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Daily mistrust: A resource perspective and its implications for work and home

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Abstract

Mistrust is a daily occurrence at work. Yet little is known about how perceptions of being mistrusted by coworkers may affect employees' subsequent daily attitudes and behaviors. Indeed, the existing literature on mistrust has overwhelmingly focused on how mistrust affects the trustor (person whose trust is violated) but not the trustee (the mistrusted person). This is problematic because conservation of resources theory (COR) suggests that perceived mistrust is a negative experience likely to affect the mistrusted employees' subsequent attitudes and behaviors both at work and at home. To investigate this possibility, we conducted an experience sampling study of employees and their significant others over 3 consecutive workweeks. Consistent with COR, day by day perceptions of mistrust increased employees' emotional exhaustion, consequently leading to withdrawal from colleagues at work and conflict toward their significant other at home. Moreover, supporting self-enhancement (rather than self-verification) theory, these effects were stronger when employees perceived mistrust to be high (vs. low) in justification. We discuss theoretical and practical implications of this research.

Trust is essential to working relationships because employees depend on each other for information, advice, and help as they navigate the uncertainty of their work environment. Trust, however, is fragile and can be easily broken. For example, research suggests that trust can be broken by actual misbehavior, by simple accusations, and even by imagined transgressions (Kim, Cooper, Dirks, & Ferrin, 2013). Attesting to trust's vulnerable nature, recent polls suggest that 25%–66% of U.S. employees experience mistrust at work (APA, 2014; Atkins, 2014; Cass, 2013). Mistrust,[1] which is conceptualized as negative expectations about others' intentions and behavior (e.g., Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998; Mcknight, Cummings, & Chervany, 1998), is thus "an everyday occurrence in most organizations" (Kim et al., 2013, p. 1). For this reason, scholars have paid considerable attention to the implications of mistrust at work (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Kim, Dirks, Cooper, & Ferrin, 2006; Tomlinson, Dineen, & Lewicki, 2004).

The existing literature on mistrust, however, has overwhelmingly focused on its implications for trustors (persons whose trust is violated; Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004; Kramer & Lewicki, 2010; Schweitzer, Hershey, & Bradlow,

2006; Tomlinson et al., 2004). The implications of perceived mistrust for trustees (persons who feel mistrusted), on the other hand, have received far less attention. The relatively scant attention paid to the plight of employees who feel mistrusted seems to suggest that their attitudes and behaviors are somehow already evident, and/or are of less significance than those whose trust is violated. Furthermore, existing research has treated perceptions of mistrust as bounded within specific interactions and thus unlikely to last or to permeate social contexts (e.g., Brodt & Neville, 2013). We challenge these positions by arguing that the experience of being mistrusted is both theoretically important and practically relevant for trustees, that its effects are long lasting through the day, and that it is consequential for behaviors both at work and at home. Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to answer the questions: (a) What are the behavioral implications of daily mistrust at work and home? (b) Why do these effects occur? (c) When are these effects more or less pronounced?

To address these questions, we propose an integrative and dynamic theoretical framework informed by conservation of resources (COR; Hobfoll, 2001), self-enhancement (Baumeister, 1998; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005), and self-verification theories (Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Swann, Hixon, Steinseroussi, & Gilbert, 1990). Whereas COR speaks more directly to *how* and *why* mistrust might consume resources and impact subsequent behavior at the day level, self-enhancement and self-verification theories speak to *when* such effects may be more or less pronounced. COR posits that stressful daily work events consume employee resources. There are reasons to expect that daily mistrust is such a stressful event, given that mistrust can threaten employees' workplace standing (e.g., Cho, 2006; Zak, 2008). Moreover, mistrust is likely to interfere with an employee's ability to accrue valuable resources from coworkers such as respect, information, or cooperation (Kim, Dirks, & Cooper, 2009; Lount, Zhong, Sivanathan, & Murnighan, 2008). Accordingly, employees must devote resources to understanding why mistrust has occurred in the first place and how it might be avoided in the future.

Our integrative theoretical framework suggests that the resource-consuming nature of daily mistrust is likely to have ramifications for employee behaviors both at work and at home. We expect that resource consumption will influence employee behaviors in both domains, but that the type of behavior will differ between the two contexts. Our expectations are informed by COR and other resource theories. Specifically, COR's *Principle 4* (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018) suggests that people become defensive and aggressive in their attempts to protect the self after resource loss. Although COR does not specify contexts in which defensive versus aggressive behaviors are more likely, other resource theories suggest that people can be strategic in their efforts to manage remaining resources when faced with resource loss (e.g., Kruglanski et al., 2012; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003). That is, although resource loss hinders an individual's ability to effectively self-regulate in general (Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993; Johnson, Lanaj, & Barnes, 2014), resource-depleted individuals may respond differently in contexts where they have high motivation and incentives to self-regulate (Muraven & Slessareva, 2003).

Considering the relatively greater incentives to self-regulate in the work domain and the potential costs associated with failures to do so (e.g., Schilpzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016), we predict that emotional exhaustion would lead mistrusted parties to withdraw at work, so as to preserve their remaining resources. As COR argues, resource-depleted people's primary concern is to avoid further loss (Holmgreen, Tirone, Gerhart, & Hobfoll, 2017), which often translates to enactment of avoidant-type behaviors because these protect resources rather than proactive behaviors because these consume resources (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014; Koopman, Lanaj, & Scott, 2016a). Indeed, Hobfoll et al. (2018, p. 106) specifically discussed withdrawal as a defensive mechanism, noting that "withdrawal allows time to regroup or to wait for help, or it allows the stressor to pass."

However, given the relatively weaker incentives to self-regulate in the home domain, we predict that emotional exhaustion would lead to conflict with one's significant other at home as mistrusted parties are less willing or able to restrain their more impulsive tendencies in this context. The home is inherently safer, and exhausted employees may feel less inhibited and more likely to express antagonism toward their significant other. This argument is consistent with research demonstrating that stress experienced in one domain (e.g., work) can spill over to another domain (e.g., home; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) as well as research on displaced aggression (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985).

Self-enhancement and self-verification theories, furthermore, suggest that the ramifications of daily mistrust will likely depend on whether or not mistrust was perceived to be justified. These theories, however, diverge in their
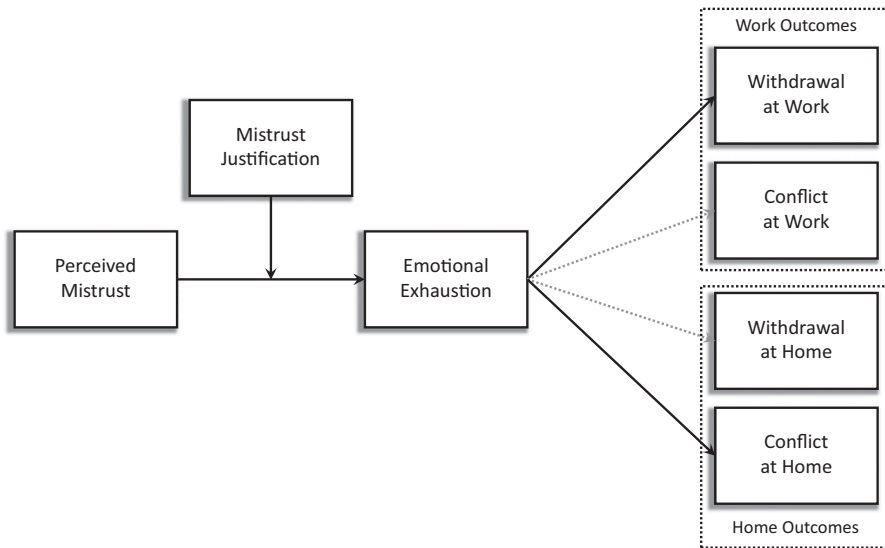
FIGURE 1 Conceptual model

Note: Our theory suggests that emotional exhaustion will be associated with withdrawal at work and conflict at home (represented by solid arrows). As a stronger test of this theory, we also include conflict at work and withdrawal at home (represented by dashed arrows), which we expect not to be associated with emotional exhaustion.

predictions for the form of this moderation. Self-verification theory posits that, when perceived to be justified, mistrust reinforces one's self-views and ought to be less problematic for employees' subsequent attitudes and behaviors. This is because even negative, but self-verifying, evaluations would reduce anxiety by confirming one's self-concept (Talaifar & Swann, 2017). Thus, viewed from the lens of self-verification theory, the perception that mistrust is high in justification may be less resource taxing and detrimental for trustees than the perception that mistrust is low in justification.

In contrast, self-enhancement theory posits that if mistrust is perceived to be justified, the resulting stress may be intensified as trustees struggle to maintain a positive self-view. This is problematic because, according to this theory, people generally desire to maintain positive self-evaluations in interpersonal contexts (Baumeister, 1998; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005). Thus, viewed from the lens of self-enhancement theory, the perception that mistrust is high in justification may be more resource consuming and detrimental for employees than the perception that mistrust is low in justification. Given these two divergent perspectives, we explore which theory holds in our context as research questions. We test our hypotheses and research questions in an experience sampling study of employees and their significant others whom we surveyed for three consecutive workweeks. Figure 1 depicts our conceptual model.

Through this inquiry, our work makes several important contributions to literatures on mistrust, conservation of resources theory, self-enhancement and self-verification theories, and work–family conflict. We are among the first to study perceptions of being mistrusted from the perspective of the mistrusted party at the day level. As such, we test theory about how, why, and when perceived mistrust at work is problematic and therefore provide a rich understanding of a prevalent but understudied phenomenon at work (e.g., Whetten, 1989).

Furthermore, we expand the focus of COR in two key ways. First, we identify perceived mistrust as a stressful work event that has resource implications for employees. Doing so addresses calls for a more focused examination of resource-consuming work events and their downstream effects on employee behaviors (e.g., Halbesleben et al., 2014). Second, we integrate insights from other resource theories (e.g., Kruglanski et al., 2012; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003) to posit that resource loss may manifest in different behaviors in contexts associated with dissimilar incentives for

self-regulation (e.g., work vs. home). Doing so responds to a recent call by Hobfoll et al. (2018) for integrating COR with other resource theories in order to better understand how resource loss unfolds over time.

We also examine research questions informed by self-verification versus self-enhancement theories and thereby offer implications for these perspectives. In particular, we reveal how strivings for self-enhancement may be more relevant than strivings for self-verification in our study, perhaps because of the risks associated with perceived mistrust at work (e.g., Kwang & Swann, 2010). Finally, we show that perceived mistrust is long lasting and permeates social contexts as evidenced by conflict enacted towards one's significant other at home in the evening.

1 | THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

1.1 | The nature of mistrust

By defining mistrust as negative expectations about others' intentions and behavior, this construct can be distinguished from trust, which concerns *positive* expectations about others' intentions and behavior (Lewicki et al., 1998). Though this difference might lead to the impression that trust and mistrust represent two ends of the same continuum, researchers have observed that they actually represent two distinct dimensions wherein each can range from high to low (or entirely absent). More specifically, Lewicki et al. (1998) theorized that there may be cases where trust and mistrust are both high (i.e., when there are reasons for both positive and negative expectations, such as when the trustee is considered dependable in some arenas but undependable in others), other cases where trust and mistrust are both low (i.e., when there are neither positive nor negative expectations, such as when trustors lack any knowledge about the trustee), and still other cases when the levels of these expectations differ from one another. In support of this reasoning, several studies provide empirical support for the notion that mistrust is distinct from trust (e.g., Clark & Payne, 1997; Constantinople, 1969; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991).[2] The notion that trust and mistrust represent two distinct dimensions ultimately underscores how the presence of mistrust does not necessarily entail that the level of trust be either low or high and highlights the need to investigate each dimension's independent implications (i.e., as past research has done by focusing on the implications of trust and as the present research seeks to do by focusing on the implications of mistrust).

Mistrust has been observed to arise from a variety of concerns, such as from the belief that another does not have one's best interests at heart, that s/he will not behave in a capable or responsible manner, and even that s/he may enact harmful behaviors towards others (Lewicki et al., 1998). Moreover, research suggests that mistrust can arise not only from a trustee's actual untrustworthy behaviors but also from rumors or groundless allegations (Kim et al., 2009). Thus, one does not need to have been untrustworthy or to be directly confronted by a trustor to become the target of mistrust; trustees may be mistrusted even when it is not deserved and without the trustee realizing that mistrust has occurred. Likewise, because mistrust is an inherently subjective experience (Brodt & Neville, 2013), it is possible that trustees may feel mistrusted even when trustors do not hold that view. This is because trustees ultimately perform their own evaluations of whether mistrust exists (e.g., based on their evaluations of interactions with coworkers on a given day at work), and such evaluations may differ from those of trustors in numerous ways (e.g., due to differences in the availability of information, how they perceive the situation, or how they interpret specific events). Thus, we focus exclusively on perceptions of mistrust from the perspective of trustees because we aim to understand how these trustee perceptions affect their subsequent attitudes and behaviors.

1.2 | The resource consuming effects of perceived mistrust

As an integrative theory of stress, COR pays specific attention to the internal processes associated with stressful events in ways that inform our expectations for how perceived mistrust will affect employees' subsequent resources. Perceived mistrust represents a stressful work event because employees recognize that mistrust can hinder their ability to obtain valuable resources from coworkers such as respect, information, or cooperation (Kim et al., 2009; Lount

et al., 2008). Drawing on COR, we expect that perceived mistrust may result in emotional exhaustion, which represents a deficit in employees' internal resources (Baer et al., 2015; Halbesleben et al., 2014; Koopman et al., 2016). Indeed, "One of the assumptions underlying COR is that emotional exhaustion reflects a state of depleted resources" (Kammeyer-Mueller, Simon, & Judge, 2016, p. 563). Thus, consistent with COR and Kruglanski and coauthors' cognitive energetics theory (2012, p. 5), we conceptualize resources as "exhaustible self-regulatory resources that are generally applicable to goal pursuit….They include but are not limited to physical and mental energy."

Perceived mistrust is likely to consume resources because it represents an adverse experience that jeopardizes people's social standing at work (e.g., Cho, 2006; Zak, 2008). Employees generally want to be considered trustworthy (Kim et al., 2009), but this desire is threatened when they feel mistrusted by their coworkers. This threat may occur because mistrusted employees believe they are viewed with skepticism, cynicism, wariness, and vigilance by others at work (e.g., Bijlsma-Frankema, Sitkin, & Weibel, 2015; Lewicki et al., 1998). Indeed, research suggests that perceptions of such critical reactions from coworkers may motivate effortful (i.e., resource consuming; Lilius, 2012) self-reflection because people try to make sense of the feelings and behaviors of critical others in attempts to determine how to respond (Servaas et al., 2013). Thus, employees who feel mistrusted are likely to spend considerable cognitive effort reflecting on the situation and determining how to respond in both the short and long term (e.g., Wang et al., 2013).

Furthermore, recent theory on interactions characterized by mistrust suggests that mistrust tends to be associated with pervasive feelings of rumination and hypervigilance (e.g., Bijlsma-Frankema et al., 2015; Chan & McAllister, 2014; Lewicki et al., 1998). The resulting apprehension and unease inherent to feeling mistrusted, therefore, may render this experience cognitively and emotionally demanding for trustees (e.g., Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). This is likely the case because employees strive to connect to others at work each day via positive social interactions (e.g., Lanaj, Johnson, & Lee, 2016a). The experience of mistrust, however, may frustrate an employees' ability to connect to others because it may lead to suspicion, stigma, and social exclusion, which are resource draining (Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Twenge, 2005; Inzlicht, Mckay, & Aronson, 2006; Kramer, 1999; Lount et al., 2008). Thus, instead of focusing on energizing work events such as making progress on work tasks or engaging in positive interactions with coworkers, employees who feel mistrusted may relive mistrust-related events and continue to scan their environment for further signs of trouble. Doing so is likely to be depleting because rumination and management of adverse work events consume resources (Donahue et al., 2012; Zohar, Tzischinski, & Epstein, 2003). COR and the arguments presented thus far suggest that feeling mistrusted will consume resources as reflected in emotional exhaustion. Hence, we expect the following:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived mistrusted is associated with an increase in emotional exhaustion.

1.3 | The work and home consequences of emotional exhaustion

According to COR, once resources are consumed, individuals' primary response is to adopt a protective posture toward their remaining resources in attempts to minimize future resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989; 1998). Specifically, COR's *Principle 4* states that "When people's resources are outstretched or exhausted, they enter a defensive mode to protect the self which is often defensive, aggressive, and may become irrational" (Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 106). Hobfoll et al. write that *Principle 4* is "the least researched principle of COR theory but one that has high explanatory power." We test this principle by mapping work withdrawal to the "defensive" mode and conflict at home to the "aggressive" mode that this theory recognizes as potential outcomes of resource loss. We consider withdrawal at work and conflict at home as two equivalent dependent variables because COR's *Principle 4* (Hobfoll et al., 2018) suggests defensive (e.g., withdrawal) and aggressive (e.g., conflict) behaviors to be equally probable responses to resource loss. We expect that emotional exhaustion will result in withdrawal at work (but not conflict) and conflict at home (but not withdrawal).

We expect these differential effects because several resource theories recognize that employee responses to resource loss can vary based on their motivation (e.g., Kruglanski et al., 2012; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003). Under conditions of high motivation and incentives to self-regulate, even depleted employees may attempt to avoid behaving impulsively and to control their behavior (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003), suggesting that in

high motivation contexts employees may "dig deep" and find sufficient resources to avoid acting impulsively by instead simply withdrawing from others. We, therefore, predict that emotional exhaustion due to experienced mistrust may result in different behaviors in the work versus home domain, as these two contexts are associated with differing incentives to self-regulate.

The work environment represents a context where incentives to self-regulate can be higher than in the home domain because negative norm-violating behaviors have potentially higher costs when enacted at work (e.g., losing reputation; Moran, Diefendorff, & Greguras, 2013). Indeed as Wharton and Erickson (1993, pp. 462–463) stated: "One important difference between work and family emotion management is that the latter is less directly governed by external groups or organizations." Thus, consistent with COR, we expect that when employees are exhausted, their inclination at work will be to protect their remaining resources by withdrawing, because enactment of positive approach-type behaviors at work would require resources that they lack (due to depletion) and the enactment of negative approach-type behaviors is costly (e.g., Barnes, Lucianetti, Bhave, & Christian, 2015; Gabriel, Koopman, Rosen, & Johnson, 2018; Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Koopman et al., 2016; Lam, Huang, & Janssen, 2010; Trougakos, Beal, Cheng, Hideg, & Zweig, 2015).

Withdrawal refers to separating oneself physically and psychologically from others at work (Nifadkar, Tsui, & Ashforth, 2012; Pelled & Xin, 1999). Interactions with coworkers—whether collaborative or challenging—demand resources (Finkel et al., 2006; Lanaj, Johnson, & Wang, 2016b), and employees who are exhausted are likely to avoid interactions with others in attempts to prevent further resource loss. Indeed, because emotional exhaustion often implies being "overextended and drained by one's contact with other people" (Leiter & Maslach, 1988, p. 297), COR predicts that exhausted employees will avoid such interactions in an attempt to protect their remaining resources (Hobfoll, 1989; 1998). Employees who are drained because they felt mistrust may be particularly inclined to avoid coworkers because of the emotional labor required to repress the negative emotions or distress associated with the perceived mistrust (e.g., Scott & Barnes, 2011). For these reasons, we expect the following:

> **Hypothesis 2:** Emotional exhaustion is positively associated with withdrawal from others at work.

At home, however, the incentives for self-regulation are diminished because the home environment feels inherently safer for self-expression and interpersonal risk-taking (Grandey & Krannitz, 2016; Lively & Powell, 2006). Thus, although aggression is seemingly irrational (Hobfoll et al., 2018) at work, it may unfortunately be less so at home. Lashing out, or otherwise being antagonistic with one's spouse is unlikely to seem as immediately problematic and costly to employees as this behavior would be toward one's supervisor or coworkers. Furthermore, depleted employees lack sufficient resources to self-regulate effectively in interpersonal contexts (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993; Johnson et al., 2014) and may struggle to restrain impulsive tendencies (e.g., lashing out at others) in environments associated with laxer incentives to self-regulate.

We expect emotional exhaustion to increase daily conflict towards significant others at home, which refers to argumentative expressions of dislike and disapproval (Abbey, Abramis, & Caplan, 1985). Although emotionally exhausted employees have diminished self-control and fewer resources to remain mindful of others' feelings and viewpoints in both the work and home contexts (e.g., Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), the incentives for self-regulation are lower at home. Thus, unlike at work, employees may be less motivated to restrain their more aggressive and negative reactions at home, and as such may be more likely to experience conflict with a significant other (DeWall, Baumeister, Stillman, & Gailliot, 2007; Gino, Schweitzer, Mead, & Ariely, 2011; Stucke & Baumeister, 2006). There is some evidence to support these expectations from the displaced aggression literature (e.g., Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). For example, in line with the idea that emotionally exhausted employees have fewer resources to attend to family roles and are less motivated to self-regulate effectively, Greenbaum et al. (2014) found that emotional exhaustion predicted work–family conflict. Similarly, Liu et al. (2015) found that emotional exhaustion due to work was associated with displaced aggression towards family members in the evening. Consistent with these arguments and findings we expect:

> **Hypothesis 3:** Emotional exhaustion is positively associated with conflict towards one's significant other at home.

The arguments that we presented thus far suggest that feeling mistrusted at work is associated with emotional exhaustion, which in turn prompts withdrawal at work and conflict at home. Mistrust is expected to prompt these behavioral reactions by consuming the trustees' resources because it represents an adverse and stressful experience that potentially threatens trustees' reputation, status, access to information, help, and guidance from others (e.g., Dirks & Skarlicki, 2009; Kim et al., 2009; Lewicki et al., 1998). Several studies in the work–family conflict domain support the idea that workplace stressors like felt mistrust may evoke emotional exhaustion, which then leads to withdrawal from the offending context at work (e.g., Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & Harris, 2014) but an inability to engage properly and to restrain from conflict at home (e.g., Greenbaum, Quade, Mawritz, Kim, & Crosby, 2014; Ilies, Huth, Ryan, & Dimotakis, 2015; Krannitz, Grandey, Liu, & Almeida, 2015). Consistent with these arguments, we expect that emotional exhaustion will mediate the association between perceived mistrust and withdrawal at work and conflict at home. Hence, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 4: Emotional exhaustion mediates the effects of perceived mistrust on (a) withdrawal at work and (b) conflict toward one's significant other at home.

1.4 | Mistrust justification as a moderator: Self-verification versus self-enhancement perspectives

The integration of COR with theories of self-verification and self-enhancement further suggests that the effects of perceived mistrust on resource consumption and downstream behaviors will also likely depend on the nature of that mistrust. In particular, we look at mistrust justification, which refers to trustees' beliefs that the mistrust they perceived from others was valid, as a particularly relevant feature of such experiences. Unlike other negative behaviors at work, which tend to violate social norms and have ambiguous intentions (e.g., experienced incivility, Andersson & Pearson, 1999), mistrust conveys information about one's standing at work. Feeling mistrusted implies that the focal person may have violated behavioral expectations for how he or she should have behaved at work. Thus, unlike uncivil behavior, which is overwhelmingly considered inappropriate and unwarranted (e.g., Andersson & Pearson, 1999), mistrust can more readily be considered either justified or unjustified depending, for example, on whether the mistrusted party feels responsible or not for the perceived violation. For these reasons, we examine the potential implications of self-verification and self-enhancement theories for such beliefs, because they offer competing arguments for the moderating effects of mistrust justification (e.g., Swann et al., 1990).

Specifically, the self-verification view posits that people want to be seen as they see themselves, even if their self-views are negative (Talaifar & Swann, 2017). According to the self-verification perspective, people are preoccupied with maintaining their current self-view, regardless of whether it is positive or negative. This theory suggests that even negative self-perceptions (e.g., information about one's weaknesses or flaws) may prove adaptive and informative in social interactions (Swann, 2012). On the other hand, the self-enhancement perspective posits that people are preoccupied with maintaining or increasing the positivity of their self-concept and decreasing the negativity of their self-concept (Sedikides & Strube, 1997). According to the self-enhancement perspective, people want to reduce uncertainty about their self-concept and ensure that they maximize the positivity of their sense of self.

Thus, viewed through the lens of self-verification theory, mistrust that is perceived to be high in justification ought to be less aversive than mistrust that is perceived to be low in justification. Research on self-verification suggests that the belief that mistrust is warranted would confirm trustees' negative self-perceptions and be less likely to consume resources (e.g., Swann, 2012). Indeed, the theory predicts that even the elicitation of negative but self-verifying evaluations from others "helps keep anxiety at bay" because it confirms one's self-concept (Talaifar & Swann, 2017, p. 4). As such, the experience of mistrust that is high in justification would be more likely to affirm the employee's self-view and not prompt resource-intensive compensatory efforts, rendering it less exhausting (e.g., Swann & Brooks, 2012). Conversely, if perceived mistrust is low in justification, it goes counter to one's self-view, enhancing its emotional tax. As a result, trustees are likely to feel more of an identity strain following mistrust they perceive to be unjustified than mistrust they perceive to be justified. Given that greater identity strain has been found to be aversive (e.g., Kraimer, Shaffer, Harrison, & Ren, 2012), mistrust that is perceived to be low in justification should be more emotionally

exhausting. COR and other resource theories suggest that the processing of such aversive and stressful emotional states is particularly resource depleting for employees (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005; Hobfoll, Shoham, & Ritter, 1991; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Thus, the self-verification perspective suggests that the association between mistrust and emotional exhaustion would be weaker when employees perceive mistrust justification to be high (vs. low).

In contrast, viewed through the lens of self-enhancement theory, mistrust that is perceived to be high in justification should be more emotionally taxing as it may pose a greater threat to the trustees' desire to maintain a positive self-view, reputation, and standing within their group. Research on self-enhancement suggests that people want to maintain a positive self-view (Sedikides & Strube, 1997). If so, trustees are likely to perceive a greater threat to their positive self-image and thus feel more emotionally exhausted when the experienced mistrust is considered to be justified versus unjustified. Indeed, research on self-enhancement suggests that information that is accurate and self-descriptive, but threatening to one's self-concept, leads to aversive emotional states (Swann, Griffin, Predmore, & Gaines, 1987), whose management consumes resources (Beal et al., 2005). Trustees may also see themselves as deserving blame for the actions that caused others to mistrust them, and self-blame renders an experience particularly stressful and depleting. For example, there is evidence that self-blaming attributions following negative social interactions elicit ruminative processes more quickly and cause more stress because targets work harder to formulate behavioral strategies that will resolve the conflict (Schilpzand, Leavitt, & Lim, 2016). Conversely, when employees believe that experienced mistrust is low in justification, they may make fewer internal attributions, engage in less self-blaming, and experience fewer negative emotions. Consequently, when experienced mistrust is low (vs. high) in justification, employees may suffer less from the ego-threatening and resource-depleting nature of experienced mistrust (e.g., Deng & Leung, 2014).

These notions, thus, suggest that mistrust perceived to be justified should be more aversive and unfavorable to the self because it violates the desire for self-enhancement. Moreover, whereas unjustified mistrust may be perceived to be easily remedied (e.g., the trustee can deny wrongdoing or explain a potential miscommunication), justified mistrust is likely to require more thoughtful planning on how to rectify the situation (Kim et al., 2009). Self-enhancement theory suggests that individuals who experience such signs of social disapproval will revisit the mistrust-inducing episode in their minds in attempts to identify corrective strategies that will help the mistrusted employee to regain social standing or to avoid relapses in the future. Such ruminative processes and thought exercises require more dedication and effort and thus consume more resources (Wang et al., 2013). Indeed, social information about aversive events can lead to more cognitive processing than information about positive or neutral events (Ditto & Lopez, 1992). Thus, the self-enhancement perspective suggests that the association between perceived mistrust and emotional exhaustion would be stronger when employees perceive mistrust justification to be high (vs. low). Because both theoretical perspectives are plausible, we pose the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Is the association between perceived mistrust and emotional exhaustion consistent with the self-verification perspective and therefore weaker when employees perceive mistrust-justification to be high (vs. low)?

Research Question 2: Is the association between perceived mistrust and emotional exhaustion consistent with the self-enhancement perspective and therefore stronger when employees perceive mistrust-justification to be high (vs. low)?

As these research questions suggest, perceived mistrust justification is likely to moderate the indirect effects of perceived mistrust on withdrawal at work and conflict at home via emotional exhaustion. Self-verification theory posits that high mistrust justification will weaken the indirect effects of perceived mistrust on withdrawal at work and conflict at home because this negative experience confirms self-views and violates one's self-concept to a lesser extent than does low mistrust justification. In contrast, self-enhancement theory suggests that high mistrust justification will strengthen the indirect effects of perceived mistrust on withdrawal at work and conflict at home because such perceptions further violate people's desire to maintain positive self-views at work. For these reasons, we also tested moderated mediation.

2 | METHOD

2.1 | Sample

Our sample included 60 full-time employees and their spouses/significant others. The focal employees worked at a large Midwestern university, in local governments, and in private companies. These employees held a variety of positions in their organizations (e.g., clerical, administrative, and professional positions), and examples of their job titles included secretary, analyst, tax consultant, administrator, chef, and account manager. Employees worked an average of 41.81 hours per week ($SD = 4.80$) and their average age was 43.42 years ($SD = 11.23$). Fifty-one employees identified as female, 49 identified as Caucasian, four as African American, three as Hispanic, three as Asian, and one declined to answer. The average age of spouses/significant others was 45.61 years ($SD = 12.13$). Fifty of the spouses/significant others identified as male, nine identified as female, and one declined to answer. Forty-six identified as Caucasian, six as African American, five as Hispanic, and three as Asian.

2.2 | Procedure

We emailed potential participants a recruitment survey, which included the consent form that described the study, and requested their participation and that of a spouse/significant other with whom they cohabitated. We allowed employees to forward the recruitment e-mail to additional friends and/or colleagues who may be interested in participating. We provided no additional compensation to employees who forwarded the recruitment e-mail, and we recruited 12 additional employees in this manner. The inclusion criteria for focal employees were that they must work full-time and cohabitate with a spouse or significant other who was willing to participate in the study. Because employment status was not germane to spouses' ability to rate their significant other's behavior at home, we did not require any additional inclusion criteria.

We collected data from both focal employees and their spouses/significant others using online surveys hosted on Qualtrics.com. The data collection included two phases. First, we sent focal employees a one-time survey approximately one week before the start of the daily portion of the study. This survey included questions about demographics. Second, employees and their spouses/significant others participated in a series of daily surveys over 3 consecutive workweeks. During this portion of the study, we sent three surveys each day (a morning survey, a mid-day survey, and an afternoon survey) to focal employees, and we sent spouses/significant others one survey each evening. In exchange for their participation, we compensated focal employees up to $80, and we compensated the spouses/significant others up to $30.

Sixty-seven employees responded to our initial recruitment email. Of these individuals, 65 also provided contact information for their spouse/significant other. Three of the original 67 employees did not take part in the daily portion of the study, and 3 more dropped out of the study after completing only 1 or 2 days of surveys. One employee did not complete a sufficient number of daily surveys and was excluded from the analyses (e.g., da Motta Veiga & Gabriel, 2016; Gabriel et al., 2018). Our final sample consisted of 60 employees who provided 797 day-level observations (88%). From 58 spouses/significant others of those 60 employees, we obtained 650 responses out of a possible 900 (72%).

On average, employees began their morning survey at 8:24 AM. This survey contained the measure of start-of-day emotional exhaustion to be used as a baseline control in our analyses to model change (e.g., Glomb, Bhave, Miner, & Wall, 2011; Scott & Barnes, 2011). This is an important aspect of our study design because it partials out potential explanations for emotional exhaustion that could have occurred before the workday started (Lanaj, Johnson, & Barnes, 2014) and also helps to alleviate concerns over the causal direction of our hypotheses.

We emailed employees a link to the time 2 survey at the midpoint of their workday (i.e., at or before their lunch break). On average, employees began this survey at 11:35 AM. The average time between the times 1 and 2 surveys was 3 hours and 20 minutes. This survey included daily assessments of mistrust, mistrust justification, interpersonal justice, and time 2 emotional exhaustion (our mediator). We e-mailed employees the time 3 (afternoon) survey near the end of their workday and asked them to complete the survey shortly before leaving work. On average, employees

began this survey at 4:34 PM. The average time between the times 2 and 3 surveys was 4 hours and 19 minutes. We measured withdrawal and conflict at work in this survey. Finally, we emailed a survey to spouses/significant others each evening. On average, they began this survey at 7:29 PM. In this survey, spouses/significant others rated the focal employees' withdrawal and expressed conflict that evening at home.

2.3 | Study measures

Items for all measures were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Following recommendations from Beal (2015) and Uy, Foo, and Aguinis (2010) we used the same anchors for all measures, and shortened some scales for the daily portion of our study to avoid burdening participants (e.g., Gabriel, Diefendorff, Chandler, Moran, & Greguras, 2014).

2.3.1 | Perceived mistrust

Because we could not find preexisting scales to measure mistrust, we developed our own measure based on several considerations (please see the online supplement for a full discussion of two validation studies). First, the definition of mistrust as negative expectations of a party's intentions and behavior (Lewicki et al., 1998) suggests that mistrust is ultimately based on concerns about various trust-relevant factors. Second, research suggests that, of these trust-relevant factors, evaluations of competence and integrity are two of the most important (e.g., Kim et al., 2004; 2006). Third, although some have considered the possibility that evaluations of the trustee's benevolence (i.e., the extent to which the trustee has one's best interests at heart) may represent a third determinant of mistrust (Kim et al., 2009; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995), the results of two validation studies we conducted revealed that measures of benevolence did not explain any meaningful variation beyond the measures of competence and integrity. For this reason and to keep the surveys short, we did not measure benevolence items in this sample. Because we expect both competence- and integrity-based mistrust to similarly influence emotional exhaustion, and because these assessments have been found to be highly correlated in the literature (e.g., Dirks, Kim, Ferrin, & Cooper, 2011; Kim et al., 2004), we treated these two facets as a single omnibus construct. The results of confirmatory factor analyses supporting this operationalization of mistrust are provided in the online supplement. All mistrust items are presented in the Appendix. An example item is: "Today at work, one or more coworker(s) doubted my ability to perform my job." Average coefficient α was .94.

2.3.2 | Perceived mistrust justification

Similar to other studies assessing justification (e.g., Naquin, Kurtzberg, & Belkin, 2010), we developed six mistrust justification items to assess the extent to which the experienced mistrust was perceived as justified by the focal person. The items were worded the same as the mistrust items (full items are presented in the Appendix), with the addition of "Today, I feel it was justified that my coworker(s) doubted my ability to perform my job." Coefficient α averaged across days was .98.

2.3.3 | Interpersonal justice

We also measured and controlled for employees' daily perceptions of interpersonal justice from coworkers to ensure that perceived mistrust was not confounded with other fairness perceptions that vary at the day level (e.g., Johnson et al., 2014). We measured interpersonal justice at time 2 with three items from Loi, Yang, and Diefendorff (2009). An example item is "Today at work, my coworkers have treated me in a polite manner." Coefficient α averaged across days was .94

2.3.4 | Emotional exhaustion

We assessed emotional exhaustion with five items recently used by Koopman et al. (2016). Participants rated their experiences over the past hours at work. An example item is "I have felt emotionally drained." Emotional exhaustion was assessed at time 1 and time 2; time 2 reflects our mediator and time 1 was used as a control predicting time 2

exhaustion, as well as our dependent variables, so as to reflect change (e.g., Glomb et al., 2011; Scott & Barnes, 2011). Coefficient α averaged across days was .92 and .91, respectively.

2.3.5 | Withdrawal at work

We assessed withdrawal at work at time 3 using three items from a scale developed by McCroskey (1982) and recently used by Nifadkar et al. (2012). Employees reported their withdrawal at work since they completed the time 2 survey. An example item is "I have avoided speaking with my coworkers unless absolutely necessary." Coefficient α averaged across days was .92.

2.3.6 | Conflict at work

We assessed conflict at work at time 3 by adapting three items from a scale by Wang, Liao, Zhan, and Shi (2011). Employees reported their conflict at work since they completed the time 2 survey. An example item is "I have vented my bad mood on coworkers." Coefficient α averaged across days was .82.

2.3.7 | Withdrawal at home

We relied on work-family research to select our evening measures that were rated by spouses. We assessed withdrawal at home using three items developed by Schulz, Cowan, Cowan, and Brennan (2004). Spouses rated the focal employee's behaviors at home each evening. An example item is "Tonight, my partner/spouse wanted to be alone." Coefficient α averaged across days was .81.

2.3.8 | Conflict at home

We assessed conflict at home using three items developed by Abbey et al. (1985) and recently used by Bakker, Demerouti, and Dollard (2008). The employee's spouse/significant other rated the focal employee's behaviors at home each evening. An example item is "Tonight, my partner/spouse argued with me about something." Coefficient α averaged across days was .80.

3 | RESULTS

3.1 | Analyses

Due to the nested nature of our data (multiple daily observations nested within participants), we used Mplus 7.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) to conduct multilevel path analyses. We initially examined the within-individual variability of our focal constructs to ensure that multilevel analyses were appropriate; this is particularly necessary as, to our knowledge, we are the first to examine perceived mistrust at the day level. As can be seen in Table 1, all within-individual constructs exhibited a considerable amount of within-individual variance (between 37% and 66%). Most of the variance in perceived mistrust (53%) was at the day versus person level. We then conducted two confirmatory factor analytic tests. First, we wanted to ensure that our conceptualization of perceived mistrust and mistrust justification adequately fit our data. We examined the factor structure of perceived mistrust by specifying four latent constructs (competence mistrust, integrity mistrust, competence mistrust justification, integrity mistrust justification), which we specified to load on two second-order factors (mistrust, and mistrust justification). The results indicated that our model fit the data adequately ($\chi^2 = 134$, $df = 49$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .05). The average factor loading in this model was .88, and all factor loadings were significant ($p < .001$).

Following this, we conducted a second factor analysis with all of our study variables. At the within-individual level, we modeled perceived mistrust and mistrust justification as described above, as well as emotional exhaustion at time 1 and time 2, withdrawal at work, conflict at work, withdrawal at home, conflict at home, and interpersonal justice. This

TABLE 1 Variance partitioning for level 1 variables

Construct	Within-individual variance (e^2)	Between-individual variance (r^2)	Within-Individual variance (%)
Perceived mistrust (T2)	.207	.186	53%
Mistrust justification (T2)	.189	.317	37%
Interpersonal justice (T2)	.276	.160	63%
Emotional exhaustion (T1)	.334	.558	37%
Emotional exhaustion (T2)	.394	.627	39%
Withdrawal at work (T3)	.344	.392	47%
Conflict at work (T3)	.228	.218	51%
Withdrawal at home (evening)	.337	.188	64%
Conflict at home (evening)	.454	.239	66%

Note: The percentage of variance within-individuals was calculated as $e^2/(e^2 + r^2)$.

model also exhibited adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 1,087$, $df = 589$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .03, SRMR = .04). Overall, results of these analyses provide support for our modeling and analytic strategy.

We group-mean centered our within-individual predictors and modeled hypothesized paths with random slopes (Bliese, 2000; Enders & Tofighi, 2007). Because both perceived mistrust and mistrust justification are level 1 variables, we computed the interaction term as the product of the two group-mean centered variables (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Our mediation and moderated mediation tests involved using a parametric bootstrapping procedure with 20,000 resamples as recommended by Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010). The parametric bootstrap uses parameter estimates and standard errors from the analyses to estimate a sampling distribution for the indirect effects and create 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (e.g., Selig & Preacher, 2008). This approach has been used to estimate multilevel mediation in several recently published manuscripts (Lanaj et al., 2014; Rosen, Koopman, Gabriel, & Johnson, 2016). We allowed the disturbances between our dependent variables to covary (Kline, 2016); however, their elimination does not change our results.

Our theoretical framework suggests that employees who are emotionally exhausted due to feeling mistrusted may enact displaced aggression—for this reason we modeled both sets of work and home withdrawal and conflict outcomes as simultaneous dependent variables in our multilevel path model. We controlled for time 1 emotional exhaustion to partially rule out concerns over the causal order of the relationship between perceived mistrust and emotional exhaustion at time 2, and to ensure that analyses involving emotional exhaustion represent change in the level of this construct (e.g., Glomb et al., 2011; Scott & Barnes, 2011). We also controlled for interpersonal justice so as to demonstrate the distinctive effects of perceived mistrust on outcomes. Further, we included three control variables to account for potential artifactual sources of error in our analysis. Variables measured on a daily basis may exhibit cyclical variation over the course of a week and to account for this, Beal et al. recommend entering a day variable to account for linear change, as well as cyclical change using sine and cosine function with a period equal to one work week because of the cyclical nature of adult working lives ("5 days on, 2 days off" and then repeat; Beal & Ghandour, 2011, p. 529). Furthermore, following recent examples (e.g., Wang et al., 2011; 2013) we modeled control variable paths with fixed slopes to reduce overall model complexity.

3.2 | Tests of hypotheses

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and correlations for our study variables. Table 3 summarizes our multilevel analyses. We began first by examining the relationship between perceived mistrust and emotional exhaustion. In support of Hypothesis 1, this relationship was significant ($\gamma = .21$, $p < .05$). Hypotheses 2 and 3 reflect our theory on the interpersonal consequences of resource loss. As explicated earlier, we anticipated a displaced aggression pattern of results, such that on days when employees felt more emotional exhaustion, they would

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics and correlations for study variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Perceived mistrust (T2)	1.42	.45								
2. Mistrust justification (T2)	1.44	.43	.65*							
3. Interpersonal justice (T2)	4.21	.53	−.15*	−.11						
4. Emotional exhaustion (T1)	2.13	.58	.07	.00	−.09*					
5. Emotional exhaustion (T2)	2.25	.63	.22*	.12*	−.10*	.43*				
6. Withdrawal at work (T3)	1.71	.59	.04	.10*	−.07	.01	.04			
7. Conflict at work (T3)	1.47	.48	.11*	.08	−.01	.03	.01	.37*		
8. Withdrawal at home (evening)	2.17	.58	.00	−.04	−.02	−.02	.04	−.02	−.07	
9. Conflict at home (evening)	2.12	.67	.00	−.07	−.04	.01	.09*	.03	−.06	.53*

Note: Standard deviations and correlations reflect daily values at the within-individual level of analysis (e.g., group mean centered). T1, T2, and T3 reflect measures reported by employees during the workday. The evening measures were completed by the employee's spouse at home.
*$p < .05$.

TABLE 3 Results of multilevel path analysis

Variables	Emotional exhaustion γ	SE	Withdrawal at work γ	SE	Conflict at work γ	SE	Withdrawal at home γ	SE	Conflict at home γ	SE
Intercept	2.25*	.11	1.48*	.11	1.47*	.10	2.07*	.10	1.92*	.12
Perceived mistrust	.21*	.09	.05	.06	.11*	.05	−.03	.06	−.03	.06
Mistrust justification	−.03	.07	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mistrust × Mistrust Justification	.20*	.10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Controls										
Emotional exhaustion (prior)	.44*	.07	−.07	.05	.02	.03	−.04	.06	−.03	.06
Interpersonal justice	−.02	.05	−.08	.05	.00	.04	−.03	.05	−.05	.06
Cyclical Variation Controls										
Day	.01	.01	.00	.01	−.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01
Sine	−.01	.03	−.03	.03	−.02	.03	.04	.03	.04	.04
Cosine	−.04	.04	.07	.04	.00	.03	−.08	.05	−.01	.05
Mediator										
Emotional exhaustion	–	–	.10*	.04	.00	.03	.04	.04	.09*	.04
Mediation & moderated mediation										
Indirect effect	–		.02 (.002, .057)		–		–		.02 (.002, .051)	
Indirect effect (low)	–		.012 (−.005, .052)		–		–		.011 (−.004, .045)	
Indirect effect (high)	–		.029 (.005, .067)		–		–		.026 (.005, .059)	

Note: Level 1, $N = 797$. Level 2, $N = 60$. Full results from multilevel path analyses are provided. Indirect effects for mediation and moderated mediation were calculated only for hypothesized outcomes.
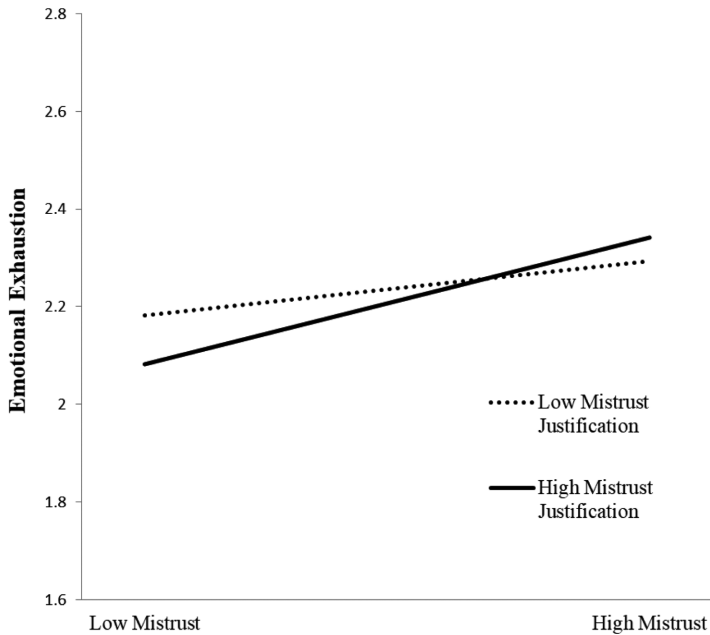
FIGURE 2 Mistrust justification moderates the relation between perceived mistrust and emotional exhaustion
Note: The *x*-axis (perceived mistrust) reflects a range of 2 *SD*s (i.e., ±1 *SD* from the mean for high and low mistrust, respectively). The *y*-axis (emotional exhaustion) similarly reflects a range of approximately 2 *SD*s. The interaction pattern corresponds to the predictions of self-enhancement theory. That is, the relationship between mistrust and emotional exhaustion is positive and significant at high levels of perceived mistrust justification ($\gamma = .30$, $p < .05$) and not significant at low levels of perceived mistrust justification ($\gamma = .13$, $p > .05$).

engage in withdrawal at work but not conflict and that the reverse pattern would emerge at home. The results support our expectations; in support of Hypothesis 2, emotional exhaustion was significantly associated with withdrawal at work ($\gamma = .10$, $p < .05$), and in support of Hypothesis 3, emotional exhaustion was significantly associated with conflict at home ($\gamma = .09$, $p < .05$). Emotional exhaustion was not significantly associated with either conflict at work ($\gamma = .00$, *ns*) or withdrawal at home ($\gamma = .04$, *ns*).[3] A model with only controls explained approximately 18% of the within-person variance in emotional exhaustion, 2% of the variance in withdrawal at work, and 0% of the variance in conflict at home. Perceived mistrust explained an additional 7% of the variance in emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion explained an incremental 1% of the variance in withdrawal at work and conflict at home (2% total).

Our mediation hypotheses (4a/b) were also supported (we did not examine the mediation relationships for the non-hypothesized dependent variables of conflict at work and withdrawal at home). Supporting Hypothesis 4a, the indirect effect of mistrust and withdrawal at work through emotional exhaustion was positive (.02), and the 95% confidence interval excluded zero [.002, .057]. As per Hypothesis 4b, the indirect effect of mistrust and conflict at home through emotional exhaustion was positive (.02, 95% CI [.002, .051]).

We also tested *Research Question 1* and *Research Question 2*, which proposed competing perspectives for the interactive relationship between mistrust and mistrust justification in predicting emotional exhaustion. In support of *Research Question 2*, and not *Research Question 1*, the nature of this interaction supported a self-enhancement explanation ($\gamma = .20$, $p < .05$). That is, the relationship between perceived mistrust and emotional exhaustion was stronger when employees believed mistrust to be justified. As Figure 2 also illustrates, the relationship between perceived mistrust and emotional exhaustion was significant at high levels of perceived mistrust justification (simple slope = .30, $p < .05$) and was not significant at low levels of perceived mistrust justification (simple slope = .13, $p > .05$). The interaction of perceived mistrust and mistrust justification explained an additional 2% of the variance in emotional exhaustion.

These research questions also suggested moderated mediation effects for whether perceptions of mistrust justification influence the strength of the indirect effects of perceived mistrust on withdrawal at work and conflict at

home, and whether the associated patterns correspond to a self-verification theory or to a self-enhancement theory explanation. We tested moderated mediation by calculating the conditional indirect effects between perceived mistrust and both withdrawal at work and conflict at home via emotional exhaustion at high and low (i.e., ± 1 *SD*) values of the moderator. Consistent with expectations by self-enhancement theory (but not by self-verification theory), the conditional indirect effect of mistrust on withdrawal at work via emotional exhaustion was positive and significant at high levels of perceived mistrust justification (effect = .029, 95% CI [.005, .067]), but it was not significant at low levels of perceived mistrust justification (effect = .012, 95% CI [−.005, .052]). Similarly, consistent with expectations by self-enhancement theory, the conditional indirect effect of mistrust on conflict at home via emotional exhaustion was positive and significant at high levels of perceived mistrust justification (effect = .026, 95% CI [.005, .059]) but not significant at low levels of justification (effect = .011, 95% CI [−.004, .045]). Overall, both moderation and moderated mediation results support self-enhancement theory but not self-verification theory.

Finally, to investigate whether the effects from our study align with their true values, we estimated the power of our tests using the program PinT (power in two-level designs), based on calculations derived by Snijders and Bosker (1993). These tests revealed that power was 95% for the association between perceived mistrust and emotional exhaustion, 97% for the interaction of mistrust and mistrust justification on emotional exhaustion, 82% for the relationship between emotional exhaustion and workplace withdrawal, and 66% for the relationship between emotional exhaustion and home conflict. The average power for detecting the effects examined here was 85%, and three of the four relationships exceeded the typically accepted power level of 80%. These tests suggest that our findings likely converge on their true effects.

4 | DISCUSSION

By integrating COR with theories of self-verification and self-enhancement, we show that perceived mistrust is resource consuming and has downstream effects on subsequent behaviors both at work and at home. As expected, we find that daily mistrust is associated with an increase in emotional exhaustion, which in turn is positively associated with withdrawal from others at work and conflict toward one's significant other at home. Consistent with self-enhancement (rather than self-verification) theory, the daily effects of perceived mistrust on outcomes were stronger when employees felt mistrust to be high (vs. low) in justification.

4.1 | Theoretical implications

We are among the first to examine the experience of feeling mistrusted and its implications for employees' resources and behaviors both at work and at home. As such, we are able to make several theoretical contributions to research on mistrust and to COR. With regard to research on mistrust, our work indicates that overlooking the effects of perceived mistrust on trustees is problematic because feeling mistrusted impairs trustees' resources and behaviors in meaningful ways. Not only do trustees' interactions with coworkers deteriorate on days when they perceive mistrust—as indicated by their withdrawal at work—but so do their interactions with significant others—as indicated by the increase in conflict at home.

These findings, in turn, help advance understanding of what mistrust may ultimately entail for relationships. In particular, Kim et al. (2009) raised the possibility that mistrust may result in at least four different outcomes depending on the reactions of trustors and trustees (including trust repair, forceful confrontation, avoidance, and mistrust confirmation). Yet much of the research on mistrust in recent years has tended to focus on matters of trust repair (Desmet, De Cremer, & van Dijk, 2011; Dirks et al., 2011; Hendry, Peacock, & Shaffer, 1989; Kim et al., 2004; 2006) and thus gives the impression that trustees would actively engage with trustors to correct the mistrust they experience. The present research, however, challenges this notion by suggesting that, rather than engage with trustors to address this perception, trustees may be more likely to *disengage*, specifically by withdrawing from work, and thus allow the mistrust to

persist into the future. This, in turn, suggests that the challenges of repairing trust may be even greater than the extant literature has already acknowledged.

Furthermore, we enrich the mistrust literature by drawing from self-verification versus self-enhancement theories to highlight the role of mistrust justification (i.e., trustees' beliefs of whether the experienced mistrust was justified) in determining when different reactions to mistrust may be stronger or weaker. Being mistrusted is inherently a subjective experience (Brodt & Neville, 2013). Yet research on mistrust has tended to focus on factors that could affect the nature of trustors' beliefs (e.g., the availability of evidence, the number of trustors, and the nature of the reparative effort; Dirks et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2004; 2013) and paid far less attention to trustees' subjective appraisals. Our findings that trustees found perceived mistrust more emotionally exhausting and were thus more likely to withdraw from work when they considered the mistrust to be justified, begin to address a major shortcoming in the mistrust literature by highlighting the importance of trustee's subjective beliefs as well. This pattern of findings also lends credence to the notion that compared to self-verification concerns, self-enhancement concerns may dominate in situations where social costs and risks are high, such as in the workplace (e.g., Kwang & Swann, 2010).

Past research on the implications of mistrust has typically focused on its implications for trustors and trustees who might directly be affected by such assessments. The present research, however, broadens the scope of those implications to consider how, owing to its resource-consuming nature, the repercussions of being mistrusted last throughout the day and permeate social contexts. Mistrust, therefore, is not an isolated incident within a dyad or within a specific social context as most research on mistrust suggests (Brodt & Neville, 2013). This notion, in turn, raises the possibility that the implications of perceived mistrust in one type of context (i.e., work) may have downstream effects for trust decisions in entirely different contexts (i.e., at home) and ultimately highlights the need to further investigate such relationships.

Our findings also underscore the need to differentiate the implications of mistrust from those of (low) trust. In particular, recent studies that have examined the effects of trust on several organizational outcomes have reached different conclusions (e.g., Baer et al., 2015; Lau, Lam, & Wen, 2014). However, our study reveals that mistrust is not only different from trust as we show across two validation studies discussed in the online supplement but also that its implications can differ. For example, different from our study, Baer et al. (2015) show that there is no net effect of feeling trusted on emotional exhaustion. Rather, feeling trusted influences emotional exhaustion in two competing ways (i.e., by increasing exhaustion via reputation maintenance concerns and perceived workload, and by decreasing emotional exhaustion via pride), resulting in no total effect. In contrast, drawing from COR, we show that perceived mistrust is a resource-consuming work event that directly elicits emotional exhaustion.

These findings suggest that the implications of mistrust for the mechanisms identified by Baer et al. (2015) are far from clear. That is, there are reasons to think that mistrust may either increase workload due to lack of help reciprocation from others (Kydd, 2000) or decrease workload due to others being less willing to rely on the focal party (Kim et al., 2004). It is also unclear whether low mistrust would trigger pride or whether the main affective implication of high mistrust would be lower pride (as opposed to increased sadness, anger, or frustration; Kim et al., 2017). Although mistrust may also affect reputational concerns, these concerns are arguably more likely to involve reputation repair than reputational maintenance, and this difference in orientation may have very different implications for cognitions and behavior. These considerations highlight the need to consider the potential implications of perceived mistrust on its own terms, rather than from the lens of past trust research, when considering how it may affect emotional exhaustion.

Our findings, furthermore, contribute to research on COR by identifying perceived mistrust as a resource–intensive experience that impacts employees' behaviors at work and at home. Scholars may gain further insights into resource depletion by paying greater attention to perceived mistrust. Indeed, given the pervasiveness of mistrust in organizational and social life (APA, 2014; Atkins, 2014; Cass, 2013), this sentiment may represent a common way in which employees' resources may be depleted. Furthermore, unlike other resource theories (e.g., Kruglanski et al., 2012; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003), COR has not explicitly recognized that resources may be allocated differently across contexts associated with varying incentives to self-regulate such as the work versus home environment. Our work

extends COR by recognizing and showing that emotional exhaustion has differential outcomes at work versus home. In so doing, we respond to the recent call by Hobfoll et al. (2018, p. 114) encouraging "integration with theories beyond COR," in attempts to better understand the nature of resource conservation.

4.2 | Practical implications

Practically, the findings from this inquiry suggest that addressing mistrust may be even more difficult than it might have seemed. Past research on mistrust has already identified a range of factors that can limit the effectiveness of various trust repair efforts (Kim & Harmon, 2014; Kim et al., 2009). Yet to the extent that trustees do not even try to repair trust and instead tend to withdraw from their workplace interactions, the likelihood of repairing trust seems particularly unlikely, at least in the short run. For this reason, organizations may benefit from paying greater attention to instances of employee withdrawal as an early warning sign that mistrust has occurred and may therefore need attention. Though it may not necessarily be wise to subsequently force withdrawn employees to confront the experienced mistrust when they are depleted, and thus lack the resources to pursue trust repair, organizations may benefit from seeking ways to counteract the depletion of employee resources itself (and thereby potentially encourage the withdrawn employees to address the mistrust more readily on their own).

Our research indicates that employees should be aware of the immediate, and lingering, negative consequences of felt mistrust. Upon perceiving mistrust, employees may be well-served to engage in activities to lessen these negative repercussions. For example, although mistrusted employees may desire to avoid their coworkers, this may not be the best course of action to recuperate lost resources. Instead, employees who feel mistrusted should seek out opportunities to replenish their resources. For example, employees could take a quick coffee break (e.g., Trougakos, Hideg, Cheng, & Beal, 2014), seek out pleasant social interactions with coworkers or clients (e.g., Bono, Glomb, Shen, & Kim, & Koch, 2013), or try to reappraise the situation as an opportunity to learn and grow in their job (e.g., Southwick & Charney, 2012). Similarly, on days when one feels mistrusted, employees could seek reenergizing activities outside of the workplace such as listening to a fun podcast or book on the drive home, going for a run, sharing positive work experiences with loved ones, and trying to rest and sleep well that night. Such positive activities may help replenish depleted resources and mitigate the spillover effects of mistrust to home via emotional exhaustion (e.g., Ilies, Liu, Liu, & Zheng, 2017; Sonnentag, 2001; Sonnentag, & Zijlstra, 2006).

4.3 | Limitations and suggestions for future research

In addition to several strengths (e.g., multiday and multisource data; separation of measures in time; within-person moderation), this study also has limitations that might be addressed by future research. First, we only studied perceived mistrust from the perspective of trustees. Although mistrust can involve broad networks of work relationships (Brodt & Neville, 2013), we hope that future research will examine the implications of mistrust from the perspectives of trustors as well as trustees to assess their mutual influence.

Relatedly, we did not investigate how the nature of the relationship between trustors and trustees may influence our findings, and this represents an opportunity for future research. It is possible, for example, that mistrust may have stronger effects on emotional exhaustion if mistrust arises from one's leader versus coworkers because of the greater resources that the leader controls (e.g., Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998). Alternatively, employees may be less affected by mistrust if they have a high-quality relationship with their leader or coworkers, because it may be easier for them to restore trust following a mistrust incident (Schilke, Reimann, & Cook, 2013). We invite future research to examine these possibilities.

Consistent with prior research (Brodt & Neville, 2013), we argue that perceived mistrust is based on perceptions of interactions with coworkers. However, trustees' perceptions may or may not be a perfect representation of the behaviors that occurred between trustors and trustees (Kim et al., 2017). Recent theory and research on actual versus perceived experiences suggest that both should have similar effects on outcomes. For example, Keller et al. (2012) found that high amounts of stress and perceptions of stress each were associated with poor health and mental health. However, perceptions of stress interacted with actual stress such that health outcomes were worse when

both were high. As we show in our study, perceptions of mistrust matter too. It could be that the effects of perceived mistrust on its outcomes may be further exacerbated when actual mistrust is high, as the study by Keller et al. (2012) suggests. Future research is necessary to unpack the social interaction dynamics involved in the experience of mistrust.

Because of time and survey length restrictions typical to experience sampling studies (Fisher & To, 2012), we were unable to assess mediating mechanisms beyond emotional exhaustion. Nevertheless, it is possible that perceived mistrust may trigger feelings of dissonance or guilt or even anger and frustration, which may then have downstream implications for emotional exhaustion and behaviors. Whereas our expectations for the effects of mistrust on emotional exhaustion are well informed by COR, the implications for the effects of mistrust on discrete emotions are more complex. For example, the experience of anger is likely to hinge on whether mistrust is considered unjustified (e.g., Averill, 1982). Additionally, frustration is likely to require a sense of having attempted to address the mistrust and (repeatedly) failed, which involves a longer time horizon to study. Moreover, unlike anger, which might lead to behaviors to address the problem (and thus less withdrawal), frustration may promote giving up (and thus more withdrawal). Thus, the implications of mistrust for discrete emotions are not straightforward nor are the implications of such emotions for subsequent behaviors (Kim et al., 2017). We invite scholars to examine implicated micromediating processes such as guilt, rumination, anger and frustration that may explain the resource-draining nature of mistrust.

Because there is a lack of theoretical clarity in the literature as to whether a defensive approach such as withdrawal is likely to either facilitate or hinder resource recovery (i.e., would withdrawal at work lead to more or less conflict at home?), we did not predict (nor find in post hoc analyses) a form of serial mediation whereby emotional exhaustion and workplace withdrawal would mediate the effect of mistrust on conflict at home. Nor did we investigate potential mediators between withdrawal at work and conflict at home (because this requires testing a five-stage path model, which goes beyond what our study design and data can support). Nevertheless, withdrawal at work may link to conflict at home, indirectly via a number of mediators that could be addressed in future research.

Although we examined withdrawal and conflict as two behavioral outcomes of perceived mistrust, we did not focus on behaviors specific to mistrust repair because doing so went beyond our research focus. We suspect that the emotional exhaustion that accompanies perceived mistrust will likely interfere with the quality of behavioral remedies undertaken by the employee the same day. For example, it may be that behaviors focusing on mistrust repair (e.g., apologies, denials, social accounts, expressed remorse) are more effective on days when employees are energized and therefore have the resources required for the level of effortful self-presentation often required by such behaviors (Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005). Thus, given the resource-consuming nature of perceived mistrust, repair efforts and other proactive behaviors focused on recuperating resources are less likely to occur within the relatively short time-windows that we investigated here because of the additional resources often required by such acts. However, the ways in which trustees may be able to engage in these kinds of proactive behaviors over longer periods of time remain an open question for future research.

Another limitation is that the effect sizes reported here are small, with the main effects falling in the small to medium benchmarks provided by Bosco, Aguinis, Singh, Field, and Pierce (2015). Effect sizes tend to be smaller in experience sampling research such as ours (Liu et al., 2015; Uy, Lin, & Ilies, 2017), because these studies focus on explaining within-person variance rather than total variance. Effect sizes also tend to be smaller when the time lag between measures is large, such as in our study. Moreover, mistrust is a low base-rate phenomenon and the range of the values in our study may have been restricted. Indeed, research on other negative experiences reports similar low means (Nandkeolyar, Shaffer, Li, Ekkirala, & Bagger, 2014; Rosen et al., 2016). Thus, the effects of perceived mistrust on emotional exhaustion seen here may be conservative estimates, and these effects may be particularly salient over longer periods of time. Scholars have previously acknowledged that even small effects may be practically relevant when detected in a difficult situation such as ours, which involved time-separated, multisourced experience sampling data (e.g., Prentice & Miller, 1992).

Finally, despite time-separated surveys, several measures were assessed at the same time (i.e., mistrust, justification, and emotional exhaustion), raising concerns of common method bias. We measured these variables at time 2 to

(a) show that perceived mistrust resulted in a change in emotional exhaustion from the start of the day and (b) to separate emotional exhaustion temporally from the downstream work and home outcomes. This approach allowed us to test one of our core arguments that the effects of perceived mistrust are not limited to the particular social interaction involving mistrust—as most research on mistrust suggests—but that mistrust may influence subsequent work outcomes and interactions at home. Moreover, several of our design features alleviate concerns about this methodological approach. First, we controlled for previous levels of emotional exhaustion, which mitigates concerns of reverse causality (Lanaj et al., 2016b; Scott & Barnes, 2011). Second, the significant interaction effect between perceived mistrust and mistrust justification renders common method bias an unlikely explanation for the interaction effect (Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010). Third, group mean centering of the daily variables reduces concerns that effects are due to social desirability and response biases (Beal, 2015). Nevertheless, we invite researchers to examine mistrust and exhaustion with time-separated data.

5 | CONCLUSION

Unlike the majority of existing research that examines the implications of mistrust for trustors, we investigate the implications of perceived mistrust from the perspective of the mistrusted party. By doing so, we show that perceived mistrust has important implications for the inner resources and subsequent behaviors of the trustee that have not been previously identified. Through such findings, our work identifies a number of exciting research avenues on the experience of being mistrusted that we hope will be pursued in the future.

ENDNOTES

[1] Although scholars have often used the terms "mistrust" and "distrust" interchangeably in the literature, we use the term "mistrust" throughout the paper for the sake of simplicity.

[2] In the online supplement to this manuscript, we report the results of two validation studies further confirming the distinction between employee perceptions of mistrust and trust.

[3] An anonymous reviewer suggested that perhaps mistrust (and unjustified mistrust in particular) elicits a sense of unfairness. Interpersonal justice, then, could be an alternative mechanism to emotional exhaustion. We ran the same analyses as presented in the paper but modeled interpersonal justice as a parallel mediator to emotional exhaustion. We found that although perceived mistrust was negatively associated with interpersonal justice ($\gamma = -.09$, $p < .05$), the interaction of perceived mistrust with mistrust justification in predicting interpersonal justice was not significant ($\gamma = -.12$, $p > .05$). Moreover, interpersonal justice was significantly associated with withdrawal at work ($\gamma = -.13$, $p < .05$) but not with conflict at home ($\gamma = -.03$, $p > .05$). Importantly, our hypothesized results remained unchanged in these supplementary analyses.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional Supporting Information may be found online in the supporting information tab for this article.

APPENDIX

MISTRUST MEASURE

Instructions: When answering the following questions, please consider all of the coworkers with whom you have interacted so far today (including individuals in your work group, your supervisor, your own direct reports, etc.).

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about your coworkers:

Today, one or more coworker(s) …

1. doubted my ability to perform my job
2. questioned my knowledge about the work that needed to be done
3. expressed lack of confidence in my work skills
4. doubted my work values
5. was displeased with the principles that guide my work behavior
6. questioned my work integrity

MISTRUST JUSTIFICATION MEASURE

Today, I feel it was justified that my coworker(s) …

1. doubted my ability to perform my job
2. questioned my knowledge about the work that needed to be done
3. expressed lack of confidence in my work skills
4. doubted my work values
5. was displeased with the principles that guide my work behavior
6. questioned my work integrity