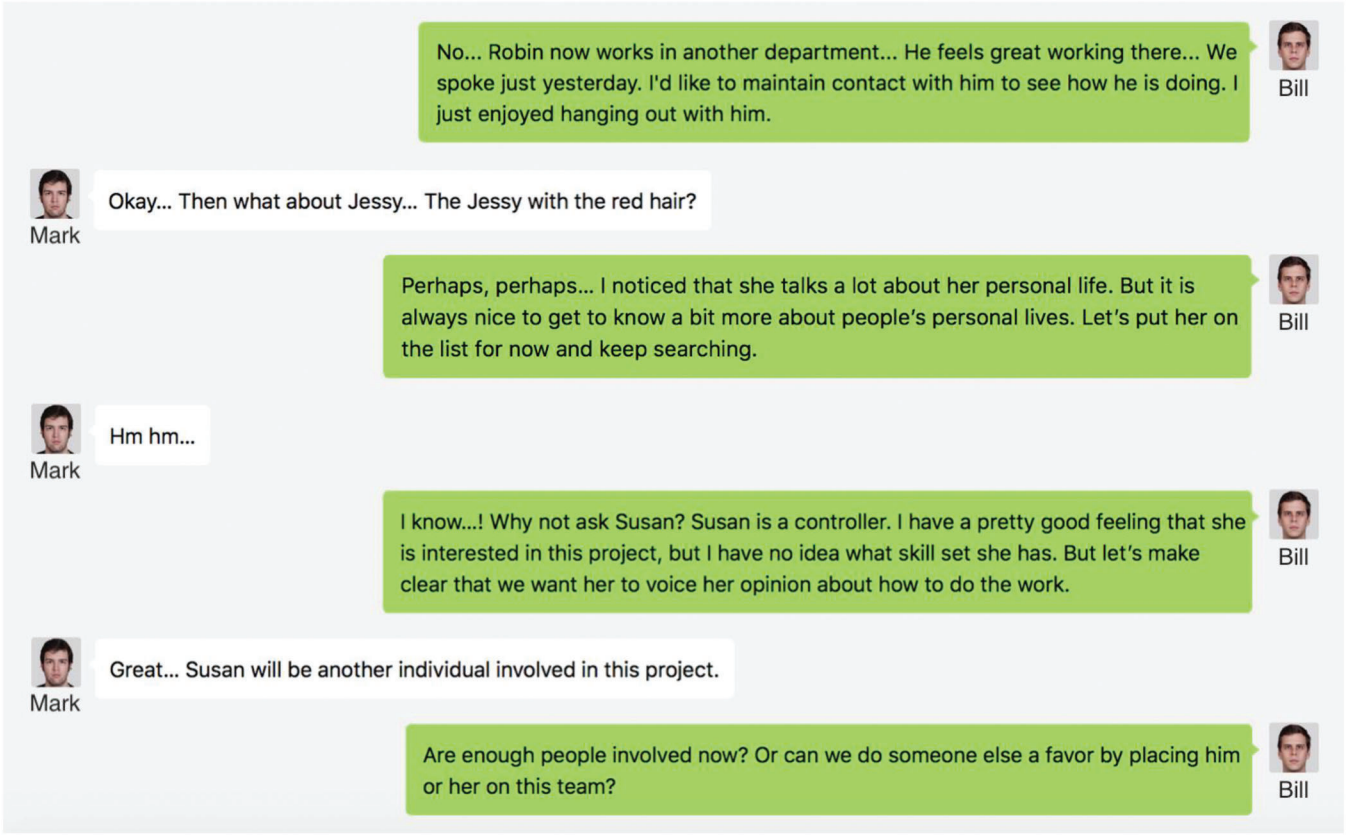
APPENDIX A

Dialogue Paradigm in Study 1

Below are the manipulation materials for objectification and non-objectification respectively. Both facial portraits of Bill and Mark were taken from the MR2 database (Strohminger et al., 2016). The two facial images were rated to be equal in term of trustworthiness, physical attractiveness, mood, masculinity, and estimated age (Strohminger et al., 2016).





APPENDIX B

Power Affordance Scale in Study 1

1. I'd like Bill to be at the top of the power hierarchy in this workplace.
2. I'd like Bill to have authority in this workplace.
3. I'd like Bill to be powerless in this workplace. (R)
4. I'd like Bill to have a position of power in this workplace.
5. If a vote were to be held, I'd like to vote for Bill as my leader again.
6. I would let Bill have influence over job issues that are important to me.
7. I would be willing to let Bill have control over my future in this company.

(R), reverse-scored item.