



Prestige Orientation and Reconciliation in the Workplace

Yohsuke Ohtsubo¹  and Kazuho Yamaura²

Abstract

Human social hierarchies comprise two distinct bases of status: dominance and prestige. One can acquire high social status not only by physically intimidating others (dominance) but also by providing information goods to others (prestige). Given that prestige-oriented individuals need to be liked and accepted by others, we hypothesized that they would be more eager to reconcile with their coworkers when they were involved in interpersonal conflicts in their workplaces. Study 1 asked 487 respondents about their conciliatory behaviors in response to workplace conflicts. Prestige-oriented individuals were more apologetic (when they hurt someone in their workplace) and forgiving (when they were hurt by someone). However, analyses of a subsample of respondents who had conflicts with their followers showed that organizational leaders' prestige orientation was associated only with forgiveness but not with apologetic behavior. Study 2 collected comparable data from 678 organizational leaders. Study 2 confirmed the results of the subsample analysis of Study 1. Compared with leaders low in prestige orientation, leaders high in prestige orientation were more likely to forgive their subordinates; however, they were no more likely to apologize to their subordinates.

Keywords

dominance, prestige, reconciliation, forgiveness, apology

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The desire for status is ubiquitous in human societies (von Rueden & Jaeggi, 2016) and seems to qualify as a fundamental motivation for humans (Anderson et al., 2015). People strive to acquire high status in their groups because it entails greater access to desirable resources (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Although high social status (or greater access to resources) is typically achieved through physical formidability and aggression (*dominance* strategy) in animal societies, an alternative route to high social status exists in human societies: generously sharing knowledge and skills with community members, which is called the *prestige* strategy (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Individuals who employ the dominance strategy acquire deference from their followers through coercion, while individuals employing the prestige strategy elicit deference from others because of attractive qualities, such as knowledge and skills (Cheng et al., 2010; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Maner & Case, 2016).

As noted by Cheng et al. (2010), the effectiveness of each of the two strategies depends on individual attributes (e.g., physical formidability and intelligence).¹ Therefore, individuals may vary in terms of which strategy they pursue to attain status.

Although the term “strategy” tends to connote conscious/deliberate choice, Cheng et al. suggested the presence of “(a)n automatic affective mechanism propelling the appropriate response” (p. 336), and proposed that two facets of pride (i.e., authentic and hubristic pride) may be part of the affective mechanism that modulates the choice of the two strategies. Of the two facets, authentic pride (a socially desirable facet of pride associated with accomplishment and confidence) motivates the prestige strategy, whereas hubristic pride (a narcissistic facet of pride associated with arrogance and conceit) motivates the dominance strategy. Thus, there are individual differences in

¹Department of Social Psychology, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan

²Faculty of Sport and Health Science, Ritsumeikan University, Kusatsu, Japan

Corresponding Author:

Yohsuke Ohtsubo, Department of Social Psychology, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo, 7-3-1 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo, 113-0033, Japan.
 Email: yohsubo@l.u-tokyo.ac.jp



status attainment strategies: some people are prestige-oriented, whereas others are dominance-oriented. Cheng et al. (2010) also pointed out that the two types of status orientation are likely to be associated with a suite of personality traits (e.g., aggressiveness, agreeableness). In this study, we examine whether the two types of status orientation also covary with distinct reconciliatory tendencies.

Prestige and Being Liked

Henrich and Gil-White (2001) argued that the prestige hierarchy emerged and evolved in humans because of the disproportionate importance of cultural learning in our species, *Homo sapiens*. The standard form of social hierarchy in other animals is the dominance hierarchy, in which dominant individuals control valuable resources because of their formidability and physical prowess. Henrich and Gil-White surmised that our social learning ability opened another door to achieving higher social status. Suppose that one can provide valuable information (e.g., how to produce effective hunting tools) to others because of their superior knowledge or skills. Others can increase their fitness by imitating this individual (the information provider). Accordingly, the information provider's followers have the incentive to provide them with tangible or social resources (including deference and respect) in exchange for access to their information goods.

It is important to note that, according to this information-goods explanation, followers voluntarily defer to information providers. Therefore, it is predicted that prestige-oriented individuals are more concerned about whether they are liked by their followers. In support of this prediction, research has shown that prestige-oriented individuals are generous and cooperative, whereas dominance-oriented individuals are aggressive (Cheng et al., 2010). It is also predicted that despite such differences in behavioral tendencies, both strategies, if successfully implemented, are associated with higher fitness. An anthropological study confirmed this prediction—both dominance and prestige strategies were associated with the attainment of higher reproductive success in the small-scale society of the Tsimane people in Bolivia (von Rueden et al., 2011). In a laboratory setting, both types of strategies were associated with higher social influence in a group decision-making task (Cheng et al., 2013). Furthermore, developmental research has discovered a comparable distinction in children's social influence tactics (Hawley, 2014).

To pursue the prestige strategy successfully, individuals may need to pay careful attention to whether they are liked and accepted by others. Their social status is not forcibly acquired but voluntarily conferred by others. Therefore, prestige-oriented individuals fail to achieve a higher social status unless they succeed in maintaining good relationships with others. There is evidence that prestige-oriented individuals, when assigned to a leader role, prioritize social acceptance from their followers over group productivity: When a prestige-oriented leader found that group members preferred to accomplish their tasks in a less-productive way, the leader tended to choose the less-productive, but more popular, approach over

the more productive, but less popular, approach so that their group members would accept them (Case et al., 2018). Therefore, it is clear that prestige-oriented individuals aim to be liked and accepted by others.

However, no individual can avoid being involved in interpersonal conflicts all the time. Such interpersonal conflicts may more severely undermine the successful implementation of the prestige strategy. Accordingly, prestige-oriented individuals may be more prone to reconciling with their opponents.

Reconciliation and Valuable Relationship Maintenance

Based on research on primate reconciliation, de Waal (2000) argued that the primary function of animal reconciliation is to maintain existing valuable relationships. McCullough and his colleagues extended de Waal's valuable relationships hypothesis to humans and found that relationship value is a robust predictor of forgiveness (Burnette et al., 2012; McCullough et al., 2010, 2014; Smith et al., 2020): Victims are more likely (and are quicker) to forgive transgressors when they value their relationships with the transgressors. However, it should be noted that forgiveness is only one side (i.e., the victim side) of the human reconciliation process. For example, conciliatory signals, such as apologies, are important in activating the reconciliation process (McCullough et al., 2014; see also Silk et al., 2000, for a primate conciliatory signal model). Ohtsubo and Yagi (2015; see also Oda & Hiraishi, 2021) showed that the valuable relationships hypothesis also applies to the offender side in humans: People are eager to restore valuable relationships that were endangered by their inadvertent transgressions (e.g., people are more likely to apologize in a costly fashion, such as offering compensation, when they damaged a relationship with a valuable partner).

The above studies support the idea that the adaptive function of reconciliation is to maintain valuable relationships. As the successful implementation of the prestige strategy relies on good relationships with others, it is predicted that prestige-oriented individuals are more likely to forgive their offenders and apologize to their victims. These associations can be engendered through individual and/or social learning (Cheng et al., 2010). For example, prestige-oriented individuals may learn the utility of reconciliation from firsthand experiences (e.g., failing to acquire prestige when they have not reconciled with their former supporters). It is also possible that prestige-oriented individuals become conciliatory by observing, for example, successful prestigious leaders exhibiting conciliatory behaviors and forgiveness. Therefore, if the prestige strategy works better when accompanied by more conciliatory tendencies, we can expect a prestige–reconciliation association within-individual.

There is indirect evidence for this association. First, De Cremer and Schouten (2008) found that leaders' apologies were more effective at promoting subordinates' fairness perceptions if their leaders respected them (i.e., if the leaders employed a non-dominance strategy). Second, Byrne et al. (2014) found a positive association between leaders'

apologizing to their followers and their sense of authentic pride, which has been shown to be associated with prestige orientation (Cheng et al., 2010).

Overview of the Present Study

On the basis of the above argument, we hypothesized that prestige-oriented individuals are forgiving (when they have been hurt or wronged by others) and apologetic (when they have committed interpersonal transgressions). We also hypothesized that dominant-oriented individuals are less forgiving and apologetic. Previous studies have shown that victims' power concerns are a base of psychological barriers to forgiving their offenders (Pearce et al., 2018; see also Williamson et al., 2014), and that offenders can boost their sense of power by refusing to apologize to their victims (Okimoto et al., 2013).

We report two studies that tested these hypotheses in workplace relationships. We chose workplace relationships as the research context because we expected that status concerns would be more salient due to the unequivocally defined status hierarchy in organizations. Study 1 recruited Japanese employees who had experienced interpersonal conflicts in their workplaces. They self-rated their prestige and dominance orientations. Further, assuming that both sides act antagonistically to some extent, we had participants report not only forgiveness of their opponents but also their apologetic behavior toward the opponents. Although we expected that both prestige and dominance strategies are important for higher-status individuals, only a small portion of participants reported conflicts with their subordinates in Study 1. Accordingly, Study 2 specifically recruited employees who had interpersonal conflicts with their subordinates.

Study 1

Study 1 asked respondents to recall a recent interpersonal conflict in their workplaces and briefly describe the nature of the conflict. They then reported how they responded to the conflict (e.g., whether they apologized) and to what extent they forgave the opponent. Finally, they completed the Dominance-Prestige Scale (Cheng et al., 2010). We tested whether respondents' self-rated prestige orientation would be positively associated with their apologetic responses to the conflict, as well as forgiveness. We also tested whether self-rated dominance orientation would be negatively associated with conciliatory responses and forgiveness.

Method

Participants. As we did not know of any prior studies that have examined the correlation between prestige orientation and conciliatory tendencies, we assumed a relatively small correlation of 0.15 for the power analysis, which was equal to the smallest correlation among the significant correlations between prestige orientation and other individual differences variables in Study 1 of Cheng et al. (2010). This power analysis revealed that

approximately 350 participants would be required to achieve a power of 0.80. To ensure an effective sample size of 350, we collected complete data (data that passed an attention check and did not have any missing values) from 500 employed Japanese workers (either full-time, part-time, or subcontracted employees) who were recruited through a Japanese online survey company, Cross Marketing, Inc. After removing 13 participants who reported no conflicts, or conflicts outside their workplaces, the data from 487 participants (244 men and 243 women) were retained for the subsequent data analyses. Their ages ranged from 22 to 65 years; the mean age \pm standard deviation (*SD*) was 44.99 ± 9.27 years.

Materials and Procedure. This study comprised five sections. In the first screening section, participants answered questions about their age, gender, and employment status. Those who reported that they were not currently employed were not allowed to proceed to the main study. The second section asked participants to describe a recent conflict with someone in their workplaces. Respondents then indicated the opponent's relative status in their workplaces (whether the opponent was higher than, lower than, or equal to themselves), and their sense of intimacy toward the opponent using the Inclusion of Other in the Self scale (Aron et al., 1992), relationship value with the opponent ("How important is the relationship with the opponent for working smoothly in your workplace?") on an 11-point scale (0 = *not important at all* to 10 = *most important in the workplace*), and the opponent's responsibility for the conflict on an 11-point scale (0% = *I was fully responsible* to 100% = *the opponent was fully responsible*).

The third section asked respondents whether they executed each of the following five apologetic actions: (a) I verbally apologized to the opponent by, for example, saying "I'm sorry"; (b) I offered to treat (or treated) the opponent to lunch or a snack; (c) I explained why it had happened in a comprehensible way; (d) I bought some apology gift; and (e) I repaired the opponent's damage or helped them recover from the damage (or tried to do so). These responses were adapted from Smith et al.'s (2020) research, in which these items were used to assess victims' perceptions of offender reactions. Respondents indicated whether or not they did so (i.e., the "yes" or "no" response format was used). We used the number of "yes" responses to these five items as an index of apologetic behavior.

In the fourth section, respondents completed the 18-item Transgression Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM; McCullough et al., 2010). The Japanese version used in this study was developed by Ohtsubo et al. (2015). Sample items include "I'll make him/her pay," "I am avoiding him/her," and "Even though his/her actions hurt me, I have goodwill for him/her." These items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*). Although TRIM includes three subscales (i.e., revenge, avoidance, and benevolence motivations), a recent psychometric study indicated that these subscales mapped onto a unidimensional continuum from hostility to friendliness (Forster et al., 2020). Accordingly, we averaged the 18-item scores to obtain a single score of forgiveness

(Cronbach's α coefficient = .94). An attention-check item was embedded within the TRIM items.

In the final section, respondents completed Cheng et al.'s (2010) Dominance-Prestige Scale, which comprised eight dominance items and nine prestige items. Sample items included "I am willing to use aggressive tactics to get my way" (dominance) and "Members of my peer group respect and admire me" (prestige). Respondents rated the extent to which each item described them on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very well*). We translated this scale into Japanese, consulting with a psychologist whose first language was English. We confirmed the discriminant validity of the Japanese version by conducting a pilot study (e.g., dominance was positively correlated with physical aggression and hostility, while prestige was not correlated with physical aggression and was negatively correlated with hostility). Details of the pilot study are reported in the Supplementary Material. We averaged the eight- and nine-item scores to compute the dominance and prestige scores, respectively (Cronbach's α coefficient was .77 and .84 for dominance and prestige, respectively).

Respondents were compensated for their participation via Cross Marketing Inc. This study (Study 1), the pilot study, and a complementary study, which is briefly reported in the General Discussion, were approved by the ethical review board at the first author's previous institute, where these studies were conducted. The materials in Japanese, data in CSV format, and analytical code (in R Markdown HTML format) of the pilot study, Study 1, Study 2, and the complementary study are available from the Open Science Framework (OSF: <https://osf.io/p2hnm/>).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix of the variables of interest. The dominance and prestige orientations were weakly correlated with each other ($r_{485} = .15$, $p < .001$; the subscript indicates the degree of freedom). As predicted, prestige orientation was positively correlated with both apologetic behavior ($r_{485} = .10$, $p = .035$) and forgiveness ($r_{485} = .13$, $p = .003$). Although dominance orientation was negatively correlated with forgiveness, it was only marginally significant ($r_{485} = -.08$, $p = .069$). Dominance orientation was not significantly correlated with apologetic behavior ($r_{485} = .004$).

To confirm the positive bivariate correlations between prestige and the reconciliation variables (i.e., apologetic behavior and forgiveness), we ran multiple regression analyses separately for apologetic behavior and forgiveness. In each analysis, apologetic behavior or forgiveness was predicted from both dominance and prestige orientations, controlling for the effects of relationship value (of the opponent), intimacy, opponent responsibility, and the respondent's gender (1 = male, 2 = female).

For apologetic behavior, we ran a Poisson regression because it was operationalized as count data. We report the regression coefficients in Table 2 (upper panel). We report the coefficients rounded to three decimal places because the regression coefficients tend to take small values (i.e., values less than

0.1). As predicted, prestige orientation was positively associated with a tendency toward apologetic behavior ($b = 0.233$). In addition, relationship value ($b = 0.082$) and intimacy ($b = 0.083$) were positively associated with apologetic behavior, while opponent responsibility was negatively associated with apologetic behavior ($b = -0.144$). Dominance and gender were not significantly associated with apologetic behavior.

For forgiveness, a standard linear regression was used to test a similar model (see the lower panel of Table 2). Supporting the predictions, prestige was positively associated with forgiveness ($b = 0.191$), while dominance was negatively associated with forgiveness ($b = -0.107$). Moreover, relationship value ($b = 0.100$) and intimacy ($b = 0.057$) were positively associated with forgiveness, while opponent responsibility was negatively associated with forgiveness ($b = -0.103$). Gender was not associated with forgiveness.

Although the general pattern was consistent with the predictions regarding prestige (but not with the predictions regarding dominance), the results need to be carefully interpreted because participants reported not only conflicts with their subordinates but also conflicts with their equal-status coworkers and leaders. Therefore, we separated our sample in terms of status relative to the opponent because leaders' conciliatory tendencies are most relevant to the present purpose. Parenthetically, the levels of apologetic behavior and forgiveness were not significantly different across the three subsamples: $F(2, 454) = 1.02$, *ns*, and $F(2, 454) = 1.44$, *ns*, for apologetic behavior and forgiveness, respectively. Table 3 summarizes these separate regression analyses. Although prestige was generally positively associated with both apologetic behavior and forgiveness, a notable exception was that respondents were not significantly more likely to act in an apologetic manner when they had had conflicts with their subordinates. Thus, prestige-oriented leaders were more forgiving, but not more apologetic, to their subordinates in this subsample analysis. The effects of dominance were not consistent across the six separate regression analyses.

The observed pattern did not provide full support for the hypotheses. Although we predicted a negative association between dominance orientation and conciliatory tendencies, this pattern was not clear from the results. The association between prestige orientation and conciliatory tendencies was generally supported. One exceptional pattern emerged when the analyses were conducted separately for subsamples: Prestige-oriented individuals who had had a conflict with their subordinates were no more apologetic than individuals low in prestige orientation. Given a small sample size of 87 (see Table 3), it is possible that the absence of a significant correlation between leaders' prestige orientation and apologetic behavior was merely due to Type II error. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the correlation between leader prestige orientation and apologetic behavior was almost nil ($r_{85} = .009$, *ns*). Given this near-zero correlation, it is also possible that leaders' power concerns, despite their prestige orientation, prevented them from apologizing to their subordinates (Guilfoyle et al., 2022; Okimoto et al., 2013). Their power concerns may

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and the Correlation Matrix of the Variables of Interest in Study 1.

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Dominance	3.19	0.93	—					
2	Prestige	4.14	0.94	.15***	—				
3	Apologetic behavior	0.73	0.94	.004	.10*	—			
4	Forgiveness	2.99	0.89	-.08 ⁺	.13**	.22***	—		
5	Relationship value	6.58	2.39	-.06	.06	.20***	.35***	—	
6	Intimacy	1.87	1.36	.0001	.05	.14**	.16***	.15***	—
7	Opponent responsibility	8.46	2.46	-.004	.27***	-.28***	-.28***	-.17***	-.05

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

Table 2. Results of the Multiple Regression Analyses (Study 1).

Dependent variable: Apologetic behavior					
Independent variable	<i>b</i>	95% Confidence interval	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	
Gender	0.011	[-0.205, 0.226]	0.10	.923	
Relationship value	0.082	[0.033, 0.131]	3.30	9.73×10^{-4}	***
Intimacy	0.083	[0.015, 0.151]	2.40	.017	*
Opponent responsibility	-0.144	[-0.185, -0.102]	6.78	1.21×10^{-11}	***
Dominance	-0.0111	[-0.128, 0.106]	0.19	.849	
Prestige	0.233	[0.113, 0.353]	3.80	1.42×10^{-4}	***
Dependent variable: Forgiveness					
Independent variable	<i>b</i>	95% Confidence interval	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	
Gender	-0.097	[-0.241, 0.047]	1.32	.189	
Relationship value	0.100	[0.069, 0.130]	6.47	2.49×10^{-10}	***
Intimacy	0.057	[0.005, 0.109]	2.15	.032	*
Opponent responsibility	-0.103	[-0.133, -0.073]	6.68	6.63×10^{-11}	***
Dominance	-0.107	[-0.185, -0.029]	2.68	.008	**
Prestige	0.191	[0.112, 0.269]	4.75	2.74×10^{-6}	***

Notes. Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) was 1070.8 and 1157.9 for apologetic behavior regression and forgiveness regression, respectively.

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

not have prevented them from forgiving subordinates because forgiveness does not undermine their sense of power. To clarify whether prestige-oriented leaders would be more apologetic or not to their subordinates, we conducted Study 2, which specifically requested that participants report conflicts with their subordinates in workplaces.

Study 2

Method

Participants. The result of Study 1 suggests that leaders' prestige orientation \times apology correlation is zero, or is at least much smaller than .15, the value used in the power analysis for Study 1. We conducted a new power analysis assuming a slightly smaller true correlation of .12, which suggested a sample size of 600 would be required. Therefore, we preregistered a sample size of a minimum of 600 along with two hypotheses: (a) Leaders high in prestige orientation are more likely to apologize to their subordinates than leaders low in prestige orientation; and (b) leaders high in prestige orientation

are more likely to forgive their subordinates than leaders low in prestige orientation. As for the first hypothesis, we did not preregister the absence of leader prestige orientation and apology, which was the observed pattern in Study 1, because the null hypothesis does not allow us to compute the necessary sample size (i.e., zero correlation remains nonsignificant, regardless of how large the sample size is). Despite the preregistered hypothesis, a nonsignificant association between leader prestige orientation and apology was a viable hypothesis for Study 2.

We recruited participants who had recently (within one year) experienced workplace conflicts with their subordinates through a Japanese online survey company, Macromill, Inc. We collected complete data from 678 individuals (486 men, 190 women, and 2 participants who opted not to reveal their gender). Their ages ranged from 18 to 60 years; the mean age \pm *SD* was 45.23 ± 9.35 years.

Materials and Procedure. The materials were the same as those used in Study 1, with the following four minor modifications.

First, the instructions explicitly requested that participants recall a workplace conflict with their *subordinates*. If participants were unable to recall such an incident on a screening page, they were not allowed to proceed to the main part of the study. Second, we included an additional apology item, given that we were specifically targeting those in a superordinate position at their workplaces: "I gave special consideration to the subordinate as a sign of apology." Therefore, we used the sum of "yes" responses to the six (instead of five) items as an index of apology. Third, following the survey company's rule, we dropped the attention-check item. Fourth, we asked participants to report not only their own gender but also their opponent's gender (we forgot to include this question in Study 1). We included the opponent's gender as a predictor variable, along with the participant's own gender, in the analyses. Study 2 was approved by the ethical review board of the first author's current institute.

Table 3. Summary of Regression Coefficients from the Regression Analyses Separately Conducted for Superordinate, Equal Peer, and Subordinate Relationships.

	Respondent's status with respect to the opponent		
	Superior (<i>n</i> = 87)	Equal peer (<i>n</i> = 144)	Subordinat (<i>n</i> = 226)
DV: Apologetic behavior			
Gender	0.169	0.142	-0.070
Relationship value	-0.016	0.090	0.103
Intimacy	0.127	0.096	0.052
Opponent responsibility	-0.251	-0.161	-0.140
Dominance	0.368	-.175	-0.017
Prestige	0.220	0.278	0.198
DV: Forgiveness			
Gender	-0.225	-0.159	0.070
Relationship value	0.147	0.124	0.089
Intimacy	0.083	0.014	0.097
Opponent responsibility	-0.090	-0.089	-0.106
Dominance	-0.030	-0.170	-0.092
Prestige	0.296	0.133	0.131

+*p* < .10, **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

Results and Discussion

We first computed Cronbach's α coefficients for the forgiveness scale (TRIM) and the Dominance-Prestige Scale to check their internal consistency. Cronbach's α coefficients were .93, .80, and .70 for forgiveness, prestige orientation, and dominance orientation, respectively. Table 4 shows descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix of the variables of interest in Study 2. As in Study 1, the dominance and prestige orientations were weak but significantly correlated with each other ($r_{676} = .09$, $p = .024$). However, unlike Study 1 (Table 1), which included any type of workplace relationships, leaders' prestige orientation was correlated only with forgiveness ($r_{676} = .13$, $p < .001$) but not with apologetic behavior ($r_{676} = -.02$, $p = .683$). This pattern was consistent with Study 1's subsample analysis (see the upper panel, superior column in Table 3). Leaders' dominance orientation was significantly negatively correlated with forgiveness ($r_{676} = -.12$, $p = .001$), which was also significant in the subsample analysis of Study 1 (see the lower panel, superior column in Table 3). Leaders' dominance orientation was not correlated with apologetic behavior ($r_{676} = -.01$, $p = .768$), which was positive and significant in the subsample analysis of Study 1 (see the upper panel, superior column in Table 3).

To confirm the above correlation pattern, we conducted two multiple regression analyses including the participant's own gender, opponent's gender (for both gender variables: men = 1, women = 2), prestige orientation, dominance orientation, relationship value, intimacy, and opponent responsibility as the independent variables. For the subsequent regression analyses, we removed three participants who did not report their own gender or the opponent's gender. The results are summarized in Table 5. Confirming the above correlations, a Poisson regression revealed that leaders' apologetic behavior was not significantly associated with either prestige ($b = 0.002$) or dominance ($b = -0.043$). A multiple regression analysis revealed that leaders' forgiveness was significantly positively associated with prestige and significantly negatively associated with dominance.

The gender of participants in Study 2 was biased toward men (486 men vs. 190 women). Therefore, the nonsignificant correlation between prestige orientation and apologetic behavior may be unique to men (and a significant correlation may be found among women). To test this possibility, we ran comparable

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and the Correlation Matrix of the Variables of Interest in Study 2.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Dominance	3.37	0.84						
2 Prestige	4.14	0.88	.09*					
3 Apologetic behavior	1.29	1.41	-.01	-.02				
4 Forgiveness	3.10	0.83	-.12**	.13***	.27***			
5 Relationship value	6.18	2.60	.05	.06	.20***	.28***		
6 Intimacy	2.02	1.35	.12**	.18***	.18***	.18***	.22***	
7 Opponent responsibility	8.17	2.48	-.06	.21***	-.28***	-.20***	-.13***	-.14***

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

Table 5. Results of the Multiple Regression Analyses (Study 2).

Dependent variable: Apologetic behavior					
Independent variable	<i>b</i>	95% Confidence interval	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	
Own gender	0.254	[0.082, 0.426]	2.90	.004	**
Opponent gender	-0.129	[-0.290, 0.030]	1.58	.114	
Relationship value	0.067	[0.040, 0.095]	4.79	1.69×10^{-6}	***
Intimacy	0.084	[0.037, 0.131]	3.53	4.10×10^{-4}	***
Opponent responsibility	-0.105	[-0.131, -0.079]	7.80	6.02×10^{-15}	***
Dominance	-0.043	[-0.125, 0.039]	1.04	.299	
Prestige	0.002	[-0.077, 0.081]	0.06	.956	
Dependent variable: Forgiveness					
Independent variable	<i>b</i>	95% Confidence interval	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	
Own gender	-0.288	[-0.437, -0.139]	3.79	1.67×10^{-4}	***
Opponent gender	0.082	[-0.052, 0.217]	1.20	.230	
Relationship value	0.070	[0.047, 0.093]	6.06	2.23×10^{-9}	***
Intimacy	0.063	[0.018, 0.108]	2.74	0.006	**
Opponent responsibility	-0.067	[-0.091, -0.043]	5.43	7.93×10^{-8}	***
Dominance	-0.199	[-0.269, -0.128]	5.53	4.66×10^{-8}	***
Prestige	0.153	[0.085, 0.221]	4.41	1.18×10^{-5}	***

Notes. Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) was 2034.2 and 1549.1 for apologetic behavior regression and forgiveness regression, respectively.

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

regression analyses for men and women separately. The prestige orientation was not significantly associated with apologetic behavior among either men ($b = 0.005$, $SE = 0.051$, $p = .920$) or women ($b = 0.029$, $SE = 0.068$, $p = .672$), while it was significantly positively associated with forgiveness among both men ($b = 0.140$, $SE = 0.043$, $p = .001$) and women ($b = 0.184$, $SE = 0.060$, $p = .002$). The dominance orientation was not significantly associated with apologetic behavior among either men ($b = -0.076$, $SE = 0.052$, $p = .143$) or women ($b = 0.038$, $SE = 0.072$, $p = .602$), while it was significantly negatively associated with forgiveness among both men ($b = -0.216$, $SE = 0.044$, $p < .001$) and women ($b = -0.164$, $SE = 0.064$, $p = .012$). Details of the gender-separated regression analyses are available in an R Markdown HTML file on OSF (<https://osf.io/p2hnm/>).

General Discussion

Study 1 showed that prestige orientation is generally associated with conciliatory tendencies: proclivity to apologize and forgiveness (Table 2). However, when we focused on individuals who had conflicts with their subordinates (i.e., leaders in workplaces), prestige orientation was significantly associated with forgiveness but not apologetic behavior (upper panel, superior column in Table 3). Accordingly, we conducted Study 2, which recruited only participants who had conflicts with their subordinates, and confirmed the pattern observed in the subsample analysis: Leaders high in prestige orientation were more likely to forgive their subordinates but were not more likely to apologize to their subordinates than leaders low in prestige orientation.

The two studies consistently indicated that prestige-oriented leaders are more forgiving, but not necessarily more apologetic.

Note that Studies 1 and 2 assessed these associations from the leaders' perspective: how leaders' self-rated prestige orientation was associated with their forgiveness and proclivity to apologize. One might be interested in whether the same associations hold from the subordinates' perspective. In fact, we had complementary data regarding this notion.² In the complementary study, we asked participants to report their workplace leaders' apologetic behaviors and prestige/dominance orientation (see the detailed methods and results in Supplementary Material). Interestingly, subordinates attributed a higher prestige orientation to leaders who had apologized to them, showing a significant positive association between leader prestige orientation and apologetic behavior. This contradictory pattern may be due to differences in self- versus other-rated prestige orientation. As shown in Tables 1 and 4, self-rated prestige orientation was positively correlated with self-rated dominance orientation. However, as shown in Table S2 in the Supplementary Material, subordinate-rated leader prestige orientation was negatively (not positively) correlated with subordinate-rated leader dominance orientation. Such a discrepancy due to the self- versus other perspective illuminates a limitation of this study (or studies relying on self-reported measures in general). In future studies, we need to take such perspective differences into consideration to deepen our understanding of the relationships between leadership styles and conciliatory tendencies.

The other results were generally consistent with previous studies. Confirming the valuable relationships hypothesis, relationship value predicted both forgiveness (e.g., Burnette et al., 2012; McCullough et al., 2010, 2014; Smith et al., 2020) and apologetic behavior (Ohtsubo & Yagi, 2015). Positive correlations between intimacy and reconciliatory tendencies were also consistent with previous studies (e.g., Donovan & Priester,

2017; Karremans et al., 2011; Ohtsubo & Yagi, 2015; Smith et al., 2020; see Fehr et al., 2010, for a meta-analytic review). Respondents who attributed greater responsibility for the conflict to the opponent were less likely to forgive the opponent, which is consistent with previous studies emphasizing the role of perceived offender responsibility in the forgiveness process (e.g., Bennett & Earwaker, 1994; Schumann & Dweck, 2014; see also Fehr et al., 2010, for a meta-analytic review). The effect of responsibility on apologetic behavior also makes sense because definitions of apology often include acknowledgment or acceptance of responsibility as a core element (e.g., Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Scher & Darley, 1997).

It is noteworthy that, although the effects of the aforementioned situational variables (e.g., relationship value of the opponent, opponent's responsibility) were mostly consistent across Studies 1 and 2, the effect of prestige orientation on apologetic behavior became nonsignificant when we specifically asked participants about their apologetic behaviors toward their subordinates (Study 2). Given that participants in Study 2 were leaders in their organizations, they may have already established leader–member exchange relationships with each of their subordinates (e.g., Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), and the quality of those relationships, compared to individual differences in prestige orientation, may have been a stronger determinant of whether to apologize to them.

In addition, the effect of gender was puzzling. Gender tended not to be significantly correlated with forgiveness and apology (when it was, the correlations were weak) in previous studies (e.g., Ohtsubo et al., 2019; Ohtsubo & Yagi, 2015; Smith et al., 2020). Study 1 corroborated these previous findings: Gender was not associated with either apologetic behavior or forgiveness, regardless of whether the entire sample or subsamples were analyzed. However, in Study 2, compared to male leaders, female leaders were significantly more likely to apologize to their subordinates, whereas they were significantly less likely to forgive their subordinates. Whether such a peculiar gender difference in fact exists among leader behavior (or if it is merely an instance of Type I error) needs to be scrutinized in future studies.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations to this study. First, the present study does not explain why the formal leadership position discourages prestige-oriented individuals from apologizing to their subordinates. It is important to note that prestige and dominance strategies can be employed by individuals who are currently not in a high-status position but would like to attain high status (i.e., who want to control desirable resources). In fact, Study 1 measured the prestige and dominance orientations of individuals who were not in a formal leadership position. The results of Study 1 indicated that individuals high in prestige orientation were both more apologetic and forgiving. However, as shown in Study 2, once prestige-oriented individuals were in a formal leadership position, they were no longer more apologetic than individuals low in prestige orientation. Admittedly, the

present study does not explain this discrepancy. Future studies need to address how the formal leadership position changes prestige-oriented individuals' motivations.

The second limitation is that the results regarding dominance orientation were inconsistent. This is, by the way, associated with the merit of empirical studies: The lack of support for the hypotheses regarding dominance orientation clearly shows that even some intuitive hypotheses may be refuted by empirical data. In fact, although one may naturally expect that dominance-oriented individuals, who are known to be more aggressive, are less conciliatory, this was not the case. What we observed was rather inconsistency in the results—not only nonsignificant results but also an opposite result. Such inconsistency suggests that dominance orientation does not entail specific behavioral tactics but rather general motivation toward high status. In other words, individuals high in dominance orientation may be flexible in choosing behavioral tactics to attain high status. In fact, coalition formation, which allows less formidable individuals to attain high status, is common in animals, whose status is considered to be based on a dominance hierarchy (Harcourt & de Waal, 1992). If dominance-oriented individuals are more flexible in terms of conciliatory tactics in the face of interpersonal conflicts, the observed inconsistency makes sense. Future studies need to examine whether the dominance strategy is associated with more flexible behavioral tactics than are typically conceptualized (i.e., physical formidability and aggression).

An intriguing question whether the reported pattern is unique to the Japanese sample. Although some scholars have pointed out possible cultural differences in conciliatory tendencies (e.g., Hook et al., 2009), there are studies reporting cross-cultural consistency (e.g., Ohtsubo et al., 2012, 2019; Smith et al., 2020). If the dominance strategy is flexible (as we discussed above), it is reasonable to expect that the behavioral manifestation of the dominance strategy is more malleable due to the influence of cultural norms. Therefore, future studies need to examine the association between prestige/dominance orientation and conciliatory behaviors in different cultural contexts.

Conclusion

In summary, this research added to the dominance/prestige literature by demonstrating that compared to individuals low in prestige orientation, individuals high in prestige orientation are generally more apologetic and forgiving. However, one exception was that organizational leaders high in prestige orientation were no more apologetic than their low prestige-oriented counterparts. We may better understand the dynamics of status attainment by more fully examining such asymmetries (i.e., forgiveness–apology asymmetry and leader–subordinate asymmetry) in future studies.

Data Availability

All data sets and R codes in the R Markdown HTML format are available from the Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/p2hnm/>).

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.


Ethical Approval

Study 1 as well as studies reported in the Supplementary Material (pilot study, complementary study) were approved by the ethics committee at the Graduate School of Humanities, Kobe University (2016-04, 2017-05, 2018-03). Study 2 was approved by the ethics committee at the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo (UTSP-21029).

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ORCID iD

Yohsuke Ohtsubo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2074-0244>

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. It is important to note that the effectiveness of the two strategies does not directly correspond to any conceptualizations of effective leadership in the field of organizational psychology (Yukl, 2012). Regardless of differences in the conceptualizations of effective leadership, such as transformational leadership or task-/relationship-oriented leadership, the ultimate goal of effective leadership is to enhance organizational outcomes (e.g., to improve work performance, to heighten job satisfaction and to lower rates of turnover and absenteeism). In contrast, because the prestige/dominance dichotomy originated from evolutionary theory, it is assumed that either strategy, if successfully implemented, enhances individual fitness. For example, dominance-oriented individuals may employ aggressive tactics to forcibly acquire desirable resources. However, aggression is not a legitimate tactic to use in organizational contexts and is unlikely to enhance organizational outcomes. Despite such differences in theoretical backgrounds, Case and Maner (2017) proposed a version of contingency theory of leadership (Oc, 2018) based on the dominance/prestige dichotomy. According to Case and Maner, the dominance-oriented leadership style fits situations where clear direction is needed so that groups can move swiftly, whereas the prestige-oriented leadership style is suitable for situations where teams prioritize innovation and creativity and relatively egalitarian relationships exist among members. In the broader context of contingency theory, the dominance and prestige strategies may correspond to the situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977) whereby a leadership style is characterized by directiveness (which corresponds to the dominance strategy) and supportiveness (which corresponds to the prestige strategy).
2. This complementary study was originally conducted as a follow-up study of Study 1. However, in retrospect, we admit that it was not well designed because it changed the methodological feature of Study 1: Prestige orientation was measured as an other-rated variable but not a self-rated variable. Accordingly, we were unable to derive a strong conclusion concerning the effect of prestige

orientation on apologetic behavior. Therefore, we conducted Study 2 after the follow-up study.

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