

# Dealing with the Full-of-Self-Boss: Interactive Effects of Supervisor Narcissism and Subordinate Resource Management Ability on Work Outcomes

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**Abstract** Extensive research has documented the harmful effects associated with working for a narcissistic supervisor. However, little effort has been made to investigate ways for victims to alleviate the burdens associated with exposure to such aversive persons. Building on the tenets of conservation of resources theory and the documented efficacy of functional assets to combat job-related stress, we hypothesized that subordinates' resource management ability would buffer the detrimental impact of narcissistic supervisors on affective, cognitive, and behavioral work outcomes for subordinates. We found support for our hypotheses across three independent samples of US workers ( $N = 187; 199; 136$ ). Specifically, higher levels of subordinate resource management ability attenuated the harmful effects of supervisor narcissism on employee-reported emotional exhaustion, job tension, depressed mood, task performance, and citizenship behavior. Conversely, these relationships further deteriorated for subordinates with lower levels of resource management ability. Overall, our research contributes to the literature that, although extensively documenting the harmful ramifications of narcissism in organizations, has neglected to investigate potentially mitigating factors.

**Keywords** Narcissism · Resource management · Conservation of resources

## Introduction

Concerns about increased societal narcissism (Miller et al. 2015) and destructive leadership driven by “dark” personalities (Schyns 2015) continue to draw attention to the role of narcissism in work contexts (Campbell et al. 2011; Domino et al. 2015). Warranting such attention is research into the unethical conduct of narcissistic organizations (Duchon and Drake 2009) and especially the harm which narcissistic leaders have caused to key stakeholders through fraud (Rijsenbilt and Commandeur 2013) and other counterproductive work behaviors (CWB; Braun et al. 2016; Fox and Freeman 2011). That narcissism—understood here as a personality disposition involving inflated self-views, self-focus, and self-love (Rhodewalt and Peterson 2009)—has far-reaching effects is supported by a recent meta-analysis concluding that “narcissism remains the largest unique predictor of CWB after controlling for the Big Five personality traits” (Grijalva and Newman 2015, p. 93). Yet, despite their links to unethical work behaviors (Braun et al. 2016; Rosenthal and Pittinsky 2006; Samnani and Singh 2016), narcissistic leaders are likely to remain a ubiquitous fixture in the future because subclinical narcissism has been found to facilitate leader emergence in organizations (Grijalva et al. 2015; de Vries and Miller 1985).

The enduring presence of narcissistic leadership in organizations (Fox 2016) hence raises the question of how those subjugated to such treatment might cope. To date, research has consistently documented adverse outcomes associated with narcissistic supervisors (e.g., Braun et al.

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2016; Campbell et al. 2011; Graham and Cooper 2013; Maccoby 2004; Padilla et al. 2007; Rosenthal and Pittinsky 2006; Sosik et al. 2014), including the considerable costs incurred to employees, organizations, and society (Amerinic and Craig 2010; Campbell et al. 2005; Chatterjee and Hambrick 2011; Duchon and Drake 2009; Lubit 2002; Rijsenbilt and Commandeur 2013). Relative to practitioner discussions, however, the academic literature lacks investigations of feasible coping options for workers endangered by narcissistic bosses (cf. Godkin and Allcorn 2011). Identifying options for managing relationships with narcissistic supervisors is important because recommendations to “leave one’s job” or to “take another position” within one’s organization are often infeasible for subordinates (DuBrin 2012).

In this paper, we hence aim to (1) identify a theoretically and practically relevant factor that supports employees’ coping efforts, namely their resource management ability (Hochwarter et al. 2008), and (2) empirically investigate its potential to mitigate the destructive impact of supervisor narcissism on subordinate outcomes (Campbell et al. 2011; Spain et al. 2014). As such, our research makes a contribution by deviating from the literature’s predominant focus on the narcissistic leader and instead focusing on what the receiver of narcissistic supervision might be able to do to reduce its harmful effects. Foundationally, we draw from conservation of resources research (COR; Hobfoll 1989), which highlights the importance of buffering assets for employees experiencing resource loss or threats thereof (Hobfoll and Shirom 2001). For instance, substantial research confirms that employees are more prone to experience detrimental personal and work outcomes when they perceive their resources are unable to (at least) match external demands (Halbesleben et al. 2014). Concomitantly, studies have shown that factors supporting the availability of resources can mitigate strains induced by work stressors (e.g., Mackey et al. 2017b).

In view of the importance of subordinate–supervisor relationships (Gottfredson and Aguinis 2017), our research focuses on a subordinate’s ability to manage work-related resources as an antidote to a particular work stressor, namely perceived supervisor narcissism. The latter construct captures subordinates’ perceptions that their respective supervisor exhibits behaviors at work that are typically understood as expressions of a narcissistic personality disposition (Fox 2016), such as disregarding the needs of others (Morf and Rhodewalt 2001), credit stealing (Graham and Cooper 2013), or otherwise manipulating and exploiting others for personal gain (Rhodewalt and Peterson 2009). An antidote to such behavior, we posit, is an individual’s resource management ability, referring to an individual’s ability to call upon resources that help with buffering the impact of taxing external demands (Frieder

et al. 2015). Importantly, this construct extends beyond the *mere possession* of resources by emphasizing an individual’s ability to utilize extant resources effectively, or procure additional resources, that can be used as buffers against work stressors (cf. Halbesleben et al. 2014).

We test our arguments as applied to the stress-inducing conditions of working for a narcissistic supervisor with data from three independent samples. Specifically, we investigate whether a subordinate’s resource management ability will moderate the impact of narcissistic supervision on the following affective, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes for subordinates: job tension and emotional exhaustion (all samples), depressed mood at work (Samples 2 and 3), citizenship behavior (Samples 2 and 3), and task performance (Sample 3). These outcomes were chosen to encompass a range of consequences previously affected by supervisor narcissism (e.g., Braun et al. 2016; Campbell et al. 2011). We begin our discussion by reviewing research documenting harm associated with perceived supervisor narcissism.

## Theoretical Framework

### The Stress-Inducing Role of Supervisor Narcissism

A continuing paradox of work life is that while leaders despair over productivity losses due to disengaged employees (Gallup 2013), an impediment to a remedy exists unabated: dysfunctional superiors (McFarlin and Sweeney 2000, 2010). Concerning their ubiquity, scholars highlight the low probability of finding a working adult who has *not* been exposed to an intolerable supervisor, whether as target or observer (Blair et al. 2008). In support, much research speaks to superiors’ unethical behaviors (Ünal et al. 2012), including credit taking (Graham and Cooper 2013), destructive leadership (Padilla et al. 2007), fraud (Rijsenbilt and Commandeur 2013), and other malicious behaviors (Schyns and Schilling 2013).

In this literature, a factor emerging reliably as an antecedent of dysfunctional supervision is narcissism (Grijalva and Newman 2015). As part of the “dark triad” of personality (Paulhus and Williams 2002), subclinical narcissism has been associated with a range of undesired work and business outcomes (Braun et al. 2016; Campbell et al. 2011; Rijsenbilt and Commandeur 2013). Foundationally, scholars contend that antagonistic traits like narcissism, which share “manipulation-callousness” as a common property (Jones and Figueredo 2013), contribute to heightened interpersonal conflict and target distress. Predictably, long-term effects of subclinical narcissism include problematic social relationships both outside (Böckler et al. 2017) and inside work environments (Samnani and Singh 2016).

Below, we further explicate the narcissism construct and describe its role in obstructing the development of favorable interpersonal relationships at work. We then discuss the impact of supervisors' self-serving behavior on subordinates before invoking COR theory (Hobfoll 1989) to develop our moderation hypotheses pertaining to subordinates' resource management ability.

## Narcissism

Narcissism reflects a relatively stable individual difference characterized by perceived grandiosity and inflated self-views, including exaggerated self-focus and self-love (Rhodewalt and Peterson 2009). Notably, these characteristics impact not only narcissists' self-regulatory strategies, but also their interpersonal relationships (Morf and Rhodewalt 2001) because, as unique, "special," and entitled individuals, they crave attention and bold admiration to energize their egoistic motivations (Campbell et al. 2011). Hence, narcissists actively seek out opportunities affording notice and approval (Rijsenbilt and Commandeur 2013), are not shy to "brag, steal credit from others, and play games in relationships" (Campbell et al. 2011, p. 269; Graham and Cooper 2013), plus purposefully engage in hostile behavior designed to halt threats perceived as injurious to self-worth (DuBrin 2012; Godkin and Allcorn 2011). Specifically, narcissists will use exploitative, manipulative, and even aggressive strategies when seeking power over others, when pursuing high-status positions, and when responding to rejection (Godkin and Allcorn 2011; Hepper et al. 2014). Narcissists also exhibit disagreeableness (Rhodewalt and Peterson 2009), lower empathy (Jones 1913), and a need for social dominance (Krizan and Herlache 2017). In evaluative terms, narcissists lack remorse for harm caused to others in both public and work contexts (Campbell et al. 2011).

## Narcissistic Supervisors and Their Subordinates

Given narcissists' destructiveness, the question arises why they habitually attain leadership positions in organizations (Blair et al. 2008). One answer points to narcissists' capacity for charm and charisma (Sosik et al. 2014) that positions them as prime candidates for leadership roles (Rosenthal and Pittinsky 2006). Others suggest that narcissists are motivating change agents capable of infusing passion into work settings previously lacking enthusiasm (Fox 2016). Once in place, narcissistic supervisors aggressively and covertly push personal agendas (McFarlin and Sweeney 2010). This pursuit—often indifferent (Krasikova et al. 2013) or even counterproductive to organizational goals—is facilitated by narcissists' lower empathy paired with an excessive agentic focus (Zeigler-Hill et al.

2010). However, "the shine soon wears off" (Hepper et al. 2014, p. 1080), which explains why subclinical narcissism facilitates leader emergence, but not leader effectiveness (Grijalva et al. 2015).

Documented effects on subordinates' career success, satisfaction, and exhaustion (e.g., Campbell et al. 2011) confirm that narcissistic supervisors represent an external threat for employees (Braun et al. 2016; Padilla et al. 2007). Because narcissists are unresponsive to outside opinions and view others as inferior (Krasikova et al. 2013), victims often receive little empathy or support (Einarsen et al. 2007). Instead, narcissistic supervisors create imbalanced exchange relationships (Rosenthal and Pittinsky 2006) by habitually claiming credit for others' contributions (Graham and Cooper 2013) while at the same time disregarding the needs of others, most often those of subordinates (Zeigler-Hill et al. 2010). Further contributing to the imbalance, narcissistic supervisors expect subordinates to indiscriminately implement their agenda (Hochwarter and Thompson 2012), yet tend to exclude them from decision-making processes (Blair et al. 2008). Combined with undesirable traits such as hypersensitivity to criticism, inflexibility, and unpredictable mood swings (Campbell et al. 2011), it is unsurprising that subordinates are harmed when being managed by narcissistic supervisors (McFarlin and Sweeney 2000, 2010; Padilla et al. 2007; Zhang and Bednall 2016).

Conceptualizing narcissistic supervisors as a work stressor (McFarlin and Sweeney 2010) immediately casts coping strategies into focus. Unfortunately, subordinates' response options are often constrained due to the power asymmetries inherent to supervisor–subordinate dyads (Kiewitz et al. 2016). As Godkin and Allcorn (2011) submit regarding possible repercussions, "Even small and token organizational resistance may be met by the arrogant narcissistic leader with disproportionate and overwhelming force such as a transfer to organizational Siberia or more directly termination" (p. 568). Indeed, research has shown that employees faced with self-serving behavior of powerful others often do not retaliate (Lian et al. 2014), especially when anticipating sanctions for behavior deemed disagreeable by supervisors (Tepper et al. 2007).

Instead, subordinates tend to pursue approaches considered deferential rather than confrontational (Hochwarter and Thompson 2012), such as doing "damage control" when a narcissistic supervisor appears offended (DuBrin 2012). Extending this discussion, we posit that one viable coping option is to focus on factors within one's personal control, such as work-relevant resources. Specifically, we suggest that the extent to which subordinates are able to manage their work-relevant resources plays a crucial role in shielding themselves from the adverse effects of narcissistic supervision.

## Hypotheses Development

### The Moderating Role of Subordinates' Resource Management Ability

To support our arguments, we draw from conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll 1989) which posits that individuals (a) are motivated to create, maintain, and increase their stock of resources, and (b) are stressed by resource loss or threat thereof (review in Halbesleben et al. 2014). Originally, Hobfoll (1989) conceptualized resources broadly as including objects, psychological conditions, physical or personal characteristics. More specific to work settings, Van den Tooren and De Jonge (2010) subsequently defined job-related resources as “energy reservoirs at work that individuals can tap to regulate their job demands” (p. 40).

The latter definition points to an important issue that remains underdeveloped in COR research, namely the differentiation between the mere possession of a resource versus its utilization. That is, while subordinates *generally* value resources because they aid with protecting extant resources, acquiring further ones, and offsetting strenuous work demands (Holmgren et al. 2017), the *particular* value of a resource lies with its appropriate utilization (Frieder et al. 2015). As Halbesleben et al. (2014) note, “simply examining the availability of a resource offers incomplete information, since those resources may not be utilized” (p. 1354). In order to address this issue, Hochwarter and colleagues (2007, 2008) developed the construct of resource management ability, which refers to individuals' ability to maintain and mobilize resources at work to their benefit: That is, the more individuals are able to manage their resources, the better they are “equipped to protect and acquire resources that include access to equipment, assistance, flexibility, and control over the pace of, and exertion towards, one's work” (Frieder et al. 2015, p. 824).

In the context of our study, such an ability is especially important because of the tendencies by narcissistic supervisors to provide subordinates with limited resources, strip existing ones, or render those remaining less useful (Herscovis and Barling 2010). For instance, narcissists may use their power to keep work-related resources to themselves, thus leaving subordinates with insufficient means to fulfill work demands (Morris et al. 2005) unless they are able to enlist additional resources over which they have discretion (Hochwarter et al. 2008). In support, prior research has shown that individuals with higher resource management ability were better equipped to handle taxing situations, such as being held accountable by others, coping with work-induced guilt, or even facing abusive

supervision (Frieder et al. 2015; Hochwarter et al. 2007; Zellars et al. 2011). Among others, resource management ability promotes effective coping with such stress-inducing demands because it provides subordinates a sense of personal control (Hochwarter et al. 2007)—that is, the ability to exert influence over one's environment (Ganster 1989). Similarly, we submit that obtaining assistance from coworkers, distancing oneself from work when necessary, or pacing one's work activities is likely to decelerate resource loss associated with narcissistic supervisor behavior (Frieder et al. 2015; Hochwarter and Thompson 2012). We therefore posit that those with higher levels of resource management ability will suffer less harm because they are better able to conserve, acquire, and redirect stress-buffering assets to address demands inflicted by narcissistic supervisors. Conversely, individuals with lower resource management ability will experience heightened detrimental outcomes because they are less able to efficiently utilize remaining resources or acquire additional ones (Grijalva and Newman 2015).

In the following sections, we develop hypotheses that posit how the interaction between narcissistic supervision and resource management ability impacts a range of affective, cognitive, and behavioral work outcomes. A review of relevant research (e.g., Braun et al. 2016; Campbell et al. 2011; Frieder et al. 2015; Hochwarter and Thompson 2012; Mackey et al. 2013) led us to focus on the following outcomes: job tension, emotional exhaustion, depressed mood at work, task performance, and citizenship behavior. Each of these outcomes is particularly relevant given the role that personal resources play in coping with work-related demands and engaging in task behavior or helping colleagues.

#### *Job Tension*

Job tension occurs when work demands exceed resources or adaptive capabilities (Hobfoll and Shirom 2001). Given the harmful impact of narcissistic supervisors on work relationships (Braun et al. 2016; Godkin and Allcorn 2011; Padilla et al. 2007), we expect victimized subordinates to report increased job tension. In support, research reports that narcissistic supervisors lack compassion (Hepper et al. 2014), exploit followers (Campbell et al. 2011), and often fail to support subordinates adequately with resources necessary to perform job duties (Einarsen et al. 2007). Tangney (2000) attributes the root cause for such tensions to narcissists' unending drive for self-validation and their need to control others to assert superiority.

We further suggest that the relationship between narcissistic supervision and job tension differs across levels of subordinate resource management ability. Particularly,

because resources enable one to capably counterbalance demands, we expect subordinates with higher levels of resource management ability to be less harmed by a narcissistic supervisor. In support, Hall and colleagues (2017) found that resources, in the form of work drive, buffered the harmful effects of a highly political work environment. For example, those with higher levels of such ability reported less job tension and exhaustion, and greater job satisfaction, compared to lower-ability individuals. We thus hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 1:** Subordinates' resource management ability moderates the relationship between narcissistic supervision and subordinate job tension such that the positive relationship is weakened for subordinates with higher resource management ability.

#### *Emotional Exhaustion*

Emotional exhaustion represents "a chronic state of physical and emotional depletion that results from excessive job demands and continuous stress" (Wright and Cropanzano 1998, p. 486). Environments created by a narcissistic supervisor drain subordinates due to leader self-centeredness, lower congeniality, and a tendency to react with aggression to even the slightest criticism (Exline et al. 2004; Godkin and Allcorn 2011; Judge et al. 2006; Zeigler-Hill et al. 2010). We thus contend that supervisors' narcissistic behaviors will deplete subordinates' resource reservoirs needed to ward off demand-induced exhaustion (Van den Tooren and De Jonge 2010). Research confirms a positive relationship between narcissistic supervision and fatigue (Whitman et al. 2014), largely due to resources being depleted without requisite opportunities for replenishment (Wheeler et al. 2013). In terms of direct loss, climates infused with supervisors' self-serving behaviors have been associated with subordinate resource reduction as well (Whitman et al. 2014). Chi and Liang (2013) argue that exhaustion arises from the discrepancy between the emotional pressures of abusive mistreatment and the resources available to meet demands. In sum, supervisor narcissism triggers energy depletion as a result of behavior that is ostensibly derogatory, hostile, and vengeful (Rosenthal and Pittinsky 2006).

Yet, studies suggest that subordinates with higher levels of resource management ability may avoid resource-depleting exhaustion when threatened (Hochwarter and Thompson 2012). For example, Frieder and colleagues (2015) found that increases in resource stocks favorably influenced abusive leader-exhaustion relationships. Conversely, outcomes suffered when resources were viewed as inadequate. As a form of self-regulation (Neal et al. 2017), proactively managing threats that might deplete resources

promotes energy renewal and lessens fatigue characteristic of narcissistic supervisor contexts (Frone and Tidwell 2015). We therefore hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 2:** Subordinates' resource management ability moderates the relationship between narcissistic supervision and subordinate emotional exhaustion such that the positive relationship is weakened for subordinates with higher resource management ability.

#### *Depressed Mood at Work*

Given that narcissistic supervision is harmful to subordinates' well-being (Godkin and Allcorn 2011; Padilla et al. 2007) and often becomes an inexorable stressor (McFarlin and Sweeney 2000), we further suggest an association with subordinate depressive mood. Research has linked social work stressors to depressive symptoms (Tepper 2000) resulting from recurring interpersonal tension (Dormann and Zapf 2002). For example, studies have shown that conflicts with important constituents are related to depression in general (Heinisch and Jex 1997), as are confrontations with one's boss specifically (Bamberger and Bacharach 2006; Mackey et al. 2017a). Indeed, general irritation, negative emotions, and fear of future aggression represent ongoing concerns for those experiencing narcissistic supervision (e.g., Braun et al. 2016; McFarlin and Sweeney 2010). Moreover, Dormann and Zapf (2002) argue that social annoyance, when prolonged, results in lower self-esteem and increased depressive symptoms. In support, a documented agentic goal of narcissistic supervisors is to manipulate, and finally deplete, subordinates' self-worth by causing targets to incessantly question their work efforts and talents (Harvey et al. 2007). Indeed, depression is very often a consequence of perceived and actual resource loss (Hobfoll 1989).

On the other hand, Gerbasi and colleagues (2015) noted that available resources can assuage the emotionally taxing consequences of aversive work relationships. Moreover, resources have the potential to offer solutions to problems provoked by external threats (Hobfoll 2011; Hobfoll and Shirom 2001), rendering them less impactful to emotional well-being. Finally, depressed mood at work is less likely to occur when a supervisor's attempts to deplete subordinates of control are of little consequence (Byrne et al. 2005). Resources, which include abilities to pace one's work, access equipment, and enjoy respites and social support, provide subordinates with the tools needed to dissociate themselves from cues intended to undermine happiness and self-confidence (Hochwarter and Thompson 2012). Hence, we hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 3:** Subordinates' resource management ability moderates the relationship between narcissistic

supervision and subordinate depressed mood at work such that the positive relationship is weakened for subordinates with higher resource management ability.

### *Task Performance and Citizenship Behavior*

Borman and Motowidlo (1993) advocated that job performance should be differentiated into two domains: task and contextual performance (the latter is also referred to as citizenship behavior). Accordingly, task performance reflects the formal duties and responsibilities related to an organization's technical core, whereas citizenship behavior involves "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization" (Organ et al. 2006, p. 8).

In the present context, we expect narcissistic supervision to impair both subordinates' task performance and citizenship behavior (Owens et al. 2015). Our notion builds on characterizations of narcissistic supervisors as "lousy managers" (McFarlin and Sweeney 2000, p. 109) who deliberately pursue their self-interest at the expense of others in order to protect or improve their organizational standing (Graham and Cooper 2013; Krasikova et al. 2013; Rijssenbilt and Commandeur 2013). We argue that this stance ultimately results in actions that discourage, if not prevented, subordinates from performing at high levels. As an example, narcissistic supervisors tend to calibrate their subordinates' task performance by minimizing information flows across levels, thus ensuring that contributions remain within nonthreatening parameters (Godkin and Allcorn 2011; Nevicka et al. 2011). In other words, their incessant credit-seeking behavior mandates that subordinate task performance is generally viewed favorably, but does not reach levels that redirect attention away from them (Brown 1998). Further contributing to subpar subordinate task performance is the narcissistic supervisor's tendency to tenaciously claim work assets for themselves and those in their chosen circle, which reliably leaves fewer resources for those on the outside (Judge et al. 2009).

Given these challenges, we expect subordinates who are more capable of accumulating and conserving resources not only to be more efficient in performing their formal job duties, but also to have sufficient energy left for engaging in discretionary work behavior. In support, possessing adequate resource stores and the ability to manage resources at one's disposal generally has been shown to function as buffers that protect individuals from stressors (Frieder et al. 2015). Likewise, we suggest that those capable of managing assets needed for successful task performance and citizenship behavior are likely to be less burdened by the destructiveness of narcissistic supervisors

because they should be better able to navigate the vagaries of supervisors' resource sharing (Hochwarter and Thompson 2012). We hypothesize:

**Hypotheses 4a and 4b:** Subordinates' resource management ability moderates the relationship between narcissistic supervision and both subordinate (a) citizenship behavior and (b) task performance such that the negative relationship is weakened for subordinates with higher resource management ability.

## **Method**

### **Samples and Procedures**

Failures to replicate study results have raised questions whether reported findings are sample specific at best or due to chance at worst (Hochwarter et al. 2011). In response, scholars across disciplines (Freese and Peterson 2017) have called for research that includes multiple samples and/or studies in order to strengthen confidence in reported results (Heene and Ferguson 2017). Thus, we collected data across three samples in an effort to examine a range of outcomes and, where feasible, to replicate our findings.

#### *Sample 1*

All 292 staff and administrative employees of a mid-sized municipality located in the southwestern USA received surveys after their weekly planning sessions. Respondents returned surveys in provided envelopes addressed to the researchers, with a centrally located drop box being available for survey collection. After 1 month (and one e-mail prompt), a total of 187 surveys were returned—a response rate of 64.1%. The sample was 55% female, on average 44 years old ( $M = 44.26$ ,  $SD = 10.28$ ), with 6 years of organizational tenure ( $M = 5.93$ ,  $SD = 4.04$ ). As provided by archival data, the population was 54% female and 45 years of age (tenure data were not available). All study variables were collected in one survey.

#### *Sample 2*

Respondents were financial planners attending their yearly regional conference held in the mid-Atlantic, southeastern USA. Each of the 320 attendees received a survey in their conference packet. No survey topic was directly discussed in any of the sessions or programs. Completed surveys were returned to a locked container at the conference's registration area. After the three-day meeting, a total of 199 surveys were returned (62.1% response rate). The sample was 42% female, with respondents being 46 years old on

average ( $M = 45.59$ ,  $SD = 8.60$ ) and having 6 years of company tenure ( $M = 6.07$ ,  $SD = 3.99$ ). All study variables were collected in one survey.

### Sample 3

Surveys were provided to 183 medical sales employees during meetings approximately 4 months apart. At Time 1, independent and control variables were collected (i.e., age, gender, organization tenure, positive and negative affect, supervisor narcissism, and resources). At Time 2, outcomes were gathered (i.e., job tension, emotional exhaustion, depressed mood at work, citizenship behavior, and task performance). We received 147 completed surveys after Time 1 and 136 at Time 2 (74.3% final response rate). The sample was 34% female, with respondents being approximately 48 years old ( $M = 48.04$ ;  $SD = 12.38$ ) and reporting an average of 9 years of company tenure ( $M = 8.93$ ,  $SD = 7.09$ ).

### Measures

Although we employed three independent samples in an effort to replicate our hypothesized tests, organizational interests in different constructs and limitations regarding survey length prevented us from assessing all measures in all three samples. Below, we indicate in which sample a measure was included alongside information about each measure. Unless otherwise noted, respondents indicated their responses using a seven-point response format ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7).

#### Supervisor Narcissism (Samples 1–3)

We measured supervisor narcissism with a six-item scale (Hochwarter and Thompson 2012). An example scale item is: “My boss has an inflated view of him-/herself” ( $\alpha_{\text{Sample 1}} = .84$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Sample 2}} = .90$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Sample 3}} = .86$ ).

#### Resource Management Ability (Samples 1–3)

We used a six-item scale ( $\alpha_{\text{Sample 1}} = .84$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Sample 2}} = .87$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Sample 3}} = .74$ ) to measure subordinates’ resource management ability (Hochwarter et al. 2008). Items for this measure included: “When work is stressful, I am able to conserve my energy,” “I have enough equipment and personnel at my disposal to fill in for me at work when things get stressful,” “When I feel like my ‘battery is run down’ at work, I can get others to pick up some of the load,” “When work gets overwhelming, I am able to get away long enough to regain my strength,” “I am able to pace myself at work when things get hectic, and “I can change my behavior at work to ensure that I don’t run ‘on an empty tank’ in terms of energy and resources.”

#### Job Tension (Samples 1–3)

We measured job tension using a six-item scale (House and Rizzo 1972). “My job tends to directly affect my health” represents a scale item ( $\alpha_{\text{Sample 1}} = .88$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Sample 2}} = .89$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Sample 3}} = .77$ ).

#### Emotional Exhaustion (Samples 1 and 2)

This construct was measured with a nine-item scale (Maslach and Jackson 1981). An example item is: “I feel emotionally drained from my work” ( $\alpha_{\text{Sample 1}} = .81$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Sample 2}} = .82$ ).

#### Depressed Mood at Work (Samples 1 and 3)

We measured participants’ depressed mood with a five-item scale (Quinn and Shepard 1974). “I feel downhearted and blue at work” represents a scale item ( $\alpha_{\text{Sample 1}} = .86$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Sample 3}} = .89$ ).

#### Organizational Citizenship Behavior (Samples 2 and 3)

A six-item scale was utilized to measure citizenship behavior (Niehoff and Moorman 1993). As an example, one item read: “I often help others who have been absent” ( $\alpha_{\text{Sample 2}} = .85$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Sample 3}} = .86$ ).

#### Task Performance (Sample 3)

We used a 10-item scale to measure task performance (Wright et al. 1995). A sample scale item is: “My supervisor is never disappointed in my work” ( $\alpha_{\text{Sample 3}} = .86$ ).

### Control Variables

Following Schjoedt and Bird’s (2014) recommendations, we controlled for age, gender, company tenure, extraversion and neuroticism (Sample 1 and 2), and positive/negative affectivity (Sample 3), given their associations with outcomes in previous studies of supervisor narcissism (e.g., Hochwarter and Thompson 2012). Further, scholars contend that both positive affect and negative affect influence depressed mood at work (Byrne et al. 2005), as well as task performance and citizenship behavior (Johnson et al. 2010).

#### Extraversion and Neuroticism (Samples 1 and 2)

We measured extraversion and neuroticism using brief scales developed by Gosling et al. (2003). Specifically, two items each (one of which was reverse-coded) measured neuroticism (anxious/easily upset plus calm/ emotionally

stable;  $r_{\text{Sample 1}} = .49$ ,  $r_{\text{Sample 2}} = .52$ ) and extroversion (extraverted/enthusiastic plus reserved/quiet;  $r_{\text{Sample 1}} = .52$ ,  $r_{\text{Sample 2}} = .63$ ), respectively. We utilized a five-point response format ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5) for these scales.

### Negative (NA) and Positive Affectivity (PA) (Sample 3)

We measured these constructs using a 20-item scale (Watson et al. 1988). Participants indicated how they felt “in general, that is on the average” by responding to words such as “distressed,” “jittery,” and “nervous” for NA ( $\alpha_{\text{Sample 3}} = .88$ ) and “interested,” “enthusiastic,” and “attentive” for PA ( $\alpha_{\text{Sample 3}} = .89$ ). Responses ranged from *very slightly or not at all* (1) to *extremely* (5).

### Analyses

Hierarchical moderated regression analyses (Cohen et al. 2003) were conducted using SAS, version 9.4, to assess the interactive supervisor narcissism  $\times$  resource management ability relationships. In Step 1, age, gender, and company tenure were entered followed by personality variables in Step 2. Step 3 included the main effect terms for supervisor narcissism and subordinate resource management ability. Step 4 included curvilinear main effect terms because bivariate interactions may surface due to overlap with omitted nonlinear terms (Cortina 1993; Edwards 2009). That is, their inclusion “helps establish that the coefficient on  $XZ$  taken as evidence for moderation does not spuriously reflect curvilinearity associated with  $X^2$ ,  $Z^2$ , or both” (Edwards 2009, p. 152). Thus, controlling for the nonlinear terms reduces type I error by guarding against the improper interpretation that the interaction term is responsible for variance associated with curvilinearity. Step 5 contained the term for the interaction between supervisor narcissism and subordinate resource management ability.

Additionally, we conducted collinearity diagnostics [i.e., variance inflation (VIF) and tolerance tests; Tabachnick and Fidell 2001] to assess method variance. VIF values greater than 10 and tolerance values less than .1 indicate potential concerns. As advocated by Schjoedt and Bird (2014), we tested study relationships with and without the control variables. Because the two results sets did not differ substantially nor significantly, we only report the results that include the control variables (other results are available upon request).

### Results

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics and correlations. Notably, constructs correlated in a manner consistent with prior research in terms of direction and magnitude (Schyns

and Schilling 2013). Further, all correlations between supervisor narcissism and the dependent variables were consistent with our expectations. Regression results are shown in Table 2, by sample.

### Sample 1

The supervisor narcissism  $\times$  resource management ability term explained incremental variance in job tension ( $\beta = -.08$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $p < .05$ ), emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = -.09$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and depressed mood at work ( $\beta = -.08$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $p < .05$ ). No VIF score exceeded 2.0, and the lowest tolerance score was greater than .70, indicating that the effects of multicollinearity on our hypotheses tests should not be a concern.

### Post hoc Tests: Sample 1

Results without demographic and dispositional variables indicated modest effects on main effect and interaction terms ( $\beta = -.09$ , job tension;  $\beta = -.08$ ; emotional exhaustion;  $\beta = -.10$ , depressed mood at work). All cross-product terms remained significant when controls were excluded (full tables of these analyses are available from the authors). To examine the form of these effects, simple slope tests were conducted (Cohen et al. 2003). For employees with lower resource management ability, increased supervisor narcissism predicted increased job tension ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $p < .05$ ), increased emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p < .02$ ), and increases in depressed mood at work ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Conversely, increased supervisor narcissism had little effect on job tension ( $\beta = .04$ , ns), emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = .02$ , ns), and depressed mood at work ( $\beta = .02$ , ns) for higher-ability employees. Figures 1, 2 and 3 illustrate these effects.

### Sample 2

The supervisor narcissism  $\times$  resource management ability term explained incremental variance in job tension ( $\beta = -.11$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $p < .05$ ), emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = -.12$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and citizenship behavior ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ,  $p < .01$ ). No variance inflation score exceeded 1.4, and the lowest tolerance score was in excess of .90, indicating that the effects of multicollinearity on our hypotheses tests should not be a concern.

### Post hoc Tests: Sample 2

Without control variables, cross-product terms had minimal changes in Study 2 ( $\beta = -.14$ , job tension;  $\beta = -.10$ , emotional exhaustion;  $\beta = .14$ , citizenship behavior).



**Table 1** Means (*M*), standard deviation (*SD*), and intercorrelations among study variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age	–											
	–											
	–											
2. Gender <sup>a</sup>	.10	–										
	.15	–										
	–.05	–										
3. Tenure	.37*	.07	–									
	.29	.02	–									
	.45	.08	–									
4. Extroversion/PA	–.03	.10	–.08	–								
	.05	.01	.04	–								
	–.01	.19*	–.14	–								
5. Neuroticism/NA	–.08	–.08	–.04	–.01	–							
	.06	.01	.01	–.10	–							
	–.20*	–.11	.13	–.17*	–							
6. Supervisor narcissism	–.19*	–.19*	–.07	.04	.33*	–						
	–.17*	–.21*	.06	.02	.28*	–						
	–.12	–.25*	–.07	–.22*	.28*	–						
7. Resource mgmt. ability	.10	.14	.05	.10	–.39*	–.37*	–					
	.14	.04	.12	.20*	–.37*	–.34*	–					
	–.10	.08	–.02	.25*	–.17*	–.07	–					
8. Job tension	–.13	–.11	.05	–.07	.21*	.18*	–.36*	–				
	–.05	–.14	.04	–.02	.25*	.32*	–.30*	–				
	.09	–.20*	.01	–.09	.25*	.29*	–.06	–				
9. Emotional exhaustion	–.23*	–.23*	–.01	.01	.34*	.34*	–.39*	.46*	–			
	–.11	–.17*	.06	.04	.33*	.42*	–.41*	.45*	–			
	–.19*	.01	–.08	–.14*	.30*	.39*	–.20*	.41*	–			
10. Depressed mood at work	–.21*	–.11	–.10	–.02	.31*	.41*	–.40*	.38*	.47*	–		
	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–		
	–.33*	–.10	–.14	–.29*	.44*	.43*	–.24*	.39*	.46*	–		
11. Citizenship behavior	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	.16*	.20*	.04	.17*	–.18*	–.20*	.07	–.19*	–.26*	–	–	–
	.02	.03	–.07	.26*	–.20*	–.24*	.29*	–.05	–.22*	–.27*	–	–
12. Task performance	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	.17*	.03	.13	.41*	–.31*	–.16*	.27*	.12	–.13	–.31*	.21*	–
Sample 1— <i>M</i>	44.26	1.51	5.93	4.64	2.71	2.88	5.21	4.13	3.43	2.99	–	–
Sample 1— <i>SD</i>	10.28	.50	4.04	1.49	1.21	1.16	1.18	1.34	1.74	1.45	–	–
Sample 2— <i>M</i>	45.59	1.58	6.07	4.78	2.68	3.15	5.12	4.29	3.62	–	5.12	–
Sample 2— <i>SD</i>	8.60	.49	3.99	1.48	1.18	1.36	1.23	1.33	1.67	–	1.14	–
Sample 3— <i>M</i>	48.04	1.66	8.93	3.93	1.91	2.59	4.61	3.61	2.88	3.13	4.54	5.61
Sample 3— <i>SD</i>	12.38	.50	7.09	.66	.63	1.09	.80	1.09	1.16	1.34	.52	.84

\*  $p < .05$ ;  $N = 187$  (Sample 1);  $N = 199$  (Sample 2);  $N = 136$  (Sample 3)<sup>a</sup> Gender coded as “1” for female and “2” for male

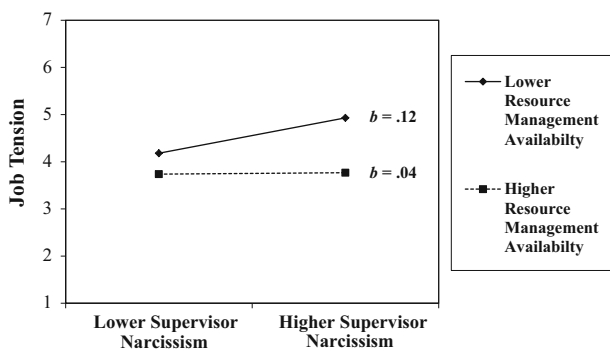
Terms remained significant and in the same direction. Simple slope tests indicated that increased supervisor narcissism predicted increased job tension ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ )

and emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ ), as well as decreased citizenship behavior ( $\beta = -.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ) for lower resource management ability employees. Conversely,

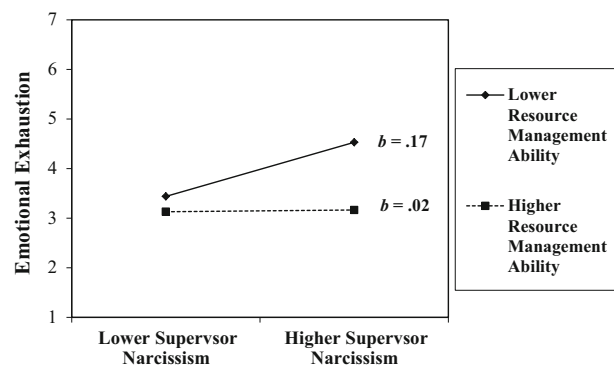
**Table 2** Results of moderated regression analyses

Variable	Job tension			Emotional exhaustion			Depressed mood at work		Citizenship behavior		Task performance
	Study 1 $\beta$	Study 2 $\beta$	Study 3 $\beta$	Study 1 $\beta$	Study 2 $\beta$	Study 3 $\beta$	Study 1 $\beta$	Study 3 $\beta$	Study 2 $\beta$	Study 3 $\beta$	Study 3 $\beta$
<b>Step 1</b>											
Age	-.02*	-.01	.01	-.04**	-.02	-.05*	-.03**	-.02**	.03*	.01	.01
Gender	-.12	-.35*	-.30**	-.02	-.33**	-.01	-.11	-.25*	.37*	.04	.09
Tenure	.04	.04	-.01	.04	.04	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01	.01
$\Delta\text{Adj}R^2$	.03	.02	.05	.07	.04	.03	.05	.12	.06	.01	.02
<b>Step 2</b>											
Extroversion/PA	-.07*	-.05	-.07	.04	.10	-.13*	-.01	.47**	.12*	.31**	.44**
Neuroticism/NA	.25**	.29**	.43**	.29**	.42**	.58**	.36**	-.36**	-.14*	-.26*	-.36**
$\Delta\text{Adj}R^2$	.07**	.06**	.06**	.10**	.13**	.08**	.06**	.21**	.05**	.09**	.21**
<b>Step 3</b>											
Supervisor narc.	.16**	.19**	.28**	.23**	.20**	.44**	.24**	.41**	-.12*	-.15*	-.01
Resource mgmt.	-.29**	-.21**	.04	-.34**	-.43**	-.27**	-.31**	-.22**	.07	.24**	.19*
$\Delta\text{Adj}R^2$	.09**	.10**	.06**	.18**	.19**	.15**	.17**	.21**	.03*	.07**	.02*
<b>Step 4</b>											
Supervisor narc <sup>2</sup>	.12*	.03	.09	-.02	.13*	.04	.04	-.01	-.15**	.05	.07
Resource mgmt <sup>2</sup>	.02	.01	.06	-.01	.04	-.16*	-.02	.14*	.04	-.01	-.02
$\Delta\text{Adj}R^2$	.02*	.00	.01	.00	.02*	.03*	.00	.02	.04**	.01	.01
<b>Step 5</b>											
Narc $\times$ Res	-.08*	-.11*	-.09**	-.09**	-.12**	-.11*	-.08*	-.11**	.13**	-.02	.12**
$\Delta\text{Adj}R^2$	.02*	.02*	.03**	.03**	.03**	.02*	.02*	.03**	.03**	.00	.03**

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



**Fig. 1** The interactive effects of supervisor narcissism and resource management ability on employee job tension (Sample 1)

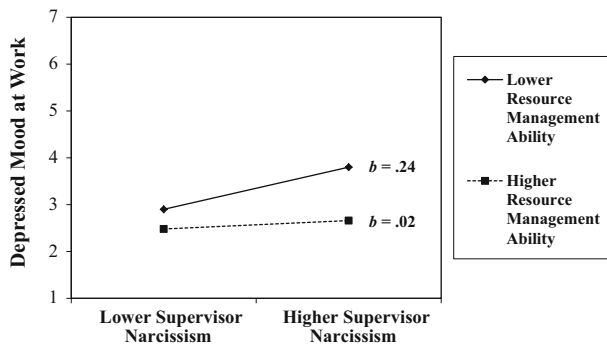


**Fig. 2** The interactive effects of supervisor narcissism and resource management ability on employee emotional exhaustion (Sample 1)

increased supervisor narcissism had little effect on job tension ( $\beta = -.02$ , ns) and citizenship behavior ( $\beta = .07$ , ns) for higher resource management ability employees. Finally, employees with increased resource management ability reported a decline in emotional exhaustion as supervisor narcissism increased ( $\beta = -.12$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Figures 4, 5, and 6 illustrate these effects.

**Sample 3**

The supervisor narcissism  $\times$  resource management ability term explained incremental variance in job tension ( $\beta = -.09$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ,  $p < .01$ ), emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = -.11$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $p < .05$ ), depressed mood at work ( $\beta = -.11$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and task performance

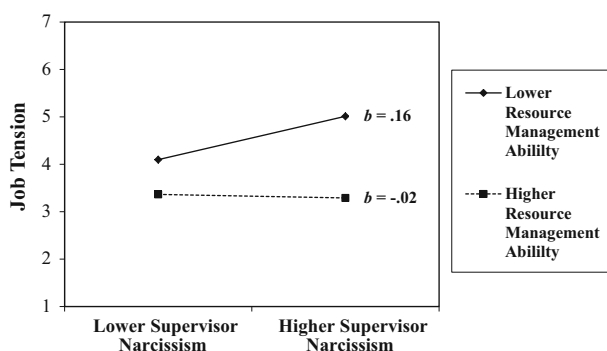


**Fig. 3** The interactive effects of supervisor narcissism and resource management ability on employee depressed mood at work (Sample 1)

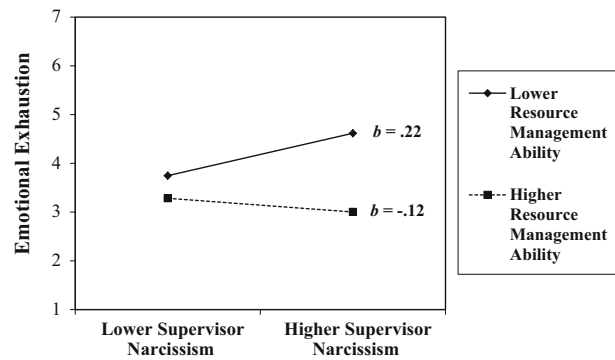
( $\beta = .12$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The coefficient for citizenship behavior was not significant ( $\beta = -.02$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ , ns). With no variance inflation score exceeding 1.8 and the lowest tolerance score being in excess of .70, the effects of multicollinearity on our hypothesized tests should not be a concern.

### Post hoc Tests: Sample 3

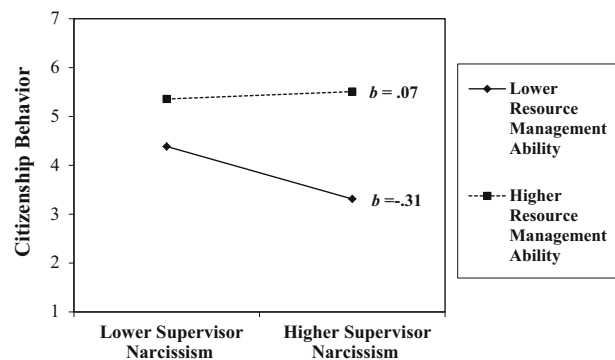
Results without control variables indicated minimal changes in the interaction terms ( $\beta = -.11$ , job tension;  $\beta = -.12$ , emotional exhaustion;  $\beta = .03$ , citizenship behavior;  $\beta = .14$ , task performance). The depressed mood at work term decreased from  $-.11$  to  $-.08$  (remaining significant at the .05 level). Slope tests indicated that increased supervisor narcissism predicted increased job tension ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and emotional exhaustion ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ), plus decreased self-rated task performance ( $\beta = -.15$ ,  $p < .01$ ) for employees with lower resource management ability. Conversely, increased supervisor narcissism had little effect on job tension ( $\beta = .01$ , ns) and task performance ( $\beta = .05$ , ns) for higher resource management ability workers. Consistent with Sample 2, employees with increased resource management ability reported a modest decline in emotional exhaustion



**Fig. 4** The interactive effects of supervisor narcissism and resource management ability on employee job tension (Sample 2)



**Fig. 5** The interactive effects of supervisor narcissism and resource management ability on employee emotional exhaustion (Sample 2)



**Fig. 6** The interactive effects of supervisor narcissism and resource management ability on employee citizenship behavior (Sample 2)

as supervisor narcissism increased ( $\beta = -.10$ ,  $p = .07$ ). Figures 7, 8, 9, and 10 illustrate these effects.

## Discussion

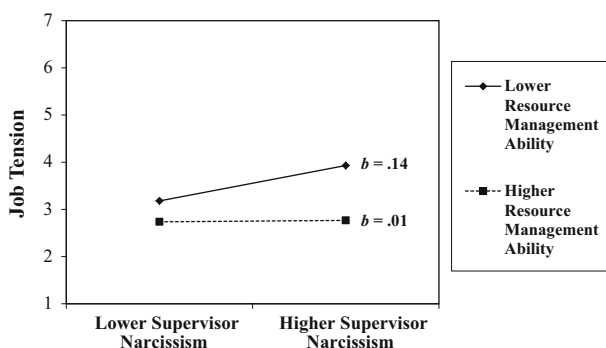
The current research was developed largely in response to five workplace realities. First, narcissism has been shown to foster unethical behavior in organizations (Harrison et al. 2016). Second, narcissism is growing in developing countries and its influence is likely to intensify in organizational contexts (Gibson et al. 2016). Third, global economic volatility will promote the preference for individuals seen as proactive, visionary, and catalysts for change—all traits associated with narcissistic leaders (Nevicka et al. 2013). Fourth, threats associated with narcissistic leader behavior have the potential to constrain the number of coping responses available to targets (Kwan et al. 2016). Fifth, due to economic, family, or issues-related job embeddedness (Allen et al. 2016), separation from a toxic work setting is not always a realistic option. Confronting these realities, we draw from foundational research in the areas of egotistic behavior and coping responses to threat to hypothesize that employee resource management ability

aids with the neutralization of harm associated with perceived narcissistic supervision.

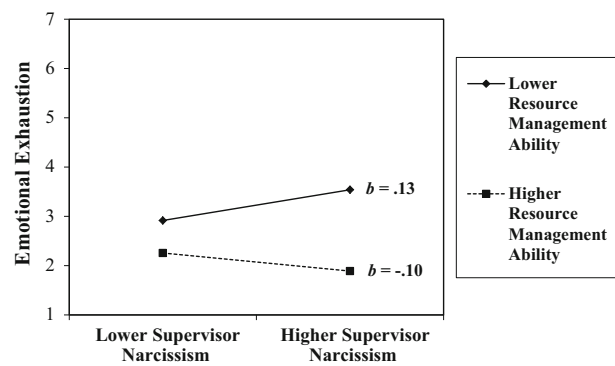
In support, results indicate that the detrimental effects of perceived supervisor narcissism on work outcomes were mitigated by subordinates' resource management ability. Specifically, for employees with lower resource management ability, heightened perceptions of supervisor narcissism predicted increased job tension (Samples 1–3), emotional exhaustion (Samples 1–3), and depressed mood at work (Samples 1 and 3) as well as decreased citizenship behavior (Sample 2) and task performance (Sample 3). Conversely, for employees with higher resource management ability, supervisor narcissism was not related to increased levels of job tension, emotional exhaustion, or depressed mood at work, nor to decreased citizenship behavior or task performance.

The hypothesis involving citizenship behavior was not fully supported across studies (i.e., statistical significance emerged in Sample 2 but not Sample 3). Sample 3 itself may provide some indication of why this result emerged. Specifically, participants spent much of their work time traveling to customer sites. It was also made clear to this group, anecdotally, that success and subsequent rewards were based almost exclusively on sales production. Given these realities, it is unlikely that citizenship behavior was a foremost consideration to these employees.

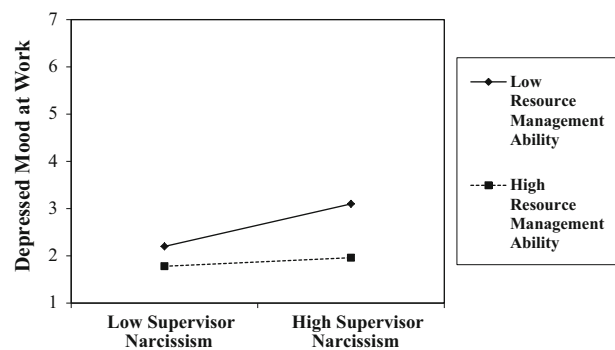
Interestingly, we also found perceived supervisor narcissism to be associated with decreases in emotional exhaustion (Samples 2 and 3) for employees with higher resource management ability. Although not hypothesized, these results are not completely unexpected. The ability to thrive in a challenging environment, such as working in a resource-strapped situation created by a narcissistic supervisor, may actually work to increase subordinate self-efficacy. Beneficial spirals driven by ample resources and favorable levels of perceived competency may contribute to a more realistic view of threat associated with narcissistic supervision. As a result, employees might feel a narcissistic supervisor represents a challenge or even opportunity rather



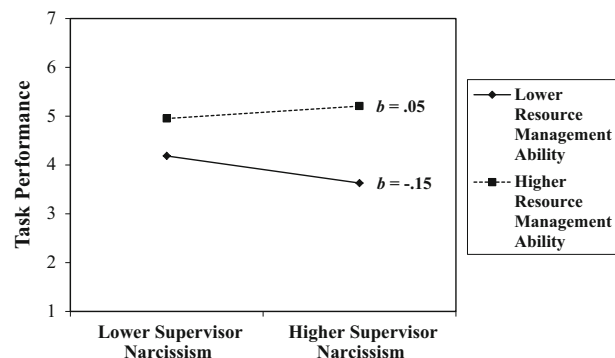
**Fig. 7** The interactive effects of supervisor narcissism and resource management ability on employee job tension (Sample 3)



**Fig. 8** The interactive effects of supervisor narcissism and resource management ability on employee emotional exhaustion (Sample 3)



**Fig. 9** The interactive effects of supervisor narcissism and resource management ability on employee depressed mood at work (Sample 3)



**Fig. 10** The interactive effects of supervisor narcissism and resource management ability on employee task performance (Sample 3)

than a hindrance or threat, especially if they perceive that the supervisor may discriminately bestow favorable outcomes on some but not all subordinates.

## Contributions to Theory

The present investigation contributes both to the narcissism and to resources literatures. First, we add to a growing body of research on the effects of narcissistic supervisors in organizations (Grijalva et al. 2015). However, where

previous research has focused largely on the harmful effects of supervisor narcissism (e.g., Braun et al. 2016), we deviate by examining a factor that enables subordinates to mitigate such adverse effects, thereby potentially suppressing narcissistic supervisors' unethical and destructive leadership (Einarsen et al. 2007). In this vein, we provide not only replicative support for prior findings of narcissistic supervisors' impact on important employee outcomes, but also evidence for an individual's ability that can serve as a buffer for its destructive effects. Moreover, by looking at supervisor narcissism rather than the broader category of abuse, we were able to develop a more nuanced view of mistreatment in organizations.

Second, in employing a resource theory perspective (Hobfoll 1989, 2011) to examine supervisor narcissism effects, this study extends research by showing that resource management ability influences work outcomes when subordinates face narcissistic superiors at work. Importantly, the present investigation highlights the significance of research efforts that examine the ramification of resource *utilization* as opposed to the more traditional emphasis in COR research on resource *possession*. As Halbesleben and colleagues (2014) noted in their review of COR theory, the utilization of a resource is intricately linked to the real value of that resource to an individual. We regard the results of the present study as testimony to this notion and thus encourage researchers to direct more efforts toward explorations focused on resource management ability as an operationalization of resource utilization. For instance, it would be interesting to extend our knowledge of how or when subordinates decide to deploy specific resources to navigate work situations involving superiors, coworkers, or clients exhibiting behaviors characteristic of narcissism or other "dark" personality traits (cf. Paulhus and Williams 2002).

### Strengths and Limitations

The present research has strengths worth noting. Most critical is our multi-sample design, which allowed us to replicate most of our hypotheses (Wright and Sweeney 2016). Also, our study documented significant findings for a number of relevant outcomes, including affective (i.e., depressed mood at work), behavioral (i.e., citizenship behavior and task performance), and cognitive (i.e., job tension and emotional exhaustion) consequences. Additionally, the interaction terms explained incremental variance in outcomes beyond the effects contributed by personality and curvilinear terms (Edwards 2009). Further, post hoc tests of the hypotheses revealed that the results were consistent without the inclusion of controls. Finally, analyses of VIF and tolerance values indicated the results likely were not due to collinearity among predictors.

A potential limitation of the present study is the use of single-source, cross-sectional, self-report data for all variables. The cross-sectional research design raises questions about causal inference. However, prior research has established the effects of supervisor narcissism on many of the employee outcomes specified here, and our results were consistent with prior results. Thus, the potential impact of the cross-sectional design on our results primarily relates to the impact of time. That is, if working for a narcissistic supervisor results in decreased resource availability over time, then resource management ability becomes increasingly important as time passes. However, we recognize that working for an extremely narcissistic supervisor for an extended period of time could have adverse effects on subordinates' resource management ability as well. In particular, these extremely narcissistic supervisors could find ways to limit subordinates' access to coworkers on whom they rely for assistance or the ability to gain physical distance from work to recharge.

Furthermore, the use of single-source, self-report data often invites concerns about common method variance (CMV; Chan 2009). Although the notion driving these concerns often assumes inflation of correlations between self-reported constructs, this is not always the case (Chan 2009), and several scholars believe comments regarding the problems of CMV-biased results for self-reported data are exaggerated (Chan 2001; Spector 1994). Additionally, Siemsen and colleagues (2010) provided evidence that bias due to CMV does not artificially create quadratic or interaction terms and hence argued that research whose primary purpose is to examine such terms should not be criticized for potential CMV. Thus, we believe the potential effects of CMV bias on our results are limited.

### Directions for Future Research

Although the present research provides insight into how to potentially cope with narcissistic supervisors, more needs to be understood. For example, research needs to examine the specific mediating mechanisms through which supervisor narcissism leads to adverse outcomes. That is, are there subordinate and/or environmental factors that further explicate the toxic effects of working for narcissistic supervisors? The victimization and destructive leadership literatures (e.g., Schilling and Schyns 2014) assert that toxic supervisors are only part of the equation when conceptualizing harmful leadership, with some arguing that narcissistic leaders need susceptible followers and conducive environments to complete the "toxic triangle" of destructive leadership (Padilla et al. 2007). For example, Avey and associates (2015) reported that embedded employees reported less frustration and fewer deviance behaviors when faced with abuse relative to less

embedded colleagues. Research needs to cast a wider lens when examining both favorable and toxic interpersonal dynamics at work.

Research on narcissistic supervisors should also examine whether the strength of group-level perceptions affects subsequent processes and outcomes. Our results provided support for a detrimental relationship between supervisor narcissism and subordinate citizenship behavior. It would be valuable to understand if this relationship is evident at the group level, and if so, whether it might lead to subsequent (un)favorable effects on cohesion and task performance, among other outcomes. In support, Nevicka et al. (2011) found that leader narcissism obstructed the flow of information within supervised work groups, which resulted in lower task performance. Fox (2016) contends that group narcissism can promote favorable outcomes including heightened morale and task performance when conditions are supportive. Dysfunctional consequences are also plausible as a result of intergroup rivalry and the self-serving pursuit of goals. Studying the formation of narcissistic groups may be useful, too. For example, are they more likely to develop from within, sparked by the traits, attitudes, and motivations of group members? Or is the development largely a protective mechanism formed in response to perceived threat either inside (e.g., dysfunctional supervision) or outside (e.g., downsizing, off-shoring) the organization? Interestingly, Cichocka (2016) argues that collective narcissists are defensive, prone to pursuing self-protecting goals and seeking ways to demonstrate group superiority to others. Thus, the interplay between narcissistic leaders and narcissistic groups represents a potential avenue for insight.

Finally, future research might consider nonlinear relationships between supervisor narcissism and related work outcomes. We controlled for nonlinear terms, and our results indicated several statistically significant relationships between the squared supervisor narcissism term and our studied outcomes. However, because we did not hypothesize these relationships a priori and these results were inconsistent across samples, these relationships should be considered tentative (Edwards 2009). Despite the inconsistencies in our nonlinear results, prior research (i.e., Grijalva et al. 2015) argued that moderate levels of narcissism are most beneficial for supervisors. For instance, at lower levels, confidence to make difficult decisions and carry out unpopular programs may be lacking. Additionally, Edwards and Berry (2010) contend that scholars are “too married to linear modeling” (p. 676). Thus, we recommend that future research on supervisor narcissism build theory regarding its nonlinear relationships with outcomes.

## Practical Implications

In addition to the contributions to research on supervisor narcissism and COR theory, the results of our study have important practical implications. In the sections that follow, we present and discuss several of these.

### *Policies and Procedures*

One characteristic of narcissistic supervisors is their propensity to exploit resources for personal gain. As our results have shown, narcissistic supervision reduces the availability of personal and work-related resources that subordinates could have used to fulfill work demands. Manipulation and exploitation thrive in environments that are ambiguous. In these contexts, aggression is considered “part of the job” (Neuman and Baron 1998). Thus, one way to limit the effects of supervisor narcissism is to provide clear guidelines and policies on how resources are allocated. The literature on organizational justice provides several guidelines on how this can be achieved (Cropanzano et al. 2007). For instance, having merit-based compensation policies ensures that employee contributions are recognized and appropriately rewarded. Similarly, clear and consistently applied procedures for career advancement help in minimizing opportunities for supervisors to abuse their power. Applied to the present context, narcissistic leaders will be less likely to advance in an organization if promotion guidelines focus on leadership effectiveness as opposed to emergence (Grijalva et al. 2015). That is, promotion criteria should emphasize one’s ability to achieve organizational goals as opposed to simply being dominant or extraverted. Indeed, narcissism’s effect on leadership emergence has been shown to disappear after controlling for extraversion (Grijalva et al. 2015).

### *Employee Resources*

Our results indicate that narcissistic leadership is associated with adverse effects on employee outcomes due to threatened or lost work-related resources. Thus, organizations can help reduce supervisor narcissism’s impact by providing employees with opportunities to conserve and regain resources as well as facilitate resource management ability. Employee assistance programs (EAPs) that provide employee counseling can be beneficial because they offer opportunities for respite and advice on proper stress management. Specifically, mindfulness training can help employees appraise stressful situations more objectively as opposed to an overly dramatic interpretation that renders the situation more overwhelming and taxing (Hülshager et al. 2013).

Resource management ability can also be strengthened through expressive writing interventions (Barclay and Skarlicki 2009). Expressive writing enhances one's ability to exert influence over the environment for several reasons. First, it repeatedly exposes individuals to the experience allowing them to address the resulting fear and anxiety more effectively. Second, it reduces tendencies to suppress the type of emotions which can further increase emotional exhaustion. Lastly, the act of writing about the adverse experience helps individuals develop insights that lead to increased understanding and perceived meaning of the experience. Overall, expressive writing makes the experience less overwhelming by allowing individuals to think more clearly on how to best manage remaining resources.

## Conclusion

Narcissistic individuals often find their way into leadership positions (Campbell et al. 2011), and employees often do not have the option of getting a reprieve through alternative employment options. Thus, it is critical to understand how employees can cope with the potentially harmful effects of narcissistic supervisors. Across three independent samples, our results demonstrate the efficacy of subordinate resource management ability for mitigating the detrimental effects of perceived supervisor narcissism on subordinate emotional exhaustion, job tension, depressed mood at work, task performance, and citizenship behavior. These findings contribute to academic and practical knowledge on supervisor narcissism and conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll 1989) by demonstrating that the ability to *manage* resources, and not just access to them, is important for employee performance and well-being.

**Funding** The authors funded this study.

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of interest** All authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Ethical Approval** All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

**Informed Consent** Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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