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Impact of Workplace Ostracism, Moderated by Personality Traits on Psychological Safety

Aniko Rastovac
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Aniko Rastovac

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2026

Abstract

Impact of Workplace Ostracism, Moderated by Personality Traits on Psychological

Safety

by

Aniko Rastovac

MS, Walden University, 2017

BS, California State University, East Bay, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial and Organizational Psychology

Walden University

February 2026

Abstract

Psychological safety, an essential element for fostering collaboration, trust, and innovation, can be undermined by negative interactions in the workplace. Most importantly, a lack of psychological safety is a barrier to individual and organizational growth, development, and innovation, which is necessary for gaining a competitive organizational advantage. The present study examines the concept of workplace ostracism as a negative interaction in the workplace that affects psychological safety. Using the big five personality traits framework, Edmondson's (1999) concept of psychological safety, and Tett et al.'s (2021) trait activation theory, this quantitative study examined how individual differences moderate the impact of workplace ostracism on employees' psychological safety. A cross-sectional survey design was used to examine these relationships in a sample of 287 employed adults who experienced or witnessed workplace ostracism. The findings showed that workplace ostracism significantly decreased employees' psychological safety, and this effect was moderated by two personality traits: extroversion, which buffered the impact, and agreeableness, which amplified it. These results suggest that the big five personality traits could shape how employees experience social exclusion and its impact on psychological safety. The insights gained could help organizations design more nuanced, personality-informed approaches to leadership, inclusion, and employee support, promoting workplaces that are not only more productive but also more socially responsive.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, **Péter Rasztoócz**, my greatest supporter and strongest advocate for my educational growth. He valued education deeply and believed in growth as a lifelong foundation—one built through discipline, curiosity, and perseverance. He took pride in every step of my academic journey, whether small or significant. Long before this degree was completed, this milestone was accomplished, he called me “doktornő” (means doctor)—not as a title, but as an expression of faith in who I was becoming and in the future he believed I would reach. Although he is not here to see this milestone, his encouragement and belief carried me to it. This work honors his legacy, his love, and the strength he helped me build.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Psychological safety is a cornerstone for business success, fostering an environment where employees feel secure to express ideas, voice concerns, and take calculated risks without fear of reprisal (Edmondson, 1999). Such a culture allows creativity and innovation to flourish and strengthen cooperation. Research has shown that teams experiencing psychological safety will outperform, develop faster, be more engaged, and deliver increased productivity to their host organizations (Edmonson & Lei, 2014). Furthermore, a workplace that is categorized as a safe place to learn and develop creates trust (Edmondson, 1999), loyalty, intrinsic motivation, and work engagement, thereby leading positively to turnover factors attract top talent. Making psychological safety a priority is not just good business; it is an essential component in any company that wants to remain excellent, especially given the fact that companies have rapidly changing landscapes within they operate (Edmondson, 2018).

Conversely, hostile workplace incidents interfere with individual and organizational wellness and expansion. Despite organizations being legally bound to prevent hostile environments, evidenced by laws against discrimination and retaliation (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], n.d.-c), various hostile workplace events persist and significantly impact employees' well-being. The alarming frequency of retaliation and discrimination cases reported to the EEOC (totaling 67,448 charges in 2020; U.S. EEOC, n.d.-c) underscores the prevalence of adverse workplace experiences, including racism, sexism, harassment, unfair treatment (Braedley et al., 2018), gender bias (Lekchiri et al., 2020), and workplace bullying (Kwan et al., 2016).

Such events take a toll on workers' psychological health, contributing to post-traumatic stress symptoms, depression, cardiovascular issues, headaches, and emotional exhaustion (Kwan et al., 2016), thereby affecting both individual psychological safety and organizational innovation. A survey conducted by O'Reilly et al. (2015) exposed that 71% of over 1,300 employees in service-oriented industries reported encountering workplace ostracism—a hostile workplace event engendering deleterious effects on individuals' fundamental psychological needs, such as belonging, control, self-esteem, and meaningful existence (Mao et al., 2018). Moreover, it impedes employees from cultivating positive social interactions within their teams (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018). While the benefits of psychological safety on organizational growth and workplace ostracism's detrimental impact on the workforce are explored, the specific impact of workplace ostracism on individuals' psychological safety is an area that warrants further exploration. Therefore, this was the focus of this study.

Beyond these considerations, the interplay of personality traits in shaping the relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' psychological safety remains relatively unexplored. Remtulla et al. (2021) proposed that personality traits may function as both barriers and facilitators of psychological safety, although researchers seldom explore team member personalities in this context. Although researchers have examined personality dimensions predicting hostile work environments like workplace ostracism (Howard et al., 2020) and positive outcomes such as employee engagement (Mat et al., 2019) associated with psychological safety, the nuanced role of personality in the specific context of workplace ostracism and psychological safety needs more profound research.

Consequently, this study addresses the social problem of workplace ostracism's impact on employees' psychological safety and the role of personality traits in moderating this relationship.

The results of this study provide a relevant contribution to scholars, as they help pinpoint the complex interactions between personality, workplace ostracism, and psychological safety and provide more refined interventions that respond directly to how everyone can experience supportiveness and inclusion at work. As a result, organizations can guide policies and practices to reduce ostracism, increase psychological safety, and promote more human-centric workplace cultures by addressing how to navigate such relationships. In addition, the research results foster academic understanding by combining elements of personality psychology with organizational behavior research and revealing how individual differences shape interactions within the workplace. These results are important because they could encourage and inspire organizations to adopt methods to help all employees grow and develop.

This chapter introduces the research problem by providing an insight into the interrelationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety. It includes the background to the problem statement, the purpose and nature of the study, research questions or hypotheses, conceptual framework, and operational definitions. Chapter 1 also addresses assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations, concluding with an exploration of the significance and implications for knowledge and social change.

Background

Psychological safety is known as an invisible contract built on interpersonal

relationships, trust, and respect, which are critical components of effective workplace environments (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety fosters an environment where individuals feel secure in taking interpersonal risks, essential for collaboration, learning, and innovation. Research data consistently show that psychological safety is linked to various positive outcomes, including increased job satisfaction, higher engagement, and improved team performance (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). In psychologically safe environments, employees are more likely to share information, provide feedback, and collaborate effectively, enhancing organizational learning and performance (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009).

Despite its importance, psychological safety can be undermined by workplace ostracism (WPO), which involves excluding or disregarding individuals by their peers (Ferris et al., 2008). Workplace ostracism impacts employees' sense of belonging and self-esteem, leading to decreased motivation and productivity (Williams, 2007). It disrupts relational elements like trust and respect, which are fundamental to psychological safety. Results from studies indicate that workplace ostracism negatively affects employees' well-being and job satisfaction, with detrimental consequences for overall organizational health (Ferris et al., 2008; Williams, 2007). The interplay between psychological safety and workplace ostracism highlights the need to understand how different factors, such as personality traits, influence these dynamics.

The big five personality traits—openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—provide the framework for understanding individual differences in the workplace (Bedi, 2021; Kang et al., 2023; Peters et al.,

2024). Research findings show these traits significantly affect how individuals perceive and respond to workplace dynamics, including psychological safety and workplace ostracism. For instance, Peters et al. (2024) indicated that individuals with high conscientiousness traits are characterized as thoughtful, organized, and responsible. This trait demonstrates the ability to control impulses and goal-oriented behaviors (Connelly et al., 2018). Individuals high in conscientiousness and extroversion positively correlate to efficiency, communicative, and sociable behavior (Peters et al., 2024). Eleftherakis et al. (2024) also indicated that the openness to experience moderates the negative impact of low psychological safety on performance. This personality trait is associated with high engagement and creativity revealed in actions, ideas, and values (Mat et al., 2019). Individuals with high scores on extroversion traits reported higher scores on psychological safety (Gheorghe et al., 2024; Wilmot et al., 2019). Additionally, employees with high agreeableness would positively relate to positive interactions with coworkers, interdependence, conflict resolution, and compromise, building a more supportive work climate within their teams (Wilmot & Ones, 2022). On the other hand, Mat et al. (2019) found that this personality trait has no significant effect on employee engagement. While they tend to be their hardest critics and harsh on themselves, making mistakes did not impact their speaking-up behavior and sense of psychological safety (Mäkinen, 2023). Moreover, conscientiousness traits acted as a protective factor, reducing the harmful effects of interpersonal conflict; therefore, individuals with high conscientiousness traits were better able to preserve effective teams (Marjanović et al., 2023). Neurotic individuals tend to exhibit more negative emotions than individuals with

other traits, such as moodiness and anxiety, resulting in a lower level of engagement (Mat et al., 2019). While individuals with high neuroticism traits were most likely to cause and perceive ostracism due to their sensitivity and anxiety (Shi et al., 2023), all personality traits, except neuroticism, were negatively impacted by ostracism (Yaakobi, 2022).

Despite substantial research on psychological safety and the big five personality traits, there is a notable gap in understanding how these variables interact with workplace ostracism to affect psychological safety. Existing studies have not fully explored how individual differences in personality traits might moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety. For instance, Ayoko (2022) used thematic analysis to explore the connection between ostracism, bullying, and perceptions of psychological safety. However, the study's sample size of 150 employees was fairly small, lacking quantitative data to examine personality traits as moderators. Additionally, Li et al.'s (2021) meta-analytic review of the outcomes of workplace ostracism indicated negative attitudes toward others and undermining fundamental needs across personality types, while others indicated otherwise. For example, the results of Keshf's and Anjum's (2020) study indicate a negative correlation between agreeableness and ostracism. Research indicates that high agreeableness may lead to susceptibility to ostracism due to a strong desire for harmonious relationships, but this aspect needs further investigation (Yaakobi, 2022). While personality traits could influence adaptation in certain work environments, their specific moderating effects on the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety remain underexplored (Keshf & Anjum, 2020).

Addressing this gap is crucial for developing targeted organizational

interventions. Using a cross-sectional survey design to collect data by nonprobability convenience sampling at one point in time, this quantitative study assessed the impact of workplace ostracism on employees' psychological safety, and the role personality plays in the relationship among these variables. A cross-sectional survey provides a snapshot in time and allows researchers to better understand a population of interest (Lavrakas, 2008). Because all modes of data collection can be used via cross-sectional surveys and data collection can be repeated with nonprobability convenience sampling, this data collection method was appropriate for this study. The result of this study can assist organizations in creating more effective strategies to enhance employee well-being and mitigate the negative effects of ostracism. Understanding these dynamics could enable organizations to review their approaches to individual differences, improving overall employee satisfaction and performance. This research contributes to a better understanding of workplace dynamics, offering insights that could lead to more supportive and productive work environments.

Problem Statement

Since Edmondson's (1999) founding of psychological safety as a team construct, psychological safety has received attention from researchers. It is also tightly linked to team dynamics and organizational outcomes at various levels (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). The conflict that reduces team and work effectiveness can be prevented by maintaining open communication and trust (Edmondson, 2018). Psychological safety allows the team to be more innovative as people will not stress about being laughed at when they try unconventional ideas or feel that their jobs are on

the line after making a mistake (Edmondson, 2018; Wang et al., 2023). For instance, psychological safety is often empirically related to fostering learning behavior, improving work experience (Edmondson, 1999; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020), engagement and job satisfaction (Ahmad & Umrani, 2019). However, no prior research has explicitly focused on the relationship between workplace ostracism—which is a particularly pernicious form of social exclusion that can negatively affect learning (Han & Hwang, 2021; Khalid et al., 2020) and lead to negative health outcomes (Bedi, 2021; Li et al., 2021)—and psychological safety moderated by the big five personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism). The specific problem is that while research has consistently shown that ostracism is associated with negative employee outcomes, such as a diminished sense of belonging (Bedi, 2021; Li et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023), reduced work engagement (Bedi, 2021), and lower job satisfaction (Bedi, 2021; Li et al., 2021), understanding how personality traits influence these dynamics remains an important yet unexplored area. Addressing this gap in research is important because knowledge of these dynamics could guide organizations that wish to implement employee-specific interventions based on the employee's personality and reaction to workplace ostracism. Their integration would yield beneficial information on how we might develop psychologically safe and more inclusive workplaces to achieve innovation and competitive advantage.

Purpose Statement

This quantitative study was conducted to investigate the impact of workplace ostracism on psychological safety, focusing on how the big five personality traits

moderate this relationship. The goal was to reveal and analyze the impact of workplace ostracism on psychological safety on an individual level to understand and investigate how this relationship changes across different personality traits. The independent variable was workplace ostracism, the experience of being excluded or ignored by colleagues (O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). Psychological safety was used as the dependent variable, which refers to the shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking and the condition in which employees can be themselves and take risks without fear of negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999; Kahn, 1990). Psychological safety can ultimately determine employee development options and knowledge sharing across the organization, enabling positive outcomes (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Kark & Carmeli, 2020; Khalid et al., 2020). The moderator variables were the big five personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism). These characteristics were targeted to be tested on how they impact the course of workplace ostracism and psychological safety (Soto, 2018).

By conducting a quantitative analysis, this study intended to assess the direct effects of workplace ostracism on psychological safety and to compare how different personality traits moderate this relationship. The research used statistical techniques to correlate these variables, providing insights into how personality traits can alter the impact of workplace ostracism on psychological safety. This investigation aimed to contribute to developing more effective organizational strategies for mitigating the negative effects of ostracism and enhancing psychological safety in the workplace (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Remtulla et al., 2021).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ 1: What is the impact of workplace ostracism on employees' psychological safety?

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' psychological safety.

H_{a1}: There is a statistically significant relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' psychological safety.

RQ 2: Do personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) moderate the relationship between ostracism and psychological safety?

H₀₂₁: Openness does not moderate (strengthen) the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a21}: Openness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H₀₂₂: Conscientiousness does not moderate (strengthen) the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a22}: Conscientiousness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H₀₂₃: Extroversion does not moderate (buffers) the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a23}: Extroversion moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H₀₂₄: Agreeableness does not moderate (buffers) the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a24}: Agreeableness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H₀₂₅: Neuroticism does not moderate (strengthen) the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a25}: Neuroticism moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

The Workplace Ostracism Scale (Ferris et al., 2008) was used to measure workplace ostracism, the individuals' psychological safety was assessed by using Edmondson's (1999) team learning and psychological safety survey, and individuals' personality traits were determined using Goldberg's (1999) 50-item international personality item pool (IPIP). Relying on the linear regression analysis, I assessed the relationship between workplace ostracism (independent variable) and employees' psychological safety (dependent variable). The regression analysis was used for each personality trait to test if personality traits moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and individuals' safety.

Conceptual Framework

To conceptualize why workplace ostracism might adversely impact employees' psychological safety and the role personality traits play in this impact, I drew on Edmondson's (1999) concept of psychological safety, Tett et al.'s (2021) trait activation theory (TAT), and the universal big five factor model of personality traits.

Edmondson's Psychological Safety

As conceptualized by Edmondson (1999), psychological safety refers to an

interpersonal climate in which individuals believe they will not face negative consequences for speaking up or making mistakes. This concept is grounded in interpersonal trust and mutual respect, enabling team members to engage in learning behaviors and take interpersonal risks without fear of adverse outcomes (Kahn, 1990). Edmondson's (1999) work emphasizes that psychological safety fosters an environment where feedback is actively sought, information is shared, mistakes are openly discussed, and established norms are challenged. Schein and Bennis (1965) introduced the psychological safety construct when they attempted to explain the reason for human interpersonal interaction to reach an integrated learning experience in a laboratory training setting. They suggested that psychological safety is essential in achieving a mutual goal by overcoming learning anxiety and defensiveness. In 1990, Kahn further contributed to organizational science studies on this topic. The results of his qualitative study conducted among counselors of a summer camp and architecture firm employees indicated the positive impact of psychological safety on individuals' work engagement. These studies support the need for psychological safety at work to understand what contributes to developing psychological safety needed for growth and innovation (Edmondson, 1999; Kahn, 1990).

This study assessed the impact of workplace ostracism on individuals' psychological safety. Workplace ostracism is an "interpersonal stressor" that can lead to psychological and physical harm (Choi, 2020, p. 334). As Lekchiri et al. (2020) explained, when individuals are treated differently—noticeably and unfavorably—they tend to personalize these experiences, believing that the harmful behavior is a

consequence of their actions, even though those actions could not be defined. Social interaction is essential for individual, team, and organizational success. Therefore, this study focused on the concept of psychological safety to determine and understand the relationship between workplace ostracism and individuals' psychological safety.

Trait Activation Theory

Tett et al.'s (2021) TAT proposes that individuals' responses and behaviors are influenced by the alignment between their personality and situational factors. TAT posits that personality traits become activated in specific contexts, leading to variations in behavior. For example, individuals with high agreeableness may be more affected by workplace environments that do not align with their values, while work standards may influence those high in conscientiousness. This theory is instrumental in understanding how personality traits influence responses to workplace ostracism and other environmental stressors (Tett et al., 2013).

The Big Five Factor Model

The universal big five factor (BFF) model includes five key personality traits: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. These traits have been extensively studied to predict various aspects of individual behavior. This study relied on the model to understand individual differences in a workplace setting and examine whether the impact of workplace ostracism on psychological safety differs among the BFFs of personality traits. This model helped understand how these traits influence individuals' responses to workplace environments and their psychological safety (Soto, 2018). An in-depth review of the psychological

safety concept and its relationship with workplace ostracism, along with the role of the TAT and the BFF model in understanding this relationship, will be provided in Chapter 2 under the conceptual framework section.

Nature of the Study

This study applied a quantitative research design to examine the impact of workplace ostracism on psychological safety and the moderating role of the big five personality traits. The rationale for selecting a quantitative design was grounded in the need for precise measurement and statistical analysis of the relationships among these variables. Quantitative methods are well-suited for assessing the strength and direction of relationships between independent, dependent, and moderating variables, allowing for the identification of significant patterns and correlations (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

To address the research questions in this quantitative study, I used a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from individuals at one point in time to assess the impact of workplace ostracism on employees' psychological safety and the role personality plays in the relationship among these variables. A cross-sectional survey provides a snapshot of time and allows researchers to understand better a population of interest (Lavrakas, 2008). A cross-sectional survey was appropriately supporting this study as it befits all modes of data collection, and data can be repeated with nonprobability convenience sampling. Therefore, I was able to assess how employee exclusion and personality traits impact the workplace environment. For my planned research design, I needed access to employed individuals with recent direct experiences with workplace ostracism at their current workplace. The questionnaire was distributed to

randomly selected individuals. The validated instruments used in the study collected data using questions related to workplace ostracism, psychological safety, and the big five personality traits.

Data were collected from employees across various organizations using an online structured survey. For this study, workplace ostracism was the independent variable, psychological safety was the dependent variable, and the big five personality traits were the moderating variables. Data were collected from a sample of employed adults with recent (within the past 6 months) direct experience with workplace ostracism at their current workplaces. The sample was obtained from various organizations using social media platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn. The study included male and female employees with different ethnic backgrounds and employees with different roles and responsibilities. This approach ensured comprehensive data analysis, contributing to a better understanding of the dynamics at play in workplace environments.

Definitions

The following concepts are defined for this study:

Big Five Factor (BFF): The BFF model is a widely used framework for understanding personality traits, encompassing five broad dimensions that describe human personality. Openness to experience is characterized by a high level of intellectual curiosity, creativity, and a willingness to explore novel ideas and experiences. Individuals scoring high on this trait are often imaginative and open-minded, while those with low scores may prefer routine and conventional experiences (Soto et al., 2016). Conscientiousness involves being diligent, organized, and dependable. Individuals high

in conscientiousness exhibit a strong work ethic, attention to detail, and goal-oriented behavior, whereas those with low conscientiousness may struggle with organization and reliability (Soto et al., 2016). Extroversion is characterized by sociability, assertiveness, and a high level of energy and enthusiasm. Extroverted individuals are typically outgoing and enjoy social interactions, while introverted individuals may prefer solitude and less social engagement (Soto et al., 2016). Agreeableness refers to traits such as empathy, kindness, and cooperativeness. Individuals high in agreeableness are generally trusting and supportive, whereas those low in this trait may be more competitive and less empathetic (Soto et al., 2016). Neuroticism involves a tendency toward emotional instability, anxiety, and mood swings. Individuals high in neuroticism may experience frequent stress and negative emotions, while those low in neuroticism tend to be more emotionally stable (Soto et al., 2016).

Moderator: In the context of this study, the BFF traits are considered moderators. A moderator variable influences the strength or direction of the relationship between an independent variable (workplace ostracism) and a dependent variable (psychological safety). For example, individual differences in personality traits may affect how workplace ostracism impacts psychological safety, with traits such as agreeableness or neuroticism potentially altering the degree of this impact (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

Psychological safety (PS): Psychological safety is defined as an interpersonal climate in which individuals feel free to take risks, express themselves, and make mistakes without fear of negative consequences to their self-image, status, or career (Edmondson, 1999). It is characterized by mutual respect and trust within a team or

organization, allowing employees to voice concerns, seek feedback, and engage in open dialogue without fear of reprisal (Kahn, 1990). This construct has been linked to increased learning behaviors, knowledge sharing, and team innovation (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

Workplace ostracism (WPO): Workplace ostracism refers to the experience of being ignored, excluded, or marginalized by colleagues or supervisors in a work environment. It involves social isolation, where the affected individual perceives a lack of acknowledgment or interaction from others, which can lead to adverse emotional and psychological outcomes (Ferris et al., 2008). This phenomenon can impact employees' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and engagement (Williams, 2007).

Assumptions

Several assumptions identified in this study were critical to data meaningfulness and validity. Participants were assumed to respond truthfully and accurately to the survey questions measuring workplace ostracism, PS, and personality traits. This assumption is critical because the study relied on self-reported data to capture employees' perceptions and experiences. Accurate reporting is essential for valid measurements and subsequent analyses. Despite the inherent limitations of self-reported data, such as social desirability bias, this assumption was necessary to obtain genuine insights into how workplace ostracism affects PS and the moderating role of personality traits (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

It was also assumed that the instruments used in this study are valid and reliable measures of workplace ostracism, PS, and personality traits. The Workplace Ostracism Scale (O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020), Psychological Safety Scale (Edmondson, 1999),

and IPIP (Goldberg, 1999) are assumed to accurately and consistently measure the constructs they are designed to assess. This assumption is essential for ensuring that the study's findings are based on sound measurements and that any observed relationships are credible (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955).

The study assumed that participants' big five personality traits are relatively stable over the short term. This assumption is necessary because the research investigates how these traits moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS. The stability of personality traits ensures that any observed effects can be attributed to their interaction with workplace ostracism rather than fluctuations in personality over time (Roberts et al., 2006).

It was assumed that participants interpret the concept of PS consistently, reflecting the construct as defined by Edmondson (1999). This assumption was critical for ensuring that the measure of PS accurately captures the intended construct and that variations in responses are attributable to differences in PS rather than differing interpretations of the concept (Edmondson, 1999).

Furthermore, it was assumed that the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety and the moderating effect of personality traits can be observed in the sample population. This assumption was necessary to ensure the study's findings are applicable and relevant to the population studied. By assuming these relationships can be detected, the study aimed to provide meaningful and generalizable insights into similar organizational contexts (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000).

These assumptions underpinned the research design and methodology, facilitating

a meaningful examination of how workplace ostracism impacts PS and how personality traits moderate this relationship. Addressing these assumptions helped ensure the study's validity and relevance to organizational behavior research.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on employees within various industries who have experienced workplace ostracism, utilizing a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from a broad population within a limited time frame. The focus on workplace ostracism addresses a critical issue in understanding how social exclusion affects PS. By concentrating on this form of mistreatment, the study aimed to provide insights into how such experiences impact employees' perceptions of safety and openness in their work environment, thus addressing internal validity concerns related to the research problem (Edmondson, 1999; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020).

The scope of this study included currently employed individuals who have reported experiencing workplace ostracism. This focus ensured that the findings are relevant to individuals actively engaged in the workforce who have had direct or indirect experiences with the phenomenon under investigation. By excluding individuals who are not currently employed or those who have not experienced ostracism, the study focuses on those most relevant to the research questions. This approach helped to ensure that the research findings are specific and applicable to the targeted population, avoiding dilution of results with data from unrelated groups.

While the study is anchored in Edmondson's (1999) concept of PS, Tett et al.'s (2021) TAT, and the big five personality traits, it did not explore other potential forms of

workplace mistreatment, such as bullying or harassment. Additionally, theories like social exchange theory or job demands-resources theory were not investigated. These delimitations are essential for maintaining a focused analysis of the specific variables of interest and preventing the inclusion of unrelated concepts that could complicate the findings.

The generalizability of the study's findings may be constrained to employees who have experienced workplace ostracism within the contexts studied. Although using a diverse sample across industries enhances the external validity of the research, the results may not be fully applicable to populations outside the study's parameters, such as those in different cultural or organizational settings. To assess the broader applicability of the findings, future research may need to replicate the study in various contexts or include other forms of workplace mistreatment.

Limitations

This study identified several limitations related to design and methodological weaknesses that could affect its validity and reliability. First, accessing participants who have experienced workplace ostracism presents a significant challenge. Although workplace ostracism is common, identifying individuals willing to share their experiences can be difficult due to the topic's potentially harmful and sensitive nature. To mitigate this issue, the study ensured confidentiality and anonymity for participants, which was essential for creating a psychologically safe environment that encourages honest responses (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

A second limitation involved potential non-response bias and recruiting a

sufficiently large sample size. To address this, the study leveraged social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn for data collection. Efforts focused on engaging with LinkedIn and Facebook groups that discuss the PS climate. This approach was to help that the sample size meets the criteria and reduces the risk of bias associated with voluntary participation (Field, 2013).

The use of convenience sampling represented another methodological limitation. Convenience sampling may result in an uneven distribution of participants across various measures, which can affect the generalizability of the findings. Specifically, there may be a need to oversample individuals who have experienced workplace ostracism to obtain a representative distribution of responses. This is particularly important if the base rate of ostracism among participants is low, as it may skew the results. To address this, the study implemented measures to balance the participants' distribution and enhance the findings' generalizability (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000).

In summary, the study addressed limitations by ensuring confidentiality and using social media platforms to reduce non-response bias. Oversampling that might be necessary to achieve a balanced distribution of responses and improve the study's validity. While these measures could have mitigated some limitations, it is essential to acknowledge that challenges such as response biases and sampling issues may still influence the study's outcomes.

Significance

The findings of this study have the potential to significantly advance knowledge in the discipline by providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between

workplace ostracism and PS, with a particular focus on the moderating role of personality traits through TAT. This research results offer new insights into how different personality traits influence individuals' responses to ostracism and their perceptions of PS within the workplace. By applying TAT, which emphasizes that individuals' behaviors are shaped by the interaction between their personality traits and situational factors (Tett et al., 2021), the study contributed to the understanding of how personality traits like openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism moderate the impact of workplace ostracism on PS. This theoretical significance lies in expanding the application of TAT to the specific context of workplace dynamics and PS.

Practically, the study's findings offer valuable implications for organizations aiming to create more inclusive and psychologically safe work environments. By identifying how various personality traits impact the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS, organizations can design targeted interventions to address and mitigate the adverse effects of ostracism. For example, understanding that individuals with high neuroticism may be more adversely affected by ostracism can lead to tailored support strategies for such employees, fostering a more supportive and responsive work environment (Tett et al., 2021).

The study results could also have significant implications for policy development and managerial practices. It advocates for creating policies and practices that recognize and address the moderating effects of personality traits on workplace ostracism and PS. Managers can use the insights from this research to develop targeted interventions and support systems that cater to the diverse personality profiles within their teams, thus

improving overall employee engagement and reducing turnover (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Kahn, 1990).

From a social change perspective, the research findings could foster healthier and more supportive work environments across industries. By highlighting the interplay between personality traits and workplace ostracism, this study can drive awareness of the need for individualized support and inclusive practices. This could lead to a broader movement toward more equitable and supportive workplaces, ultimately contributing to positive social change by addressing and mitigating the adverse effects of ostracism (Braedley et al., 2018; Khalid et al., 2020).

Summary

This chapter established a foundation for the study by addressing several key aspects. It began with an introduction that underscored the importance of examining how workplace ostracism impacts PS and how personality traits influence this relationship. The background section detailed the significance of PS for organizational success. At the same time, the problem statement identified a gap in understanding how various personality traits affect the relationship between ostracism and PS.

The purpose statement clarified that the study aimed to quantitatively explore and describe these relationships. Specifically, it examined workplace ostracism as the independent variable, PS as the dependent variable, and the big five personality traits as moderators. The conceptual framework integrated Edmondson's (1999) concept of PS, the TAT by Tett et al. (2021), and the big five personality traits.

The nature of the study justified using a cross-sectional survey design, outlining

key variables and the methodology for data collection and analysis. It also addressed critical assumptions, such as the expectation that participants will answer honestly and that the study's measures are valid and reliable. The scope and delimitations defined the study's focus on employees who have experienced ostracism, excluding other forms of mistreatment and non-employees. Limitations, including difficulties in accessing participants and potential non-response bias, and strategies to address these issues were discussed. The study's significance was emphasized, noting its potential to advance theoretical understanding, inform organizational practices, and promote positive social change.

As I transition to Chapter 2, the focus will shift to a detailed review of the existing literature. This chapter will outline the literature search strategy, provide a thorough conceptual foundation, and present a comprehensive literature review that further explores the relationships and gaps identified in this study. The review will synthesize current research on PS, workplace ostracism, and personality traits, setting the stage for a deeper understanding of the study's context and theoretical underpinnings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Significant research has been conducted on the consequences of a toxic workplace culture for employees and employers for over two decades (Asmita et al., 2024; Howard et al., 2020; Hua et al., 2023; Sharma & Dhar, 2022; Xu et al., 2020). Researchers have stressed the significance of developing PS among individuals, teams, and organizations (Edmondson, 1999; Kahn, 1990). For organizational leadership, it becomes important to explore the areas through which they can receive more advantages in terms of employees and organizational growth to have an edge over their competitors. The work environment and PS are considered critical success factors for both individual and business performance (Baer & Frese, 2002; Edmondson, 1999; Ge, 2020; Khalid et al., 2020; Moake et al., 2019).

Early pioneers in PS research identified its critical role in organizational learning and change (Schein & Bennis, 1965) and personal involvement with work itself (Kahn, 1990). Research has shown its impact on multiple dimensions like team efficacy (Edmondson, 1999), work engagement and motivation of an employee to achieve organizational goals (Frazier et al., 2017), inter-personal relationships, trust, and growth, innovation (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Edmondson (1999) observed that PS is nurtured through interpersonal respect and trust between team members, where people can take social risks with one another. Lack of PS has the opposite effect on learning behaviors and performance. Because of this, the need to create PS in an organization is not just for benefits but rather a necessity, as it will eventually lead to continuous improvement and innovation.

PS is an essential concept for organizational well-being. Various negative workplace experiences can significantly influence these perceptions. Among these detrimental experiences are bullying (Kwan et al., 2016), racism, sexism, harassment, unfair treatment (Braedley et al., 2018), gender bias (Lekchiri et al., 2020), abusive leadership (Ferris et al., 2008), as well as social exclusion and rejection (Williams, 2007). This array of experiences impacts employees' psychological health and safety and, consequently, organizational growth. Notably, hostile workplace events, such as workplace ostracism, adversely affect the feeling of belonging, control, self-esteem, and meaningful existence (Mao et al., 2018). Additionally, it restrains individuals from fostering courageous and meaningful social interactions with their peers (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018). Recognizing the prevalence of workplace ostracism (O'Reilly et al., 2015) and significance of employees' PS, this quantitative research study was designed to evaluate the influence of workplace ostracism on employees' PS. The research aimed to contribute insights into the dynamics of workplace interactions and their impact on the PS of individuals within organizational settings.

Similar to workplace experiences, personality traits are significant elements in an employee–workplace relationship. Personality traits come into play when individuals find themselves in trait-relevant workplace settings, triggering distinctive behavioral patterns. According to Tett et al. (2021), TAT posits that individuals adapt their behavior to situations aligned with their inherent traits. Employees' optimal performance is observed in environments where their authenticity is recognized and valued. Concurrently, organizations benefit when employees possess traits that align seamlessly with

organizational systems.

Moreover, the role of personality dimensions extends to predicting hostile behavior (Howard et al., 2020). These dimensions also serve as barriers and facilitators of PS within the workplace. Despite this recognition, a significant gap exists in understanding how these personality factors influence the intricate relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' PS. Thus, this study aimed to investigate how personality factors interact with these variables.

This chapter also provides an overview of the literature search strategies, the theoretical framework for the study, and a review of the relevant literature. The literature review offers an in-depth analysis and synthesis of the peer-reviewed studies concerning employees' PS, workplace ostracism as a barrier to employees' PS, and personality traits' role in the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS.

Literature Search Strategy

This chapter begins with a focused review of the literature concerning the impact of workplace ostracism on individuals' PS and the moderating effect of personality traits on their relationships. My attention was on academic journals published between 2018 and 2024; however, the scope of the literature review included references from historical, primary scholarly work going back as far as 1965. I used major online search engines like UC Berkeley Library, Google Scholar, and Walden University Library to find relevant peer-reviewed articles. The databases accessed for this study include APA PsycInfo, APA PsycArticles, Business Source Complete, Complementary Index, Directory of Open Access Journals, Emerald Insight, MEDLINE with Full Text, Science Direct, SocINDEX

with Full Text, Supplemental Index, and Thoreau. To conduct this research, I explicitly used the following key terms: *psychological safety*, *psychological safety climate*, *workplace environment*, *workplace bullying* or *workplace harassment* or *workplace violence*, *workplace ostracism*, and *personality traits* or *big five* or *five factor model* or *neuroticism* or *extroversion* or *openness to experience* or *agreeableness* or *consciousness*. The literature identified included studies on the impact of hostile work environments on employees' behavior, physical and psychological health, and the role personality traits and other factors play in these relationships.

Conceptual Framework

This research study is anchored in key Edmondson's (1999) conceptualization of PS, Tett et al.'s (2021) TAT, and the universal BFF model of personality traits. PS offers valuable insights into how employees behave in their work environment. Additionally, the BFFs and the TAT contribute to identifying individual personality characteristics and comprehending how individuals respond in situations that align with these traits, respectively.

Psychological Safety

This study extends the knowledge of Edmondson's (1999) concept of PS, identified as an interpersonal construct founded on the collective belief that the team provides a safe space for taking interpersonal risks. This construct is built on interpersonal trust and mutual respect. PS empowers individuals to express themselves and employ their abilities without adversely affecting their self-image, status, or career (Kahn, 1990).

As Edmondson (1999) and Kahn (1990) argued, PS offers profound insights into learning behavior and performance dynamics, ultimately influencing team effectiveness. Although their investigations reveal nuances in applying this concept, whether at the individual or team level, both scholars concur with its merits. Edmondson established a significant link between PS and team learning behaviors such as actively seeking feedback, sharing information, openly discussing mistakes and errors, and demonstrating a willingness to challenge the established norms. Kahn furthered the perspective of PS in his research on how individual engagement fosters interpersonal relations and group dynamics within and across teams. Kahn posited that individuals are more willing to take risks and explore opportunities within a supportive environment that nurtures trust. PS impacts individuals' engagement or disengagement (Kahn, 1990), the willingness to voice concerns, and expressive behavior (Ge, 2020; Ito et al., 2022; O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). It also positively impacts organizational communication, learning (Chao et al., 2021), transparency, interprofessional collaboration, and innovation (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Ito et al., 2022). The benefits associated with PS consistently emerge across diverse research findings.

The work environment shapes individuals' behavior by influencing their attitudes, motivation, and overall role. Despite this profound impact, many workplaces fail to foster a positive atmosphere. At the same time, organizations have a legal mandate to eliminate hostile environments, such as discrimination and retaliation (U.S. EEOC, n.d.-c); various forms of hostile workplace events still persist, posing significant threats to PS and employee well-being. Adverse workplace events such as racism, sexism, harassment,

unfair treatment, disrespect (Braedley et al., 2018), gender bias (Lekchiri et al., 2020), and workplace bullying (Kwan et al., 2016; Munro & Phillips, 2023), can lead to adverse health conditions, emotional exhaustion (Kwan et al., 2016). It can deteriorate trust (Lekchiri et al., 2020) and impact individuals' speaking up (Munro & Phillips, 2023) and knowledge-sharing (Khalid et al., 2020) behavior. Edmondson's (1999) theory of PS highlights the importance of trust and respect in fostering relationships that promote risk-taking, learning, and growth. Scholars can benefit from a deeper insight into what causes PS development and deterioration.

Trait Activation Theory

TAT (Tett et al., 2021) is incorporated within the theoretical framework to extend Edmondson's (1999) concept of PS. TAT suggests that individuals' responses to their environment are influenced by the alignment between their personality traits and situational factors. According to Tett et al. (2013), individuals demonstrate consistent behaviors when corresponding situational cues activate their traits. For instance, individuals with high agreeableness may be vulnerable to ostracism experiences as they tend to care more about social harmony. On the other hand, those high in conscientiousness might be more affected by work-related stressors. The TAT hypothesizes that employees' responses to hostile workplace events, such as workplace ostracism, will depend on the alignment between their personality traits and the situation. Individuals who receive recognition for their authentic selves are more likely to contribute to the success of tasks, groups, and organizations. TAT provides an understanding of how personality traits moderate the relationship between workplace

ostracism and PS, emphasizing the role of personality in shaping behavioral responses in different contexts.

Big Five Factor Model of Personality Traits

Similarly, personality traits related to learning behavior have also been determined to impact PS factors. The big five personality trait factors—openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—are frequently utilized to predict individuals' behavior. According to Soto (2018), individuals with high openness to experience are learning, thinking-oriented, and driven by natural intellectual curiosity. Conscientiousness represents a commitment to fulfill roles and responsibilities. These individuals demonstrate a goal-oriented nature and prefer structure and clear guidance. Extroverted individuals relish interaction with others and feel at ease expressing themselves in social settings. Those with high agreeableness exhibit strong regard, compassion, and respect for others. Conversely, individuals with neurotic traits are more likely to experience anxiety and emotional instability in challenging situations. This study used personality traits, the individual-level component of PS, to determine the moderating impact personality traits have on workplace ostracism and the PS relationship. By considering the BFFs of personality traits and the TAT, scholars could understand the impact of workplace ostracism on individuals' PS and how this relationship varies across the BFFs.

Rationale and Integration

Incorporating Edmondson's PS, Tett et al.'s TAT, and the BFF model provide a robust framework for understanding the interplay between workplace ostracism and PS.

Edmondson's theory provides a perspective on how supportive environments promote PS, while TAT explains individual traits' role in moderating this dynamic. The big five model further refines this understanding by detailing how specific personality traits influence responses to ostracism and contribute to PS.

By integrating this framework, the study addresses gaps in the literature regarding the interaction between PS, personality traits, and workplace ostracism. The research questions are designed to explore how these factors interrelate and to extend existing theoretical perspectives on PS and trait activation. This approach builds on established theories and contributes to a better understanding of how personality traits and the surrounding environment shape interactions and relationships in the workplace.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Psychological Safety at the Workplace

PS, a widely explored interpersonal construct, is pivotal in influencing individuals' behavior, developing employees and organizations, and fostering innovation. PS is essential for how employees interact and their capacity to openly discuss and correct business errors and mistakes without facing adverse impact or retaliation (Edmondson, 1999, 2018; Lee et al., 2020).

Pioneering PS research, Schein and Bennis (1965) employed a laboratory approach to investigate how learning opportunities are cultivated among individuals. Their observations of participants in the training group (T-group) unveiled the profound impact of PS on enhancing employees' adaptiveness and knowledge-sharing behavior, which are pivotal components of learning and change. They suggested that PS alleviates

anxiety stemming from a fear of exclusion and unworthiness, reduces barriers to change, and mitigates defensive and rigid behavior. Similarly, Kahn (1990), by assessing individuals' work attitudes and behaviors, associated PS (along with meaningfulness and availability) with factors of social systems that are non-threatening, predictable, and consistent, enabling employees' work engagement. Acknowledging that individuals' work attitudes and behaviors are shaped by their psychological experiences and that individual, interpersonal, group, intergroup, and organizational factors influence these experiences, Kahn opposed that the cornerstones of PS lie in interpersonal trust and respect.

PS serves as a catalyst in enabling employees to transcend defensiveness and learning anxiety, thereby promoting problem-solving and knowledge-sharing behaviors that contribute to the attainment of shared goals (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Edmondson (1999) has referred to PS as a "shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking" (p. 354). These interpersonal relationships determine organizational performance and learning abilities (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Lee et al., 2020; Moake et al., 2019). PS promotes individuals' job engagement, organizational commitment, creativity, proactivity, information exchange, extra-role behavior, and verbal communication (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). At the team level, PS fosters positive outcomes in learning activities and problem-solving. Although Schein's (1965) and Kahn's (1990) study focused on individuals' perceptions of PS, Edmondson's (1999) work identified PS as a team-level construct. Despite the differences in framing, PS, whether approached from an individual or team perspective,

adheres to the same fundamental principle—a work environment that encourages interpersonal risk-taking to foster personal and organizational development, learning behavior, performance improvement, and the achievement of competitive advantage.

The Outcome of Psychological Safety

While researchers agree on the importance of PS climate, they assessed the construct from various directions: organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., voice and speaking-up behavior), interpersonal factors (e.g., trust, respect, social and organizational support), and non-retaliatory culture. The repercussions of these factors have been thoroughly investigated, extending their influence on organizational, team, and individual levels.

Organizational Level

While PS is commonly studied as a team-level construct, empirical examples support its organizational-level impact. Often, researchers observe the construct in service-driven industries, such as education (Park & Kim, 2021), healthcare (O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020), and the airline industry (Lee et al., 2020), as the lack of PS in these industries could lead to detrimental consequences. Too much confidence in the authorities and the fear of challenging superiors' decisions could be hazardous to human health, lead to tragic incidents (e.g., a collision of aircraft, inappropriate medical treatment), and cause organizational corruption and legal consequences (Edmondson, 2018; Potipiroon & Wongpreedee, 2021). Low PS, characterized by a lack of appropriate supervisory support and procedural justice, could also provoke occupational stress and workplace bullying (Kwan et al., 2016) and increase turnover intent (cited in Remtulla et

al., 2021). Furthermore, Edmondson noted that fearful organizations could lead to a lack of complex innovation and competitive advantage. Organizations are more likely to adopt innovation processes with critical thinking, proposals for new ideas, and a proactive approach to challenge the status quo (Baer & Frese, 2002). However, without organizational policies that support employees' ability to speak up freely, propose new ideas, or identify risks and challenges, expertise and knowledge are not fully shared, leading to potential failures that could have been prevented otherwise. PS fosters innovative work behavior and organizational climate (Xu et al., 2022). While most researchers agree on PS's positive implications at the organizational level, Higgins et al.'s (2022) study indicated that PS alone does not impact organizational performance. Instead, accountability, time, and PS are significant positive indicators of organizational performance. Ultimately, these illustrate why organizations must do more to create a culture where employees feel safe sharing concerns and suggesting new ways forward. Complemented by accountability and adequate time, PS is essential for enhancing organizational performance and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Team Level

PS, described as a collective belief that it is safe to take interpersonal risks within a team (Edmondson, 1999), has become a focal point in organizational research. This synthesis aims to consolidate recent findings from peer-reviewed articles published in the past 5 years, exploring the impact of PS on team performance, innovation, learning, and overall well-being.

Recent studies have repeatedly underscored the positive relationship between PS

and team performance. For instance, Frazier et al. (2017) meta-analysis found that teams with higher PS demonstrated superior performance across various industries. Newman et al. (2017) explained that PS mitigates the fear of negative consequences, promoting open idea-sharing and feedback, which enhances problem-solving and decision-making processes. Sun and Huang's (2019) research in healthcare settings found that PS improves performance and reduces mistakes. Their study emphasized that PS facilitates open communication, which is critical in environments where mistakes can have significant consequences.

Researchers also explored the relationship between PS and innovation.

Edmondson and Lei (2014) proposed that PS fosters team innovation. Empirical evidence from Javed et al. (2018) supports this, indicating that PS creates an environment where team members feel comfortable proposing novel ideas without fear of ridicule, thus driving creativity and innovation. Furthermore, Kark and Carmeli (2020) found that PS encourages knowledge-sharing behaviors, which is essential in industries requiring continuous innovation to remain competitive.

PS is also pivotal in promoting team learning behaviors. Edmondson (1999) initially linked PS to team learning, and recent studies have expanded on this connection. Kostopoulos and Bozionelos (2019) demonstrated that teams with high PS are likelier to engage in reflective practices and continuous learning. Their research indicated that PS allows team members to admit mistakes, seek feedback, and discuss failures constructively, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Similarly, Edmondson and Harvey (2018) found that PS facilitates learning across different organizational domains.

Teams with higher PS better integrate diverse perspectives, enhancing collective learning and adaptability.

The importance of PS for team well-being has also been investigated in recent studies. Roussin and Webber (2019) found a positive correlation between PS and both job satisfaction and overall well-being among team members. Their finding suggested that when team members feel secure in expressing their true selves and voicing concerns, it alleviates stress and burnout, contributing to a more supportive work environment. Furthermore, Carmeli and Gittell (2009) revealed that PS enhances relational coordination, improving team cohesion and mutual support. This relational part of PS fosters a feeling of belonging and collective efficacy within teams, which has important implications for mental health outcomes.

Current literature points to the broader effects of PS on team-level outcomes. From enhancing team performance and fostering innovation to promoting team learning and well-being, PS is a pivotal factor in team dynamics. While the positive impacts of PS are well-documented, recent research has begun to explore potential negative consequences and limitations. Group thinking and overconfidence reduce individual accountability, and the possibility of misaligned goals, emotional exhaustion, and slower decision-making are documented negative impacts of PS at the team level. While PS brings many benefits, it can also lead to challenges, especially when it creates a setting where people hesitate to voice differing opinions and end up following the crowd.

A critical issue that can arise in this situation is groupthink, where the lack of diverse perspectives can hinder creativity and lead to poor decisions. When team

members feel too safe and comfortable, they may be less likely to challenge each other's ideas, leading to a lack of critical thinking and scrutiny. This phenomenon can result in overconfidence and poor decision-making. For instance, Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) noted that while PS encourages participation, it can sometimes lead to complacency, where dissenting opinions are stifled in favor of maintaining harmony. Similarly, high levels of PS may lead to a diffusion of responsibility, where individual accountability is diminished. This underlines the importance of personal responsibility and initiative, as team members might rely too heavily on the collective decision-making process, resulting in a lack of ownership over tasks and outcomes. In teams with high PS, there can be a tendency for members to support each other's ideas and efforts without adequately assessing alignment with the team's or organization's overarching goals. This can lead to efforts being expended on initiatives that, while well-intentioned, do not necessarily advance the organization's strategic objectives (Sanner & Bunderson, 2015). Additionally, PS encourages inclusive decision-making processes, which can sometimes slow down the decision-making process. When team members are encouraged to express their opinions and concerns, it can result in extended discussions and deliberations, potentially delaying actions (Bradley et al., 2012). This issue is particularly problematic in fast-paced environments where quick decision-making is essential.

While PS is mainly beneficial, teams and organizations must be aware of its potential drawbacks. Balancing PS with other elements, such as individual accountability, critical thinking, and alignment with organizational goals, is crucial. Further research is needed to explore strategies that can mitigate these negative impacts while cultivating

and sustaining the positive aspects of PS in diverse organizational contexts.

Individual Level

Although PS, as a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999), has been explored extensively at the team level, its implications at the individual level are equally profound and multifaceted. Kahn (1990) originated PS as an individual-level construct. In his qualitative study, he observed the summer camp counselors and members of an architecture firm. He studied personal engagement or disengagement, which results from individuals' physical, cognitive, and emotional attitudes during role performance. Constant engagement and openness could lead to emotional exhaustion, especially when team members are expected to share and discuss their thoughts and experiences continuously. Baer and Frese (2003) noted that requiring employees to maintain high levels of PS can sometimes lead to burnout. Individuals may feel pressured to constantly support their peers and engage in open communication, which can be exhausting over time and negatively affect their mental health and well-being.

Although PS can have some adverse effects, it generally enhances job performance and engagement, increases creativity and innovation, and improves well-being and job satisfaction. A meta-analysis by Newman et al. (2017) found that individuals who perceive their work environment as psychologically safe are likelier to display behaviors that contribute to higher performance. This safety reduces the fear of negative consequences, allowing individuals to take risks, share ideas, and express concerns openly, which fosters proactive behavior and job engagement. Similarly,

Edmondson and Lei (2014) argue that when people feel safe to voice unconventional ideas, they are more likely to engage in creative problem-solving and suggest innovative solutions. Frazier et al. (2017) support this notion, finding that PS encourages a culture of experimentation and openness, which is essential for innovative thinking. Further, Roussin and Webber (2019) indicated that psychologically safe individuals report higher job satisfaction and overall well-being. This is because PS reduces stress and anxiety, as individuals are not constantly worried about negative repercussions for their actions or ideas, creating a more supportive and satisfying work environment. While PS generally enhances job performance, creativity, learning, and well-being, balancing its benefits with strategies to mitigate potential downsides is essential. Achieving this balance is crucial for fostering a supportive yet challenging work environment that promotes individual growth, ultimately driving organizational success.

Workplace Ostracism and Its Impact

Workplace ostracism (WPO), a relational phenomenon, negatively affects individuals' well-being, behavior, and organizational success. It is considered a "powerful threat to people's need for belonging, self-esteem, shared understanding, and trust" (Williams, 2007, as cited in Li et al., 2021, p. 2). The term ostracism originates from the Greek word "ostrakimos", which was used to describe the process of "removing those with dictatorial ambitions from the democratic state (Zippelius, 1986, as cited in Yang & Treadway, 2018, p. 881). Similarly, in social psychology, ostracism is described as a behavior that manifests in purposeful exclusion and ignorance of an individual without any explanation. The exclusion and ignorance could range from being direct

when the individual is removed from their group to indirect when the perpetrators avoid eye contact or verbal communication with their targets. Since ostracism is a relational phenomenon, it has a significant direct impact on the targeted individual and an indirect impact on the organization. Previous scholars have used several theories to explain workplace ostracism's impact on an individual and organizational level. These theories, such as social exchange theory (Xu et al., 2020; Zhu & Zhang, 2021), conservation of resources theory (Wang et al., 2023; Xing & Li, 2022), belongingness theory (Williams & Liu, 2022) or self-determination theory (Luo et al., 2022) explain the relationship between individuals' behavior and ostracism. Additionally, while researchers also examined the impact workplace ostracism has on learning, knowledge sharing, trust, respect, individual and organizational growth, and interpersonal relationships – essential elements of PS – no research study has been conducted on how workplace ostracism impacts PS as one construct.

While social interaction is essential for individual and organizational success, workplace ostracism, also known as being neglected or excluded (Han & Hwang, 2021), is frequently present in workplaces, harming interpersonal relationships. In 2014, 71% of 100 employees surveyed from various companies were exposed to workplace ostracism (O'Reilly et al., 2015). These statistics are high, considering workplace ostracism as a barrier to employees' PS, promoting development and sustainable competitive advantage. Although being excluded from conversations or uninvited to meetings seems harmless, research shows that ostracism can harm the organization and individual, as discussed next.

Workplace Ostracism Impact on Organizational Growth

At the organizational level, ostracism can lead to decreased productivity and innovation. Employees experiencing workplace ostracism disassociate themselves from others and from belonging to the organization to protect themselves and their resources and knowledge. Individuals experiencing workplace ostracism develop and practice defensive and retaliatory behaviors that impact workplace productivity (Yang & Treadway, 2018), learning abilities (Ayoko, 2022; Han & Hwang, 2021), knowledge-sharing, and innovation (Xing & Li, 2022), essential for organizational development and success. They could intentionally withhold information that is detrimental to organizational performance. The reduced trust and increased conflict stemming from ostracism disrupt organizational cohesion and efficiency (Ferris et al., 2008). Workplace ostracism creates a connection gap between the excluded employee and the organization, negatively impacting employees' sense of belonging. As Xing and Li's research results on the relationship between workplace exclusion and innovative behavior indicated, ostracized individuals withhold information and disengage in innovative behavior to reduce the loss of their resources and protect their knowledge. Direct or indirect intentional isolation of employees harms interpersonal relationships and inhibits full job engagement (Xu et al., 2020). Several studies confirm that these counterproductive work behaviors, the lack of a sense of belonging and motivation could financially burden the organization and lead to turnover intention. Ostracized employees are 50% more likely to leave the organization, leading to a loss of talent and increased recruitment and training costs (O'Reilly et al., 2015). This turnover can also negatively impact the morale and

stability of the remaining employees, further stalling organizational growth. Therefore, the negative impact of workplace ostracism is undeniable.

Workplace Ostracism Impact on the Individual

Social exclusion represents disrespect for others (Singh & Srivastava, 2021). This phenomenon negatively influences individuals' cognitive function (processing social information, decision making), self-regulation process (Yang & Treadway, 2018), and psychological and physiological well-being. Ostracism in the workplace can severely impede learning and development. Williams (2007) posited that social exclusion reduces access to vital information and resources necessary for learning. Recent studies corroborate this, indicating that ostracized individuals are less likely to engage in knowledge-sharing behaviors. O'Reilly et al.'s (2015) research results indicated that 71% of full-time employees ($n = 1,300$) experienced ostracism in the past 6 months, significantly impacting their sense of belonging, well-being, affective commitment, and psychological withdrawal. This is because the experience of exclusion diminishes PS, which is crucial for open communication and collaborative learning (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Exclusion can also reduce self-directed motivation to learn. A study by O'Reilly et al. found that employees who felt ostracized reported a 40% lower intrinsic motivation to pursue professional development opportunities compared to their non-ostracized counterparts. This decreased level of motivation can result in a significant loss of potential growth for both the individual and the organization. Additionally, workplace ostracism undermines trust by fostering feelings of betrayal and insecurity. Balliet and Ferris (2013) demonstrated that ostracized individuals are 55% more likely to perceive

their colleagues as untrustworthy, which erodes the overall trust climate within the organization. Moreover, the erosion of trust due to ostracism can have long-lasting effects. A longitudinal study by Hitlan et al. (2006) found that the negative impact of ostracism on trust persisted over time, with 70% of affected individuals reporting lasting mistrust even after the ostracizing behavior had ceased. Long-lasting distrust can also harm team cohesion and collaboration, which are essential for organizational success.

Respect in the workplace, an element of the PS construct, is closely related to individuals' sense of self-worth and belonging. Ostracism deliberately challenges this by signaling that an individual is unworthy of attention or inclusion. The lack of respect associated with ostracism can also affect an individual's behavior. Poon (2013) found that employees who experienced ostracism were 45% more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors as a means of coping with the perceived disrespect. This affects the individual's well-being and harms the organizational environment. Similarly, interpersonal relationships are crucial for a supportive and productive work environment (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson, 2018; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Ostracism severely damages these relationships by creating an atmosphere of hostility and exclusion (Asmita et al., 2024; Howard et al., 2020; Sharma & Dhar, 2022). Moreover, the strain on interpersonal relationships extends beyond the immediate victims of ostracism. Observers of ostracism within the workplace may also experience increased anxiety and decreased trust, with 45% of employees reporting fear of becoming the next target (Robinson et al., 2013). Ostracized individuals experience emotional numbness (Sharma & Dhar, 2022). Such experiences, especially when prolonged, could lead to

hopelessness and depression and cause a suppressed immune response (Williams & Nida, 2022). Most importantly, workplace ostracism positively impacts defensive silence (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018; Özişli, 2022; Sahabuddin et al., 2023) and interpersonal deviance (Hua et al., 2023). These impacts are even more substantial in a collectivist culture where individuals appreciate close, interdependent relationships with others (Xu et al., 2020). When ostracism occurs, this relationship breaks and negatively impacts individuals' job engagement. Ostracism does not benefit the employees or organizations; instead, it creates a toxic work environment where collaboration and mutual support are undermined.

PS is only possible with interpersonal relationships, trust, and the exchange of ideas and concerns. Individuals and, consequently, organizations can only reach their best potential with the individuals' experience of PS. Therefore, fostering employees' PS is essential for organizational success and innovation. Thus, I proposed the following hypothesis:

H_{a1}: There is a statistically significant, negative relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' PS.

The Big Five Personality Traits in the Workplace

The big five personality traits are the framework for understanding different aspects of human personalities, which are grouped into five facets. Although the term big five originates from Goldberg (1992), McCrae and Costa are also significant contributors to determining the specifics of each personality factor (Dziak, 2020). The core personality traits have been defined after extensive research and analysis of individuals'

behaviors and attitudes. Nevertheless, over years of research, scholars relied on the five-factor personality traits – Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (OCEAN) – as a valuable framework for understanding personality differences. This section aims to explain how PS and the effects of workplace ostracism can differ across these traits, drawing attention to both the similarities and distinctions that contribute to a deeper understanding of these dynamics.

Understanding how personality traits influence behavior in the workplace is essential for creating strategies that promote a positive work environment and minimize the harmful effects of ostracism. The relationship between workplace ostracism and the big five personality traits has continued to interest many scholars (Bedi, 2021; Robinson & Judge, 2020). Researchers assessed how individuals with different personality traits experience and perceive workplace ostracism. According to the person-situation interaction theory, an individual's behavior is shaped by both their personality traits and how they perceive their environment (Bedi, 2021). Research results indicate that individuals who score high in conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness are less likely to experience workplace ostracism, while those with higher levels of neuroticism are more prone to it (Bedi, 2021; Howard et al., 2020; Sharma & Dhar, 2022). Additionally, Bedi's research results show that individuals prioritizing positive interpersonal relationships are more likely to approach challenges with a solution-oriented mindset. Such findings indicate that individuals experiencing interpersonal challenges will focus on resolving and re-establishing their needs undermined or disrupted by ostracism. Therefore, since individuals with higher levels of

conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness are focused on maintaining positive relationships, they are less likely to perceive workplace ostracism.

Similarly, Keshf and Anjum (2020) also showed the interaction of workplace ostracism with personality traits to predict interpersonal and organizational deviance. In addition, their results revealed that ostracism significantly predicts interpersonal deviance in employees with a high level of openness to experiences and agreeableness. Although the same applies to individuals with emotional stability, organizational deviance was a stronger predictor than interpersonal deviance. Additionally, research by Yang and Treadway (2018) revealed that individuals with a high need to belong are likelier to detect ostracizing behaviors from others and more sensitive to such behavior than those with a low need to belong. This sensitivity to social exclusion may worsen the harmful impact of workplace ostracism for those with a higher need to belong.

On the other hand, individuals with high neuroticism struggle to maintain harmonious relationships in the workplace as they are seen as more anxious and impulsive (Hitlan & Noel, 2009, as cited in Sharma & Dhar, 2022). Additionally, research shows that neurotic employees are inclined to poor interpersonal relationships, withholding tendencies, and respond to threats with hostile attitudes (Bedi, 2021; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001, as cited in Liu et al., 2019). Due to these characteristics, neurotic employees are more likely to be avoided, excluded, and thus ostracized. These results are supported by the person-situation interaction theory, which states that individuals' behavioral reaction to situations is a by-product of their personality traits and the situation (Mischel, 1968, 1977, as cited in Bedi, 2021). For this reason, the characteristics

associated with neuroticism, such as anxiety and impulsiveness, are likely to worsen the negative effect of challenging interactions at work, which can make them more subject to being left out or ostracized. By exploring these complex relationships, scholars can better understand how personality traits influence workplace dynamics and the importance of tailoring interventions to individual differences.

Openness to Experience

The openness to experience trait is linked with engagement and innovation (Connelly et al., 2018). It indicates the depth of individuals' engagement with their environment, including their intellectual curiosity, sensitivity, and creativity (Soto, 2018). People with higher levels of openness to experience are intellectually driven, enjoy learning, propose new ideas (Liu et al., 2023), and show innovative work behavior (Javed et al., 2020). Individuals with openness to experiences are likelier to thrive in psychologically safe environments due to their inherent curiosity and willingness to engage in new experiences (Hirsh & Peterson, 2020). Similarly, Bas and Tabanali (2020) indicated that individuals with openness to experience traits are more likely to adjust to different circumstances and be more receptive to changes; therefore, speaking up and voicing their thoughts is not a concern. They are also positively related to growth and development (Jiang et al., 2021) and idea implementation (Mi et al., 2024). While Hirak et al. (2012) found that individuals with higher openness are more likely to perceive their environment as psychologically safe because they seek out and embrace new experiences, Bas and Tabanali's and Sacramento et al. (2023) research results did not indicate a significant positive relationship between PS and openness to experience.

These discrepancies in research can indicate the importance of further assessing situational factors when assessing these relationships.

Additionally, research results from Zhu et al. (2019), Rudert et al. (2020), and Singh and Srivastava (2021) indicate a negative correlation with ostracism, which may suggest that openness may mitigate the negative impact of workplace ostracism by enabling individuals to seek alternative social connections and cope creatively with exclusion. These findings imply that openness to experience moderates the impact of PS and workplace ostracism on employee outcomes, highlighting the importance of considering individual differences in organizational interventions. Additionally, according to the TAT, environments that offer opportunities for creative expression and novel experiences can activate this trait (Tett et al., 2021); therefore, it could enhance PS. Thus, I proposed the following hypothesis:

H_{a21}: Employees' personality trait of openness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness illustrates the degree of individuals' productiveness and responsibility, as Rudert et al. (2020) cited. Individuals with higher conscientiousness traits are dedicated to their duties and responsibilities. They work with dedication under directives and structure, making this personality trait the most reliable predictor of productivity and performance. Connelly et al. (2018) noted that these employees are long-term goal-oriented and thrive on challenges and complex assignments. They are also independent, high-achievers, and detail-oriented individuals (Budianto,

2021). Conscientious employees are often perceived as dependable and competent, which could enhance their PS by fostering trust and respect from colleagues and supervisors. A research study by Budianto (2021) indicated that conscientious individuals were likelier to engage in proactive behaviors that foster PS when freedom and attention to detail requirements are provided. Their alignment with organizational standards and procedures can further reinforce this trust, creating a stable and predictable environment conducive to PS (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002). Conscientious individuals are also less likely to be ostracized in performance-oriented cultures where their diligence is valued (Robinson et al., 2013; Rudert et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2019).

Even though conscientious employees may initially cope better with ostracism due to their adaptability and problem-solving skills, they could become targets when they undermine team performance (Rudert et al., 2020). In work environments where mistakes are penalized, conscientious individuals might experience intensified anxiety and reluctance to take risks, leading to perceiving lower PS (Frazier et al., 2017). Additionally, in environments where high standards and perfectionism are not the norm, their behavior might be perceived as rigid or overly critical, increasing the risk of exclusion. Conscientiousness, characterized by diligence, reliability, and goal orientation, is most effectively expressed in structured environments emphasizing performance and strict compliance with rules. The TAT suggests conscientious individuals feel psychologically safe and likely to remain with the organization when fitting well with coworkers and work standards (Tett et al., 2021). Thus, I proposed the following hypothesis:

H_{a2}: Employees' personality trait of conscientiousness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS.

Extroversion

Extroversion traits are the most recurring element of the big five model in research studies. Extroversion traits are associated with conclusiveness, enthusiasm, and excitement toward their surroundings (Soto et al., 2016). Extroverts often perform well in an environment where their sociable nature can enhance team cohesion and collaboration. For instance, results from the study by Wilmot et al. (2019) indicated that extroverted employees' advantage at work relies on their drive to work and help others and their strong interpersonal relationships – also needed for a psychologically safe workplace. Extroverts are more likely to engage in open communication, seek feedback, and build supportive relationships (Carmeli et al., 2009), and they feel psychologically safe in an environment where they can cherish their social skills (Budianto, 2021). Their natural tendency to form strong interpersonal connections can promote trust and mutual respect, which are critical components of PS (Edmondson, 1999). Extroverts tend to be less predisposed to experience workplace ostracism due to their active engagement and visible presence in social and work-related activities (Ferris et al., 2008). Nonetheless, as Rudert et al. (2020) pointed out, their assertiveness could lead to interpersonal conflicts, which might increase the risk of ostracism if their behavior is perceived as overpowering. Conversely, Zhu et al.'s (2019) study results indicated a negative relationship between extroversion and perceived workplace ostracism.

The impact of extroversion on PS can be contingent on social competencies and

the climate for initiatives (Wihler et al., 2017). Specifically, extroverts with well-developed interpersonal skills thrive in environments that encourage personal initiative, enabling them to adapt their performance effectively to navigate unexpected challenges, manage crises, and meet demands for innovation. Moreover, Wilmot et al.'s (2019) synthesis of the meta-analytic evidence also suggests that introverts thrive in environments where team conflict and social interaction are higher. Therefore, extroverts might experience tension between their social nature and the need to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics in unstructured, competitive, or politically charged environments, potentially impacting their PS perceptions. However, while extroversion is positively associated with social interaction, their focus is on individual versus collective idea generation, decreasing team creativity and idea formulation (Marjanović et al., 2023). Although extroversion could result in situation-based, different behavior, the TAT suggests that extroverts feel more psychologically safe in environments encouraging social interaction and open communication because their traits align with situational cues promoting engagement and social tendencies (Wihler et al., 2017). Thus, I proposed the following hypothesis:

H_{a23}: Employees' personality trait of extroversion moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness traits are essential for jobs that demand regular interpersonal interactions, discretion, and diplomacy, as they are strongly linked to performance outcomes that emphasize teamwork, collaboration, and supportive interpersonal

behaviors (Connelly et al., 2018; Kang et al., 2023). Agreeableness is positively associated with trust (Soto et al., 2016), essential for PS. Individuals with higher agreeableness are compassionate, respectful toward others, and considerate of their rights and desires (Soto et al., 2016; Soto, 2018). Agreeable individuals are prone to create and sustain positive relationships, fostering a supportive and non-threatening work environment (Connelly et al., 2018; Kil et al., 2024). Their empathetic approach and conflict-avoidance tendencies minimize interpersonal conflict and promote harmonious interactions (Rudert et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2019). As a result of their collaborative nature and ability to connect with colleagues, they are generally less likely to be ostracized (Keshf & Anjum, 2020; Rudert et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2019).

However, it is essential to note that overly agreeable employees could prioritize harmony over honest communication, possibly discouraging alternative perspectives and innovative thinking, which are crucial for PS (Grant & Schwartz, 2011). Relationships in the workplace are complex, and individuals high in agreeableness could be ostracized not because of their susceptibility but because their personality is perceived as a poor fit with others. For instance, according to Kang et al. (2023), the agreeable trait is undesirable for employees in managerial roles as it could impact their ability to make challenging decisions and maintain their prosocial desires simultaneously. Agreeable individuals may be susceptible to workplace ostracism, given their strong desire for harmonious relationships. While the impact of individuals with this personality trait varies based on situational factors, it indicates that agreeableness influences the connection between PS and workplace ostracism, as it can foster inclusion or inadvertently lead to exclusion

depending on the workplace environment. Therefore, I proposed the following hypothesis:

H_{a24}: Employees' personality trait of agreeableness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS.

Neuroticism

Contrary to other traits, neuroticism is associated with experiencing negative emotions, defensiveness, and impulsive outbursts (Connelly et al., 2018). Neuroticism, characterized by tendencies for anxiety, moodiness, and emotional instability, is associated with lower levels of PS (Soto et al., 2016). Individuals with high neuroticism traits are likelier to perceive their environment as threatening and less likely to feel secure in taking interpersonal risks. Additionally, Ahmad's and Chowdhury's (2022) research results revealed that such individuals are perceived as challenging to approach and tend to exhibit risk-averse behavior (Kil et al., 2024). Their sensitivity to potential threats and criticism can aggravate feelings of vulnerability and lead to negative emotions (Connelly et al., 2018). These findings focus on the connection between neuroticism and workplace dynamics, highlighting the difficulties individuals with high levels of neurotic traits could encounter in building trust and establishing PS.

Workplace ostracism is strongly connected to neuroticism, as neurotic individuals' anxiety and emotional instability can lead to social withdrawal and difficulties in forming stable relationships (Keshf & Anjum, 2020). These individuals are more likely to experience emotional distress and ruminate over past negative experiences. Their negative affectivity could further contribute to perceiving or provoking ostracism,

creating a self-fulfilling cycle of exclusion and heightened insecurity (Williams, 2007). Individuals high in neuroticism are more sensitive to unfavorable situational triggers. According to TAT, the trait of neuroticism is likely to be activated in stressful or threatening environments (Tett et al., 2021). For example, a high-pressure workplace or an environment with high levels of conflict can trigger anxiety and emotional instability in neurotic individuals, leading to behaviors consistent with their trait profile (Smillie et al., 2011). Neuroticism can also impact interpersonal dynamics at work. While it can hinder the implementation of creative ideas, its negative impact may be mitigated through the mediating effect of user engagement, which can enhance contributions to innovation (Mi et al., 2024). Neurotic employees are less likely to perceive their environment as psychologically safe due to their heightened sensitivity to potential threats and criticism (Bolger & Zuckerman, 2021). Consequently, neuroticism, as a trait, is particularly reactive to negative situational cues, which can activate behaviors associated with emotional instability and stress reactivity. Thus, I proposed the following hypothesis:

H_{a25}: Employees' personality trait of neuroticism moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS.

As indicated, individuals with different levels of the big five personality traits perceive the world differently and behave accordingly. TAT offers a valuable framework for understanding the complex relationships between personality traits, PS, and workplace ostracism. This theory explains how specific situational cues bring out certain personality traits, providing insights into how individual dispositions interact with environmental factors. While personality traits like openness, extroversion, and

agreeableness can foster PS and protect against ostracism in supportive contexts, they may also lead to conflicts in less accommodating environments. For instance, high agreeableness might be perceived as a lack of strong opinions or values, leading to misunderstandings or exclusion by those with more assertive personalities. Similarly, introverts might clash with extroverts, or those high in conscientiousness might be avoided by colleagues who perceive them as overly critical or demanding. Neuroticism generally diminishes PS and intensifies the harmful effects of ostracism. Understanding these moderating effects is crucial for developing targeted strategies to enhance employee well-being and organizational performance. The findings of this study could potentially lead to the development of interventions that leverage personality traits to mitigate the negative effects of workplace ostracism, thereby enhancing PS and improving overall organizational performance.

Summary and Conclusions

This research is grounded in the frameworks of PS, TAT, and the BFF model of personality traits. As conceptualized by Edmondson (1999), PS is an interpersonal construct built on the belief that a team provides a safe space for taking interpersonal risks and fostering trust and mutual respect. It enables individuals to express themselves without fear of negative self-image, status, or career consequences. The BFFs model helps identify individual personality traits, and TAT explains how individuals' traits are activated by specific situations, influencing their behavior (Tett et al., 2021).

Central to Edmondson's (1999) framework, PS is crucial for team learning behaviors, performance, and effectiveness. It involves the collective belief that the team

environment supports interpersonal risk-taking without fear of negative consequences. Research has shown that PS enhances learning behaviors, feedback seeking, information sharing, and the willingness to challenge norms (Edmondson, 1999; Kahn, 1990). Kahn linked PS to work engagement and the ability to navigate social systems non-threateningly. Schein and Bennis (1965) highlighted its role in reducing anxiety and fostering adaptive behavior. Edmondson furthered this by identifying PS as a team-level construct that enhances performance, learning, and innovation. Psychological safety's positive impacts are well-documented at organizational, team, and individual levels, including job engagement, organizational commitment, creativity, and problem-solving (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). However, potential downsides include groupthink, reduced individual accountability, and slower decision-making (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Bradley et al., 2012). Barriers to PS include a lack of knowledge, rigid hierarchies, and hostile work environments characterized by discrimination, harassment, and bullying (Kwan et al., 2016; Lekchiri et al., 2020; Munro & Phillips, 2023). Facilitators include inclusive environments, supportive leadership, open communication, and organizational policies that promote trust and respect (Remtulla et al., 2021). These factors influence employees' behavior, impacting growth and innovation opportunities. Given the complexity of the PS construct and its interaction with workplace events such as ostracism, TAT provides an understanding of human traits and situations' influence on behavioral variance (Tett et al., 2013). Understanding the barriers and facilitators of individuals' PS could promote a fearless workplace where learning from mistakes and knowledge sharing becomes primary elements of innovation and growth.

The TAT emphasizes the interplay between personality traits and situational factors. It posits that individuals' responses are consistent with their personality traits when situations activate these traits. For example, individuals with high agreeableness may be more affected by feelings of exclusion, while those with high conscientiousness and emotional stability respond differently to work stressors (Tett et al., 2013). The theory helps explain how personality traits influence responses to hostile workplace events and the subsequent impact on PS.

The big five personality traits – openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism – predict individuals' behavior and interactions in the workplace. These traits influence how individuals perceive and respond to their work environment, impacting their PS. Openness is associated with learning and intellectual curiosity, conscientiousness with responsibility and goal orientation, extroversion with sociability and expressiveness, agreeableness with compassion and cooperation, and neuroticism with anxiety and emotional instability (Soto, 2018). Personality traits influence how individuals perceive and respond to workplace ostracism and PS. Openness to experience is associated with intellectual engagement and innovation, and individuals high in openness are more likely to thrive in psychologically safe environments due to their inherent curiosity (Connelly et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2021). Conscientiousness represents the degree of productivity and responsibility, fostering PS through trust and respect from colleagues (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002; Budianto, 2021; Rudert et al., 2020). This trait could foster PS through reliability and adherence to norms but can lead to anxiety in high-pressure environments (Frazier et al.,

2017). Extroverts typically flourish in psychologically safe environments, enhancing team cohesion and collaboration, but may experience heightened stress and reduced performance if excluded (Carmeli et al., 2009; Wilmot et al., 2019). Agreeableness fosters a supportive work environment but may lead to suppressed dissenting opinions (Connelly et al., 2018; Kang et al., 2023; Kil et al., 2024). Neuroticism is linked to lower PS due to heightened sensitivity to threats and criticism (Baer & Frese, 2003; Bolger & Zuckerman, 2021; Connelly et al., 2018; Bolger & Zuckerman, 2021) and higher sensitivity to workplace ostracism (Bolger & Zuckerman, 2021).

Workplace ostracism, or being ignored or excluded, significantly affects individuals' well-being and organizational success. It undermines PS by reducing trust, respect, and opportunities for open communication. Ostracized employees exhibit defensive behaviors, reduced job engagement, and lower motivation for professional development (Williams, 2007; O'Reilly et al., 2015). Ostracism also impacts organizational performance by decreasing productivity and innovation and increasing turnover intent (Ayoko, 2022; Han & Hwang, 2021; Xing & Li, 2022).

This study aimed to comprehensively understand workplace dynamics by integrating three significant frameworks: PS, TAT, and the BFF traits. It extends the existing literature on PS by exploring its relationship with workplace ostracism and the moderating effects of personality traits. The research results intend to offer valuable insights for developing tailored organizational interventions by highlighting how individual differences influence responses to workplace ostracism. These interventions can enhance PS, mitigate the adverse effects of ostracism, and foster a supportive and

innovative work environment.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This quantitative study was conducted to assess the impact of workplace ostracism (independent variable) on employees' PS (dependent variable) and the role personality (moderators) plays in the relationship among these variables. The results of this study intend to provide a better understanding of the impact workplace ostracism and personality traits have on employee PS. This chapter provides a general overview and rationale of the moderation analysis used for the study. The population, sampling, and sampling procedure, data collection and analysis plan, and instrument validity and reliability are also included. Lastly, the chapter concludes with validity threats and ethical concerns.

Research Design and Rationale

A quantitative approach with a regression-based, cross-sectional survey research design was used to conduct statistical analyses among the dependent and independent variables and their moderators. First, workplace ostracism's impact on employees' PS was examined. Second, I assessed the BFF model of personality traits' (openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) role in these variables' relationships. I applied multiple regression to conduct moderation analysis to examine and illustrate "numerical changes in measurable characteristics of a population of interest" (Kraska, 2022, p. 2) and to explain the relationship between these variables. The regression model is a valid scientific, quantitative method that tests whether and to what extent the independent or predictor variables explain the dependent or criterion variable (Segrin, 2022). By applying regression analysis, I tested scientific hypotheses about

whether and to what extent workplace ostracism impacts individuals' PS.

Additionally, this study analyzed how the big five personality factors impact the relationship between the predictor and outcome variable. The moderation model allowed such analysis. Moderation assumptions listed by Fein (2022) were fulfilled: (a) the dependent and independent variables are measured on a continuous scale, (b) moderator variables should be nominal variables with at least two groups, and (c) the variables should have a linear relationship with no significant outliers. Therefore, the regression moderation analysis was appropriate for conducting this study. The cross-sectional survey allowed the examination of multiple individuals with differing levels of personality traits who were experiencing workplace ostracism. Wang and Cheng (2020), in their examination of cross-sectional studies, identified that this research design entails the evaluation of data gathered from a population pertinent to the research question at a singular point in time. They further highlighted the advantages of cross-sectional studies, which include cost-effectiveness, promptness, and ease of access. The decision to employ this research design for the current study was predicated on the potential for generalizations derived from the data.

Methodology

The following section will describe the study population and sampling procedures, along with the reliability and validity of the selected instruments. It will conclude with the data collection and data analysis plan, threats to validity, and ethical considerations.

Population

According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2015), the nature of the population is based on the research problem and defined in terms of content, extent, and time. Therefore, to take part in the research study, individuals must have met several criteria. Inclusion criteria were as follows: (a) be eighteen or older, (b) work full-time at a U.S.-based organization, (c) work on-site, and (d) have direct experience with workplace ostracism within the past 6 months. While O'Reilly et al. (2015) indicated that 71% of the surveyed employees experience workplace ostracism, most individuals leave within 5 years. To effectively assess workplace ostracism's impact on employees' PS and avoid sampling bias, respondents experiencing workplace ostracism at any prior work location was included. Furthermore, stereotypes and biases toward people with physical or psychological disabilities harm acceptance and inclusive behavior toward employees with disability (Peng & Salter, 2021). According to the U.S. EEOC (n.d.-a) data on total discrimination and retaliation charges filed in fiscal year (FY) 2022, charges filed on the basis of disability yield the highest percentages (34%). Due to these facts, employees who self-identify as having visible or non-visible disabilities were included in the analysis, and disability served as a covariate to ensure an assessment of the actual relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' PS.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

This study used a nonprobability convenience sampling technique for data collection from the population of interest. A convenience sample is obtained when the researchers collect data from a readily available subset of the target population

(Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2015). Because the sample is easily obtainable, the cost associated with the method is relatively low (Salkind, 2022). The disadvantages of this technique include the constrained observation's scientific generalizability (Bhattacharjee, 2012) and the potential for selection bias (Salkind, 2022). Although employing convenience sampling may aid in hypothesis testing, researchers need to be aware of its constraints and take measures to ensure that the research findings accurately reflect the characteristics of the study participants rather than the broader target population, which is a step I took.

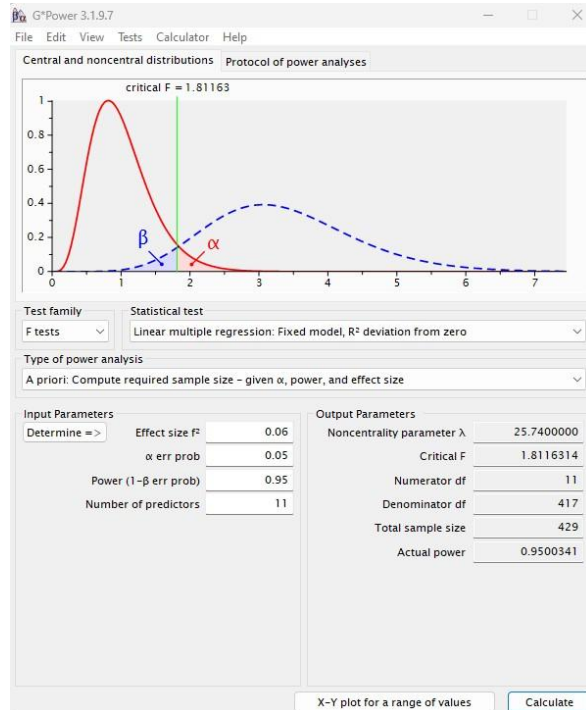
Participants in this study were identified through professional networking platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn to capture a diverse range of personality traits. Facebook, the largest social media platform in the United States, has over 223 million subscribers, with 74% actively using the platform (Clement, 2020, as cited in Skeens et al., 2022; Gramlich, 2019, as cited in Skeens et al., 2022). Similarly, LinkedIn, with over 202 million U.S. users as of 2023, is globally recognized for its focus on professional networking, learning, and development. Both platforms provide significant advantages, such as access to diverse populations, the potential for snowball sampling (Skeens et al., 2022), and efficient, data collection. Moreover, their broad reach and ease of engagement were intended to help recruit a sufficiently large sample size and address concerns of non-response bias effectively.

The power analytic approach was used to determine the sample size necessary for the study. This approach aimed to reject a false null hypothesis with a specified probability to avoid Type II error (Kelley, 2022). I used the G*Power software (version

3.1.9.7) to determine the minimum sample size for multiple linear regression. The input parameters for the analysis include the effect size $f^2 = .06$ (small-medium effect size), the desired alpha level $p < .05$, and the desired statistical power $1-\beta = .95$. Eleven predictors (main effect: workplace ostracism; moderators: BFFs, five interaction terms) are also included in the statistical power analysis. G*Power indicates that for the linear multiple regression test, a sample size of at least 429 respondents is needed to ensure a high probability of detecting an effect when one exists and a low probability of detecting an effect when none does. Figure 1 provides the summary of the analysis in G*Power.

Figure 1

*G*Power Calculation of Sample Size for Moderated Linear Multiple Regression Statistical Test*



Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Potential participants were recruited after Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB) grants approval to conduct the research study. Participants were recruited through social media platforms, specifically Facebook and LinkedIn. The recruitment post contained the invitation for social media (Appendix A) with a direct link to the SurveyMonkey questionnaire, starting with the anonymous survey consent form. The form included eligibility requirements, voluntary participation and privacy disclosure, and the Walden University's Research Participant Advocate and the student researcher's contact information. Individuals were asked to consent to participate in the study. By selecting "I consent" before accessing the survey, they agreed to voluntary participation, data collection, and the publication of research results while protecting confidentiality and anonymity. Once the consent was confirmed, participants were directed to complete the survey.

The survey was developed using SurveyMonkey, an online tool with a user-friendly interface that offers robust data security measures and supports advanced data exports to SPSS. The survey included four sections. The first section collected demographic information (Appendix B). Participants were asked about their gender and race, with options for gender identification, including male and female, and prefer not to answer. Regarding race, participants chose from options such as Hispanic or Latino, White, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Two or More Races. Age was assessed by requesting participants to indicate their age in years as an integer value. Labor data were

also collected from respondents. This included the years at the company (identified in years as an integer value), job category (executive/senior level officials and managers, first/mid-level officials and managers, professionals, technicians, sales workers, administrative support workers, craft workers, operatives, laborers and helpers, service workers), and the years in their current role (identified in years as an integer value). Lastly, participants were asked to note if their experience with workplace ostracism occurred at their current or previous workplace. The second, third, and fourth sections were comprised of Ferris et al.'s (2008) 10-item Workplace Ostracism Scale (measuring workplace ostracism), Edmondson's (1999) 7-item Team Learning and Psychological Safety Survey (measuring individuals' PS), and Goldberg's (1992) 50-item IPIP (identifying participants' personality traits), respectively. Once the survey was completed, participants received resources they can use to report workplace ostracism.

To mitigate potential psychological or emotional triggers from the survey content, participants had the right to terminate their participation at any time before submitting their responses. Only complete surveys were included in the research data and analyzed using IBM's SPSS statistical software. The data analysis process details are located under the Data Analysis Plan section.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

The online survey used for data collection consists of nine demographic questions and 66 questions from three combined, existing, and validated surveys: the Workplace Ostracism Scale, the Team Learning and Psychological Safety Survey, and the IPIP. The Workplace Ostracism Scale and the Psychological Safety Survey use a 7-point scale,

while the IPIP uses a 5-point scale.

Workplace Ostracism

The Workplace Ostracism Scale developed by Ferris et al. (2008) measured workplace ostracism. Permission to use the Workplace Ostracism Scale is shown in Appendix C. The measure of workplace ostracism consists of ten items (Appendix D). These items are behavioral in nature and specific to workplace ostracism, the perception of being ignored or excluded. The scores of the items are then summed up, where the highest total score signifies a higher degree of workplace ostracism. Items are measured on a 7-point scale, with response options ranging from 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Once in a while*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Fairly often*, 5 = *Often*, 6 = *Constantly*, and 7 = *Always*.

Ferris et al.'s (2008) coefficient alpha reliability estimates were between .89 and .94, and the average corrected item-total correlation ranged from .65 to .86 across four samples. These results indicate adequate internal reliability of the workplace ostracism scale. Other studies have found similar reliability results. Specifically, Hua et al. (2023) demonstrated that the measure had internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha of .89 in a sample of 233 employees (74.2% male) from a private petrochemical equipment manufacturing company in the northwestern part of China. The average age of participants was 33.38 years (SD = 5.74), with the average tenure in the organization was 4.92 years (SD = 3.43). Similarly, Khalid et al. (2020) confirmed the internal consistency reliability of the instrument with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .96. Their data were collected from 765 employees (49% male) in the hospitality industry (four and five-star hotels) of Pakistan. 46 % of participants were between the ages of 20 and 35, and 54%

were between 36 and 55. Over half of the respondents (56%) were in supervisory or first-line manager roles.

Several studies also provide validity evidence for the measure. Ferris et al. (2008) found that all scale items' factor loadings ranged from .50 to .93 across the four samples. Therefore, the factor analyses demonstrated that a single factor (workplace ostracism) fits the data well. Ferris et al.'s confirmatory analysis presented that workplace ostracism is a separate construct, while highly related to, yet discriminant from, undermining, perceived organizational support, interpersonal justice, leader-member exchange, group cohesion, and perceived organizational citizenship behavior norms. The measure has been successfully used in relevant research. Zhu and Zhang (2021) confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) of the four-factor model (including workplace ostracism, anger, turnover intention, and counterproductive work behavior) demonstrated acceptable fit [$\chi^2(568) = 1,504.98, p < 0.001; CFI = 0.92; TLI = 0.91$; root-mean-square error of approximation [RMSEA] = 0.06] and convergent validity. By contrasting the four-factor model against a three-factor model (loading items with the highest correlation, measuring anger and counterproductive work behaviors into one latent factor) and a one-factor model (loading all four constructs onto one latent factor), Zhu and Zhang' CFA results confirmed discriminant validity of the constructs. Their results are based on data collected from 426 employees (42.7% male) from different industries and companies in Shanghai and Suzhou. Most participants were between the ages of 22 and 26 (84.27%). Of the 426 employees, 73.71% were general workers, 17.84%, 6.81%, and 1.64% were first-line, middle, and top managers, respectively. 18.54% of participants had worked at the

company for less than one year, 59.86% had one to 5 years tenure, and 21.6% worked there for more than 5 years.

Psychological Safety

The Team Learning and Psychological Safety Survey, developed by Edmondson (1999), measured employees' PS. Permission to use the survey is shown in Appendix E. The measure of PS comprises seven items (Appendix F). The items are then summed: the highest total score indicates a higher degree of perceived PS. Items are measured on a 7-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from 1 = *I Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *I Strongly agree*.

Using factor analyses, Edmondson (1999) confirmed the internal consistency reliability by demonstrating that all items favorably impacted Cronbach's alpha. The measure has proven effective in prior studies, as Kim et al. (2021) demonstrated through a Likert 5-point scale, achieving a Cronbach's alpha score of .829 for its reliability. The sample comprised 394 employees (47.7% male) from travel-related industries. Most participants were over 30 (43.7% between ages 30 and 39, 22.1% between ages 40 and 49, and 13.2% over age 50). Additionally, the majority had less than 10 years of tenure in the organization, specifically 29.2% working between 5 and 10 years, 28.9% working between 3 and 5 years, and 24.9% working less than 3 years. Similarly, Kerrissey et al. (2022), while assessing the relationship between PS, feeling heard, burnout, and adaptation during uncertainty, confirmed the measurement's reliability. Confirmatory factor analysis verified the psychometric properties of PS. They reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.72 for internal consistency.

Furthermore, multiple other studies have also presented evidence supporting the validity of this measurement. Edmondson (1999) compared individual-level variables (internal motivation and job involvement) with group-level variables (team learning behavior and team PS) to demonstrate that PS is a group-level construct. Edmondson also established discriminant validity using the multitrait-multimethod matrix, which indicated a correlation between an average of .35 (within each item of a given scale and items in other scales) and an average of .25 (between each item of a given scale and all items in other scales). The measure has proven effective in relevant research. Hebles et al. (2022) confirmatory analysis of the four-factor model (PS, cognitive stress, supervisor support, turnover intentions) captured distinctive constructs. They reported $\chi^2(84, N = 145) = 162.68$, comparative fit index (CFI) = .93, Tucker—Lewis index (TLI) = .92, standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) = 0.06, and root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .08, and confirmed acceptable fit. Their findings are based on data collected from 145 full-time employees (53% female) working in public hospitals in Chile. The majority of these individuals, approximately 89%, held administrative roles, while the remaining 11% were engaged in healthcare-related functions. In terms of age distribution, 30% of the participants were aged 18 to 30, 43% were in the 31 to 40 age group, 18% were between 41 and 50, and the remaining 9% were above 50 years old. When it comes to their length of employment, 20% of the participants had been with their organization for less than one year, 22% had tenure between 1 and 3 years, 13% had been employed for 3 to 5 years, and the remaining 46% had worked for more than 5 years.

IPIP

To measure individuals' personality traits, I used Goldberg's (1992) IPIP. Obtaining permission to utilize IPIP items, scales, and inventories for any purpose was unnecessary, as the IPIP is accessible to the public in the public domain (Goldberg, n.d.; see Appendix G). The measure of personality comprises fifty items, each designed to encompass the five fundamental dimensions (openness/intellect, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism/emotional stability [OCEAN]) that underline a comprehensive evaluation of traits (refer to Appendix H). Each item corresponds to one of the five personality traits, but their direction of scoring could be negative or positive. Items are measured on a 5-point scale. The scoring instructions for the 50-item IPIP measures and the scale on which the item is scored are shown in Appendix I.

In Goldberg's (1999) study, regression analysis was used to compare scales (including AB5C, NEO, CPI, TCI, and 16PF) and their criterion variables. The results indicated that the IPIP scale showed strong predictive power. The Coefficient Alpha reliability estimate for IPIP scales targeted at the AB5C facets ranged from .70 to .80, with a mean of .78. Similarly, the Coefficient Alpha values were higher for the IPIP scales (.80) than for the NEO scales (.75) and 16PF scales (.74). These findings are based on data collected from 501 adults, aged 18 to 85, who were recruited from the Eugene-Springfield area in Oregon, USA. Additional research has yielded consistent findings in terms of reliability. Zheng et al.'s (2008) analysis revealed strong reliability scores for the 100-item and the 50-item IPIP. Their study, which included 633 heterosexual and 437

homosexual participants between the ages of 13 and 45 from various Chinese cities, indicated that the Coefficient Alpha ranged from .87 to .93 for the extended version and .69 to .87 for the shorter version. Similarly, Guenole and Chernyshenko (2005) confirmed the reliability (falling within the range of .78 to .88) of the IPIP 50-item measure. They obtained data from a group of 452 participants, consisting of 251 females and 201 males, who represented various ethnic backgrounds, including Asian (21), European (384), Indian (11), Maori (25), Pacific Island (10), and other (1).

Multiple studies have also provided evidence supporting the validity of measurement. Ehrhart et al. (2009) found strong convergent validity between the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) and the IPIP, as evidenced by the standardized factor loadings. In the IPIP, Extroversion exhibited factor loadings ranging from .63 to .74, Emotional Stability from .38 to .78, Agreeableness from .31 to .70, Conscientiousness from .38 to .68, and Intellect from .29 to .76—all statistically significant at $p < .05$. The TIPI factor loadings similarly indicated a satisfactory fit to the model. Furthermore, all correlations between the TIPI and the FFM scales were statistically significant, and all correlations among the factors were positive, providing evidence for convergent validity. These results were based on data collected from 902 undergraduate students in the USA, with an average age of 21.8 years. Most participants were Caucasian (57%), while 20% were Asian American, 13% were Hispanic, and 7% belonged to other ethnicities. In addition, Lim and Ployhart (2006) examined the five-factor structure of the IPIP scale using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with data from 353 undergraduate students (157 male) attending American universities. The participants had an average age of 18.9

years and a racial composition of 61% European American, 16% Black, 13% Asian, 5% Latino, and 5% from other racial backgrounds. The CFA results showed a good fit with $RMSEA = .06$, $SRMR = .05$, $CFI = .95$, and $NNFI = .93$. They also conducted multitrait-multimethod analysis, confirming both convergent and discriminant validity.

Data Analysis Plan

Data from the workplace ostracism scale, team learning and PS survey, IPIP, and demographics questionnaire were collected and analyzed. These instruments collect data on workplace ostracism, individuals' PS, participants' personality traits, and demographics. The aggregated data from the online questionnaire was analyzed and presented using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 28. SPSS is a software package for data collection and editing, advanced statistical analysis, modeling, and prediction. Before proceeding with the statistical analysis, incomplete data and responses with unmet inclusion criteria were removed. As part of the data preparation, the composite scores for each big five personality trait were calculated by averaging the item scores for each trait. The composite scores were also calculated for workplace ostracism and PS. Additionally, to reduce multicollinearity between main effects and interaction terms, centering the independent variable (workplace ostracism) and moderators (big five personality traits) were intended. To create the centered variable, the mean of the independent variable (workplace ostracism) is to be subtracted from each individual's workplace ostracism score. This gives the new centered ostracism variable a mean of zero. The same steps were intended to be followed to center the moderators. After centering the variables, the interaction terms were proposed to be

created for the moderation analysis by multiplying the centered independent variable by each centered moderator. To test whether extroversion moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS, the following interaction term was created:

$$\text{Workplace Ostracism (WPO) x Extroversion (E) = Centered WPO x Centered E}$$

This process was repeated for all five big five personality traits. I proceeded with the moderation analysis with the centered variables and created interaction terms.

Multiple regression analysis provides the ability to test for direct effects between variables and estimate and compare the strengths of those effects across different groups (Segrin, 2022). Therefore, the regression analysis allowed for assessing how and under what conditions the relationship between workplace ostracism (X_1 , independent variable, ratio scales of measurements) and individuals' PS (Y , dependent variable, ratio scales of measurements) is influenced by the big five personality traits (X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6 , moderators, ratio level of measurement). The regression model of the big five traits as moderators of the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Ostracism}_{\text{centered}}) + \beta_2 (\text{Openness}_{\text{centered}}) + \beta_3 (\text{Conscientiousness}_{\text{centered}}) + \beta_4 (\text{Extroversion}_{\text{centered}}) + \beta_5 (\text{Agreeableness}_{\text{centered}}) + \beta_6 (\text{Neuroticism}_{\text{centered}}) + \beta_7 (\text{Ostracism}_{\text{centered}} \times \text{Openness}_{\text{centered}}) + \beta_8 (\text{Ostracism}_{\text{centered}} \times \text{Conscientiousness}_{\text{centered}}) + \beta_9 (\text{Ostracism}_{\text{centered}} \times \text{Extroversion}_{\text{centered}}) + \beta_{10} (\text{Ostracism}_{\text{centered}} \times \text{Agreeableness}_{\text{centered}}) + \beta_{11} (\text{Ostracism}_{\text{centered}} \times \text{Neuroticism}_{\text{centered}}) + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y is **psychological safety** (dependent variable),
- B_0 is the intercept (the expected value of PS when all predictors are zero),

- $Ostracism_{centered}$ is the centered variable for **workplace ostracism**,
- $Openness_{centered}$, $Conscientiousness_{centered}$, $Extroversion_{centered}$, $Agreeableness_{centered}$, $Neuroticism_{centered}$ are the centered **big five** personality traits,
- $Ostracism_{centered} \times Openness_{centered}$ and the other terms are the **interaction terms** between workplace ostracism and each of the big five personality traits,
- ϵ is the **error term**.

Data were summarized using descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix, providing insight into the population and the results of each regression model.

Using multiple regression and moderation analysis, data were able to answer the following two research questions and test the hypotheses listed below:

RQ 1: What is the impact of workplace ostracism on employees' psychological safety?

H_01 : There is no statistically significant relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' psychological safety.

H_a1 : There is a statistically significant relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' psychological safety.

RQ 2: Do personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) moderate the relationship between ostracism and psychological safety?

H_02_1 : Openness does not moderate (strengthen) the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_a2_1 : Openness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_02_2 : Conscientiousness does not moderate (strengthen) the relationship between

workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a22}: Conscientiousness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H₀₂₃: Extroversion does not moderate (buffers) the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a23}: Extroversion moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H₀₂₄: Agreeableness does not moderate (buffers) the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a24}: Agreeableness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H₀₂₅: Neuroticism does not moderate (strengthen) the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a25}: Neuroticism moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

Threats to Validity

Assessing the validity of scientific research ensures the research method's efficacy, applicability, and replicability without forming false assumptions (Yu, n.d.). Internal and external factors may obscure the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables and the validity of the measurement; therefore, they are considered threats to validity (Giannatasio, 2008). As noted by Giannatasio, validity is examined when the following is tested:

1. Independent variables cause the expected corresponding change in the dependent variable.
2. The extent to which the findings of an experiment can be applied to different groups, settings, subjects, and conditions.
3. Measurement tools.

Further discussion on internal and external threats to validity follows below.

External Validity

Once external validity is assessed and addressed, researchers can generalize findings from their research study to benefit a larger population (Salkind, 2022). Therefore, the participant selection method is essential. This study aimed to use nonprobability convenience sampling for data collection, leading to a potentially uneven number of participants across the range of measures. It may require oversampling to ensure a sufficient number of respondents have experienced some degree of workplace ostracism.

Multiple treatment interference will likely occur when individuals receive multiple treatments (Giannatasio, 2008). In this research study, participants might have received resources from the organization where workplace ostracism occurred or attended therapy to mitigate the impact of ostracism. These resources may also affect the extent of individuals' PS. Although multiple treatment interference might pose a threat to this study, participants were not asked about any interventions they may have undergone, as these have no direct relevance to the research.

Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to the accuracy of the causal relationships between variables and indicates a direct, not mitigated, causal relationship between two variables (Salkind, 2022). Threats that could undermine the internal validity of this research study include selection. Although workplace ostracism is a common phenomenon, the challenge can consist of identifying participants willing to provide information related to this topic, as it might be a negative experience they do not want to revisit. To ensure individuals feel psychologically safe responding to the questionnaire, I ensured confidentiality (anonymity). Additionally, recruiting for a large enough sample size, considering the possibility of non-response bias, aimed to address by recruiting participants on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Construct Validity

Construct validity refers to the degree of consistency of the measurement (Salkind, 2022). In other words, construct validity occurs when the instrument measures what it intends to evaluate. The constructs identified in this study were measured by the original instruments used and published. The instructions provided to participants aligned with the purpose and variables of the study to promote a focus on the construct.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical Principles of Psychologists and the Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association [APA], 2017) are used as a guiding principle to ensure ethical procedures throughout this study. These principles promote honest, impartial research and protect human subjects from physical, mental, socio-economic, or legal harm. In

addition, approval from Walden University's IRB was obtained before the start of this research study to ensure ethical concerns are addressed and principles are met. Ethical procedures were include the following: (a) obtaining participants' consent to research a part of the survey, (b) using transparent, appropriate, inclusive, and unbiased language, (c) allowing participants to decline to participate and to withdraw from the study once participation has begun, (d) protecting participant's privacy and anonymity, and (e) avoiding false, deceptive or fraudulent statements concerning the research study and its findings. No incentives were offered to participate in this study.

Participants were recruited using social media. A statement of the purpose of the study and the participants' rights were included at the beginning of the questionnaire. Participants were asked to agree by clicking "I consent." to informed consent. The privacy and confidentiality of participants were ensured by not collecting personal-identifiable information and storing collected data in a password-protected file saved on an external drive. Collected data will be erased after 5 years.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to explore the connection between workplace ostracism and employees' PS. The research design included a cross-sectional, convenience sampling approach to conduct regression-based statistical analyses involving both the dependent and independent variables as well as their moderators. The study population comprised full-time employees in the United States holding various roles and responsibilities, all of whom have had recent direct or indirect exposure to workplace ostracism. Data were collected using the workplace ostracism scale, a survey

on team learning and PS, the international personality item pool (IPIP), and a demographic questionnaire. Rigorous measures were taken to mitigate threats to validity and safeguard the rights of participants. Chapter 4 will present the statistical findings of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

This quantitative, correlational research study was conducted to examine the relationships among workplace ostracism, PS, and personality traits as conceptualized by the five-factor model. The study addressed two central research questions. The first focused on the extent to which workplace ostracism—defined as the experience of being ignored or excluded by colleagues—is related to employees' perceptions of PS, or the belief that one can speak up, ask questions, or share ideas at work without fear of interpersonal repercussions. The second question explored whether different personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS. Based on prior research, it was hypothesized that higher levels of workplace ostracism would be associated with lower levels of PS. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that this relationship would vary depending on individual personality traits. More specifically, it was hypothesized that levels of neuroticism would be positively associated with stronger negative correlations between workplace ostracism and PS, reflecting the tendency of individuals high in neuroticism to experience heightened emotional sensitivity. In contrast, high level of conscientiousness was expected to show a weaker negative correlation. Extroversion and agreeableness were expected to mitigate the negative effects by enhancing social engagement and interpersonal resilience, whereas the role of openness was viewed as more uncertain. For this study, I used validated measures of the key constructs and statistical data analysis to explore these relationships, thereby helping the scholarly community gain a deeper understanding of the moderating role of personality traits. The

goal was to gain a deeper understanding of these dynamics at the individual level and inform organizational practices that support inclusive, psychologically safe work environments.

In this chapter, I outline the results of the data analysis conducted for the study. It begins with a summary of any deviations from the data collection procedures described in Chapter 3. Additionally, in the chapter, I present descriptive statistics of the participants, followed by reliability assessments and hypothesis testing, with a focus on the results of hypothesis testing and moderation analyses, which explore the relationships between the variables. The findings are organized around the research questions and hypotheses to ensure clarity and coherence, allowing for a structured and insightful interpretation of the data. Interpretation and discussion of the implications of these results are reserved for Chapter 5.

Data Collection

Timeframe

The application for IRB approval at Walden University was submitted on January 28, 2025. Approval was granted on February 6, 2025, under IRB number 02-06-25-0551503, with the approval valid until February 5, 2026. Some revisions were made to the invitation for social media (Appendix A) and the anonymous survey consent form to ensure they aligned with Walden University's guidelines outlined in the Anonymous Survey Manual. Data collection was conducted through SurveyMonkey, an online survey platform, utilizing social media channels such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Recruitment began on February 9, 2025, and ended on March 21, 2025. Any challenges encountered

with the recruitment strategy and data collection process will be addressed in the following section.

Discrepancies in Data Collection from the Plan Presented in Chapter 3

To address challenges related to participant recruitment and to achieve an acceptable sample size for the study, two key adjustments were implemented: an adjustment of the sample size and power level, and a broadening of the inclusion criteria. After data cleaning, the final sample consisted of 276 participants, providing a modest yet sufficient foundation for analysis.

Adjustment of Sample Size and Power Level

Based on a G*Power analysis, with a statistical power of .95, a sample size of 429 was recommended. While this would have maximized the chance of detecting true effects, reaching that number was not feasible within the available time and resources. To address this challenge, I reduced the power level to .80, which adjusted the target sample size to 290. This level of power is considered sufficient in behavioral research to detect medium effects while keeping the risk of Type II error (false negatives) at an acceptable level (Newton & Rudestam, 2013). Increasing the power level beyond .80 can yield diminishing returns in accuracy, especially when it significantly complicates data collection. In this case, the adjustment allowed the study to remain rigorous while making data collection more manageable.

Broadening of Participant Inclusion Criteria

The proposed participation eligibility criteria included individuals who experienced workplace ostracism at their current workplace. However, as recruitment

was more difficult than anticipated, the inclusion criteria were expanded to also include individuals who had experienced ostracism in a previous workplace. This practical decision was also theoretically supported. Hitlan et al.'s (2006) research results indicated that the effects of ostracism can persist long after the initial experience, continuing to impact an individual's sense of PS and well-being. Including individuals with past experiences provided a more comprehensive understanding of how workplace ostracism affects people over time.

Research Results

Recruitment and Response Rate

The survey was hosted on the SurveyMonkey platform, and data collection began by sharing the survey link across LinkedIn, Facebook, and various professional networking and social media platforms. Participants were invited to complete the survey voluntarily and anonymously. This initial recruitment effort resulted in 12 responses, but only two were fully completed. Due to this low response rate, I supplemented recruitment by using SurveyMonkey's paid survey services to boost participation. This adjustment did not require IRB approval.

With the paid surveys, I collected 1,497 responses. Of these 287 were complete, yielding a completion rate of 19.17%. After exclusions due to lack of consent and ineligibility, the final dataset included only those aged 18 or older, employed full-time at a U.S.-based organization, working on-site, and having direct or indirect experience with workplace ostracism at their current workplace. In addition, 11 responses were removed due to potential response bias, as these participants selected extreme values (1 or 7)

across all items related to workplace ostracism and PS—suggesting inattentive or patterned responding rather than genuine engagement with the survey content. After applying these filters, the final analytic sample consisted of 276 participants who met all eligibility and data quality criteria.

The low attrition rate reduced sample representativeness but did not necessarily compromise the validity of the findings. Through this research, I aimed to examine how individual personality traits moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS. The key finding is that, despite a non-representative sample, the variability in big five traits allowed for meaningful analysis of these moderating effects. However, the sample size introduced some statistical limitations, which are discussed next.

The sample size of 276 participants is relatively modest and falls below the recommended threshold for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing at a power level of 80% ($1-\beta = 0.80$). The lower response rate highlights several practical challenges experienced during recruitment and data collection—including an unpaid survey limiting outreach, a lower-than-anticipated engagement rate on social media platforms, and data collection on sensitive workplace issues, such as ostracism, proving more difficult than expected. Given these challenges, I revised my initial approach to data-gathering. In the following section, I will detail the discrepancies between the data collection plan outlined in Chapter 3 and the methods ultimately employed, highlighting the modifications implemented in response to these challenges to preserve the quality and reliability of the dataset.

Sample Description

The final sample consisted of 276 full-time employees currently working in U.S.-based organizations. Demographic data (see Table 1) showed a majority of male participants (60.5%, $n = 167$) and a sample that was predominantly White (65.9%, $n = 182$) with a smaller representation of Black or African American (12%, $n = 33$), Hispanic or Latino (10.5%, $n = 29$), and Asian (7.2%, $n = 20$) respondents. Most participants were aged 42 to 55 (35.9%, $n = 99$) or 30 to 41 (37.7%, $n = 104$) years. Most participants held white-collar positions, with executives, senior leaders, and professionals comprising 64.8% of the sample. Craft, operative, and administrative support roles each accounted for fewer than 4% of participants. This distribution suggests a sampling bias toward individuals in higher-level and potentially digitally engaged occupations, which aligns with the use of online recruitment platforms.

Table 1*Demographic Characteristics*

Variable	Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Female	107	38.8
	Male	167	60.5
	Prefer not to answer	2	0.7
Race	Hispanic or Latino	29	10.5
	White	182	65.9
	Black or African American	33	12.0
	Asian	20	7.2
	American Indian or Alaska Native	2	0.7
	Two or more races	10	3.6
	Age (years)	18-29	43
	30-41	104	37.7
	42-55	99	35.9
	56-64	23	8.3
	65+	7	2.5
Job category	Executive/senior-level officials and managers	68	24.6
	First/mid-level officials and managers	39	14.1
	Professionals	72	26.1
	Technicians	16	5.8
	Sales workers	20	7.2
	Administrative support workers	10	3.6
	Craft workers	4	1.4
	Operatives	10	3.6
	Laborers and helpers	17	6.2
	Service workers	20	7.2

Note. *N* = 276

As shown in Table 2, participants varied in organizational tenure, with the largest group (26.1%, *n* = 72) reporting 3-5 years at their current organization. Similar patterns were seen for time in their current role, with 29.3% reporting 3 to 5 years and 22.1% reporting 1 to 3 years. This spread suggests a relatively experienced workforce, but a notable portion is still in the early to mid-stages of their roles.

Table 2*Frequencies of Participants' Tenure with Current Company and Role*

Tenure duration	Current company		Current role	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Less than 6 months	24	8.7	24	8.7
More than 6 months but less than 1 year	30	10.9	42	15.2
More than 1 year but less than 3 years	49	17.8	61	22.1
More than 3 years but less than 5 years	72	26.1	81	29.3
More than 5 years but less than 10 years	49	17.8	40	14.5
More than 10 years	52	18.8	28	10.1

Note. The percentages are based on the total sample size ($N = 276$).

Participants were asked whether their experience of workplace ostracism occurred in their current or a previous workplace. The majority ($n = 247$, 89.5%) reported experiencing ostracism in their current workplace, underscoring the phenomenon's relevance and urgency in contemporary work settings.

Regression Assumptions

To evaluate the impact of workplace ostracism on PS and the potential moderating role of personality traits, the regression model was tested for assumptions of linearity, normality of residuals, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. These diagnostic steps are needed to ensure the validity of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model and the interpretability of their results (Field, 2013). The following sections detail this process, organized by assumption.

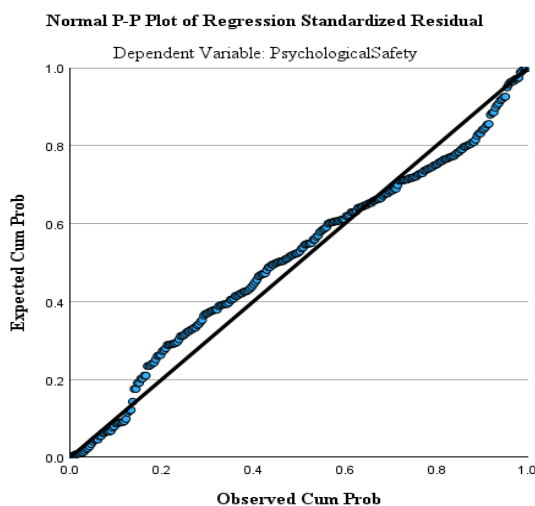
Linearity

Linearity assumes that the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable is linear. To assess this assumption, scatterplots of standardized

residuals against predicted values were inspected to test this assumption. The plot displayed a random spread of points with no apparent curvilinear pattern or clustering (see Figure 2). This indicated that the linearity assumption was satisfied for the regression model. Additionally, the Normal P-P plots showed points closely aligned with the diagonal line, further supporting linearity.

Figure 2

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual for Psychological Safety



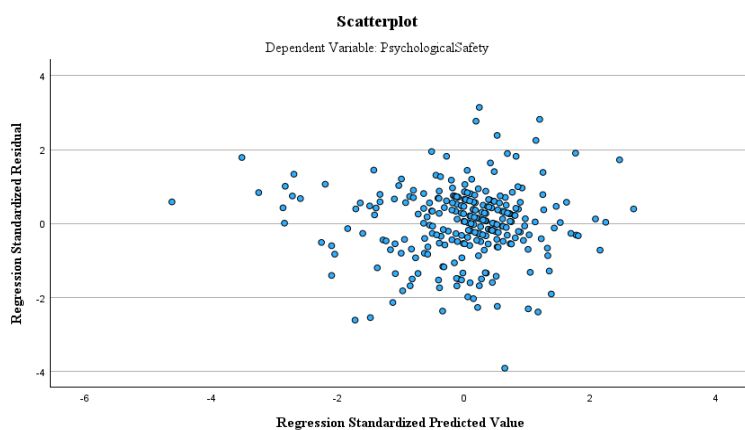
Note. This normal P-P plot illustrates linearity for psychological safety variable.

Homoscedasticity

In order to test homoscedasticity (constant variance of residuals across levels of predicted values), scatterplot of standardized residuals against predicted values was examined. Results indicated no funnel-shaped pattern or systematic variance, suggesting that residuals were spread evenly (see Figure 3). This indicates that the assumption of homoscedasticity was satisfied.

Figure 3

Scatterplot of Standardized Residuals for Psychological Safety



Note. This scatterplot illustrates standardized residuals plotted against standardized predicted values for psychological safety, dependent variable.

Normality of Residuals

The assumption of normally distributed residuals was tested by examining standardized residuals. The residual statistics table indicated that standardized residuals ranged from -3.921 to 3.142, with a mean of .000 and a standard deviation of .980 (see Table 3). These values fall within acceptable bounds, suggesting that the residuals were approximately normally distributed.

Table 3

Residual Statistics Indicating Normally Distributed Residuals.

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Predicted value	1.3008	4.1504	3.1025	0.3897	276
Residual	-2.7838	2.2305	0.000	0.6956	276
Std. predicted value	-4.624	2.689	0.000	1.000	276
Std. residual	-3.921	3.142	0.000	0.980	276

Note. Dependent variable: psychological safety.

Independence of Errors

The independence of residuals was tested using the Durbin-Watson statistics. The Durbin-Watson value was 1.884 (see Table 4), which falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5 (Field, 2013). This indicates that there is no significant autocorrelation among the residuals, confirming that the assumption of independence of residuals has been met.

Table 4

Independence of Error Model Summary.

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.489	0.239	0.207	0.7099	1.884

Note. Includes R , R^2 , adjusted R^2 , and Durbin–Watson statistic to assess model fit and residual independence. Dependent Variable: psychological safety. Predictors: (Constant), WPOstracism_Centered_x_Neuroticism_Centered, Neuroticism_Centered, WPOstracism_Centered_x_Openness_Centered, Openness_Centered, WPOstracism_Centered_x_Extroversion_Centered, Extroversion_Centered, WPOstracism_Centered, WPOstracism_Centered_x_Conscientiousness_Centered, Agreeableness_Centered, Conscientiousness_Centered, WPOstracism_Centered_x_Agreeableness_Centered.

Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity refers to high intercorrelation among predictors, and the variance inflation factor (VIF) values were used to assess it. The interaction terms introduced high multicollinearity, with VIF values exceeding 10 in all cases, and exceeding 70 in many (see Appendix J). This is above the accepted threshold of 10

(Garson, 2020). To address this issue, mean-centering was applied to all predictors before recalculating interaction terms. Following the adjustment, VIF values decreased significantly, with all predictors and interactions falling below 2, which is within acceptable limits (see Appendix K). As a result, all variables were retained in the final regression model used for hypothesis testing, and the model satisfied the assumptions of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression.

Hypotheses Testing

Having confirmed that the regression model met all key OLS assumptions and retained only the significant predictors and interaction term, I now present the statistical results in alignment with the study's research questions. The following sections are organized by research questions and hypotheses, detailing the relationships examined and interpreting the significance, direction, and strength of the associations.

RQ 1: What is the impact of workplace ostracism on employees' psychological safety?

H_{01} : There is no statistically significant relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' psychological safety.

H_{a1} : There is a statistically significant relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' psychological safety.

Workplace ostracism was a statistically significant predictor of PS ($B = -0.111$, $SE = 0.033$, $\beta = -0.208$, $t = -3.407$, $p < .001$). The negative coefficient indicates that as workplace ostracism increased, PS decreased. This finding provides strong support for H_{a1} , which posits a significant relationship between workplace ostracism and PS, and

leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_01).

To address the second research question, the analysis included interaction terms between workplace ostracism and each of the five major personality traits, collectively referred to as the big five. These interaction effects examined whether personality moderated the effect of ostracism on PS.

RQ 2: Do personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) moderate the relationship between ostracism and psychological safety?

To examine the second research question, interaction terms were created between the mean-centered independent variable and the mean-centered five moderators. These interactions were entered into the regression model to test for moderation effects. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(11, 264) = 7.53, p < .001$, and explained 23.9% of the variance in PS ($R^2 = .239, Adjusted R^2 = .207$).

H_{02_1} : Openness does not moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a2_1} : Openness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{02_2} : Conscientiousness does not moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a2_2} : Conscientiousness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{02_3} : Extroversion does not moderate the relationship between workplace

ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a23} : Extroversion moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{024} : Agreeableness does not moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a24} : Agreeableness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{025} : Neuroticism does not moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

H_{a25} : Neuroticism moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological safety.

The regression analysis results (see Table 5) highlighted that the interaction between workplace ostracism and openness was not statistically significant, $B = -0.032$, $\beta = -0.033$, $p = .638$. Therefore, H_{021} was not rejected, indicating that there is no evidence that openness moderates the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS. Similarly, the interactions between workplace ostracism and conscientiousness ($B = -0.053$, $\beta = -0.053$, $p = .439$) and workplace ostracism and neuroticism ($B = -0.071$, $\beta = -0.102$, $p = .089$) were not statistically significant. Therefore, H_{022} and H_{025} were not rejected. Notably, although neuroticism did not significantly interact with workplace ostracism, it had a significant negative effect on PS ($B = -0.155$, $\beta = -0.139$, $p = .029$). While the negative direction of the interaction suggested that for individuals high in neuroticism, ostracism may have a stronger negative impact on PS, it cannot be concluded that the

relationship between ostracism and PS depends on levels of neuroticism.

On the other hand, interactions between ostracism and extroversion ($B = 0.127, \beta = 0.118, p = .045$) and between ostracism and agreeableness ($B = -0.302, \beta = -0.322, p < .001$) were found to be significant. These results suggested that extroversion and agreeableness significantly moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS, with agreeableness amplifying the negative impact of ostracism. Therefore, hypotheses H_{023} and H_{024} were supported.

Table 5

Summary of the moderation analysis, including main effects and interaction terms.

Variables and interactions	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	B	SE	Beta		
(Constant)	3.027	.046		65.782	<.001
WPOstracism_Centered	-.111	.033	-.208	-3.407	<.001
Openness_Centered	.038	.097	.026	.385	.700
Conscientiousness_Centered	-.171	.097	-.125	-1.769	.078
Extroversion_Centered	.204	.077	.154	2.642	.009
Agreeableness_Centered	-.205	.094	-.154	-2.188	.030
Neuroticism_Centered	-.155	.070	-.139	-2.200	.029
WPOstracism_Centered x Openness_Centered	-.032	.067	-.033	-.471	.638
WPOstracism_Centered x Conscientiousness_Centered	-.053	.069	-.053	-.775	.439
WPOstracism_Centered x Extroversion_Centered	.127	.063	.118	2.019	.045
WPOstracism_Centered x Agreeableness_Centered	-.302	.069	-.322	-4.407	<.001
WPOstracism_Centered x Neuroticism_Centered	-.071	.041	-.102	-1.708	.089

Note. Dependent variable is psychological safety. Data indicating significance is bold.

Summary

In this research study, I aimed to test the impact of workplace ostracism on PS and whether the big five personality traits moderated that relationship. The results confirmed that workplace ostracism significantly reduced PS. This finding confirmed the

significant impact of exclusion in workplace environments and reinforced the importance of preventing exclusion and instead fostering employees' confidence to speak up, take interpersonal risks, and engage fully at work. After examining the moderation effects, extroversion and agreeableness were the only personality traits that showed significant interaction with workplace ostracism. Specifically, extroversion buffered the negative impact, suggesting that extroverted individuals are more resilient when facing social exclusion. In contrast, agreeableness worsened the negative effect of ostracism, indicating that individuals high in agreeableness may be more psychologically vulnerable to exclusionary experiences. The interactions involving openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism were not statistically significant, indicating that these traits did not significantly influence the relationship between ostracism and PS.

Overall, the findings highlighted the harmful impact of workplace ostracism and identified personality traits, such as extroversion and agreeableness, as influential factors in how individuals experience exclusion. In Chapter 5, I will further interpret these findings, discuss their implications for practice and policy, address the study's limitations, and offer recommendations for future research and positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this quantitative study, I investigated the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS, with a focus on whether the big five personality traits moderate this relationship. PS is widely recognized as essential for team learning and innovation (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Lei, 2014); still, limited research has addressed how individual traits shape experience of exclusion in the workplace. With this study, I aimed to bridge that gap by exploring how openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism influence the impact of ostracism on PS.

PS refers to an employee's belief that they can speak up, make mistakes, and take interpersonal risks without fear of humiliation or retribution (Edmondson, 1999). Unlike the positive effects of PS, workplace ostracism has been associated with declines in engagement, overall well-being, and an individual's sense of belonging (Bedi, 2021; Li et al., 2021). Although researchers have extensively studied these harmful consequences, little is known about how personality traits may either strengthen or weaken their impact.

This study addressed that gap using validated instruments: Ferris et al.'s (2008) Workplace Ostracism Scale, Edmondson's (1999) Psychological Safety Scale, and Goldberg's (1999) IPIP for the big five traits. A sample of 276 working adults completed the survey, and linear regression analysis was used to test main and interaction effects. The analysis indicated that workplace ostracism was a statistically significant negative predictor of PS. Greater experiences of exclusion or being ignored by colleagues were associated with lower levels of reported PS and a decreased likelihood of speaking up, asking questions, or sharing ideas without fear of interpersonal risk. Moderation analysis

revealed that only two of the five personality traits, extroversion and agreeableness, significantly moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS.

Extroversion mitigated the negative effect of ostracism, indicating that extroverted individuals may exhibit greater resilience to exclusion. In contrast, agreeableness strengthened the negative impact of workplace ostracism, suggesting that highly agreeable individuals may be more psychologically vulnerable when ostracized.

Although openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism did not significantly moderate the relationship between ostracism and PS, neuroticism showed a significant effect on PS, indicating that individuals with higher levels of neuroticism tend to feel less psychologically safe regardless of ostracism levels.

The set of findings highlighted the complex interaction between personality traits and workplace dynamics. While ostracism consistently diminishes PS, individual differences in personality influence the magnitude of this effect. The following sections will further analyze these results, assess their alignment with existing literature, discuss theoretical and practical implications, address study limitations, and offer recommendations for future research and organizational practices.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this study expand the existing body of literature on PS, WPO, and personality by validating and extending several theoretical perspectives introduced in Chapter 2. First, the results affirm Edmondson's (1999) conceptualization of PS as a construct sensitive to social threats such as ostracism. Previous research (Khalid et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021; Williams & Nida, 2022) has demonstrated that a negative

workplace environment undermines interpersonal trust and impedes open communication. My study similarly shows a statistically significant negative relationship between workplace ostracism and PS.

Furthermore, the results of this study are consistent with what is expected from TAT (Tett et al., 2021), which states that personality traits are expressed in response to trait-relevant situational cues. As suggested by TAT, the present study demonstrates that some personality traits moderate the impact of workplace ostracism, but others do not, indicating that some personality attributes are more relevant to this relationship. Findings from the moderation analysis indicated that, among the big five traits, extroversion and agreeableness significantly moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS. Extroversion reduced the negative association, whereas agreeableness amplified it. Openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism did not significantly moderate this relationship, although neuroticism showed a significant main effect, suggesting that individuals high in neuroticism consistently reported lower PS. In line with TAT, traits are behaviorally expressed, or “activated,” when the environment presents relevant cues (Tett et al., 2021), here the relevant cue is workplace ostracism.

Extroversion in the five-factor model is defined by higher levels of sociability, higher levels of assertiveness, and a strong orientation toward social interaction (Soto, 2018), in interpersonal contexts. In the workplace, ostracism undermines employees’ sense of belonging and disrupts their social connection (Balliet & Ferris, 2013; Hitlan et al., 2006; O’Reilly et al., 2015). According to TAT, such exclusion could act as a situational cue that activates extroverted traits. Rather than withdrawing, individuals high

in extroversion may seek greater social engagement to reestablish their interpersonal standing or to counter the experienced ostracism by engaging with others. Their natural tendency to approach rather than avoid social situations serves as a psychological buffer, mitigating the harmful effects of being excluded. This outcome reflects the principles of TAT, whereby the trait is triggered by a relevant context and facilitates an adaptive, protective response.

Agreeableness is defined by a preference for cooperation, showing empathy and warmth toward others, and keeping harmony with others (Kang et al., 2023; Soto, 2018; Zhao et al., 2013). While these qualities usually help with social relationships, this study revealed a significant negative interaction between agreeableness and workplace ostracism in predicting PS. Under the TAT framework (Tett et al., 2013, 2021), ostracism may serve as a potent trigger for agreeable individuals by challenging their core values of inclusion and relational harmony. This activation may not lead to coping but instead intensify their sense of emotional vulnerability. When agreeable individuals encounter exclusion, the experience may be internalized more personally and be perceived as a violation of their expectations for mutual respect and social cohesion. Rather than prompting resilience, the trait's activation amplifies distress, leading to lower levels of PS. Thus, in this context, trait activation revealed a susceptibility rather than a strength, aligning with TAT's view that activation can lead to different outcomes depending on how traits align with situational demands.

The absence of moderation effects for openness and conscientiousness also offers additional theoretical insight. As noted, TAT emphasizes the necessity of trait-cue

alignment, indicating that traits influence behavior only when situations correspond to their motivational properties (Tett et al., 2021). Ostracism is a relational cue with emotional significance, rather than a cognitive or task-oriented cue. Openness to experience, reflecting curiosity, imagination, and a preference for novelty (Soto, 2018; Soto et al., 2016), may not be directly activated by interpersonal exclusion. Similarly, conscientiousness, associated with self-discipline, dependability, and achievement orientation (Soto, 2018; Soto et al., 2016), is typically triggered by evaluative or task-relevant demands rather than social disconnection. Therefore, the lack of significant moderation for these traits is theoretically consistent: ostracism may not activate them.

Although neuroticism did not significantly moderate the ostracism–psychological safety relationship, it did have a main effect, highlighting an important pattern.

Individuals higher in neuroticism possess heightened emotional reactivity, sensitivity to threat, and fear of negative evaluation (Connelly et al., 2018; Soto et al., 2016). From the TAT perspective, neuroticism functions not as a situationally activated trait in this context, but as a baseline vulnerability. The trait exerts a pervasive general influence rather than interacting with specific situational cues. This perspective aligns with broader approaches in personality psychology that conceptualize neuroticism as a chronic risk factor affecting a wide range of interpersonal experiences.

In summary, interpreting the findings through TAT demonstrates that personality traits do not uniformly protect or expose individuals to the psychological effects of ostracism. Instead, the influence of each trait depends on whether the workplace situation activates trait-relevant concerns, motives, and behaviors. Extroversion and agreeableness

exhibited clear activation (one linked to resilience, the other to increased vulnerability), while openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism showed distinct patterns based on their alignment with the situational cue. These insights reinforce the understanding that PS is shaped by both the social environment and individual dispositions. For researchers and organizations, the findings underscore the importance of recognizing how personality interacts with workplace conditions and the essential role leaders play in minimizing harmful triggers while supporting diverse dispositional needs.

Limitations of the Study

In this section, I highlight the limitations encountered during the study, each of which has implications for how the findings should be interpreted in terms of credibility, scope, validity, and reliability. These limitations are related to the sample size and statistical power, sampling strategies, self-reporting challenges, cross-sectional design, exclusion of organizational-level factors, and social desirability bias. While none of these limitations invalidate the study, they do offer important context for evaluating the findings and their applicability to other workplace environments.

One limitation of the study relates to the final number of participants (276 individuals), which fell short of the target sample size of 429 that would have achieved stronger statistical power. In order to move forward with the study, I have adjusted the power level to .80, a common but slightly less rigorous standard in the behavioral sciences. The adjustment allowed the study to remain statistically viable; however, it increased the likelihood of Type II errors, especially for moderation effects that tend to be more subtle. This may explain why some personality traits did not significantly

moderate the relationship between workplace ostracism and PS. Therefore, the reduced power potentially limits the depth and generalizability of the moderation findings; results should be interpreted with caution.

The way participants were recruited also introduced selection biases. A nonprobability convenience sampling method was employed, utilizing outreach through LinkedIn, Facebook, and SurveyMonkey's paid participant panel. While social media platforms provided free access to professional and general audiences, the SurveyMonkey panel (despite being a paid service) did not guarantee the recruitment of the required sample size and proved to be a costly endeavor. Participants who are active on LinkedIn or Facebook, or who opt in to online survey platforms, may hold characteristics that systematically differ from those who are not digitally connected or who are less inclined to participate in surveys addressing workplace ostracism. Therefore, nonprobability convenience sampling could introduce potential selection bias, thereby potentially compromising the external validity of the results.

Another challenge was the study's reliance on self-reported data, especially when participants were asked to recall past instances of being excluded at work. Although validated instruments were used to measure workplace ostracism, PS, and personality traits (Edmondson, 1999; Ferris et al., 2008; Goldberg, 1992), memory-based reporting carries risks. People may unintentionally distort past experiences due to time, mood, or personal interpretation, and such distortions could affect the accuracy of the data. Even when memories are intact, reporting on emotionally charged topics like exclusion may be influenced by how participants coped with the experience over time.

The cross-sectional design of the study further limited its ability to clarify the direction of relationships. Because all data were collected at a single time point, it is not possible to determine whether workplace ostracism contributed to reduced PS, or whether people who already felt psychologically unsafe were more likely to perceive themselves as being excluded. While the statistical associations observed in this study are meaningful, the design does not support conclusions about causality or sequence.

Another limitation lies in how PS was measured—as an individual-level experience rather than a team-based variable. Edmondson's (1999) foundational work describes PS as a shared belief that is shared by a team, built through group norms and how people treat one another. In contrast, this study asked individuals to reflect on their own personal sense of PS, focusing on how safe they felt speaking up at work. By focusing solely on individual perceptions, the study may have overlooked the social dynamics that influence whether people feel safe within a group setting.

Additionally, the sensitive nature of workplace ostracism may have influenced how honestly participants responded. Even with the promise of anonymity, some people may have held back out of discomfort or fear of judgment, underreporting their experiences with exclusion or overstating their sense of PS. This tendency to present oneself in a socially acceptable light—known as social desirability bias—is a known limitation of self-report surveys (Podsakoff et al., 2003), particularly when the subject matter involves emotional or stigmatized experiences. Personality traits like neuroticism or conscientiousness are also prone to biased self-perception (Soto et al., 2016), which could further shape how participants represented themselves.

Taken together, these limitations affect how confidently the results can be interpreted and how broadly they can be applied to different workplace settings. While care was taken to use sound methodology and validated instruments, each of these factors introduces uncertainty that should be considered when evaluating the findings.

Recommendations

Building upon the strengths and limitations of the present study, several directions for future research are recommended. The primary goal of these recommendations is to deepen understanding of how workplace ostracism and personality traits influence PS, while recognizing the methodological and theoretical constraints under which the current study was conducted.

My first recommendation is to pursue research with larger and more representative sample sizes. While the sample of 276 participants offered useful findings, the reduced statistical power left some moderation effects less clear, especially for traits such as openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism. Having a broader base of respondents would reduce the likelihood of overlooking meaningful effects and strengthen confidence in results relating to personality differences.

Second, researchers should consider employing probabilistic or stratified random sampling strategies to minimize potential selection bias. Although convenience sampling via social media and online panels enabled access to a large group of respondents, it limited representativeness to digitally engaged populations. Adjusting the sampling strategies could provide a fuller understanding of how ostracism and PS develop across industries and organizational settings.

Further, because this research relied on a cross-sectional design, it was not possible to establish directionality in the relationships among variables. Collecting data across multiple time points would allow scholars to better assess causality—whether workplace ostracism precedes reductions in PS, or whether individuals with lower PS are more vulnerable to perceiving exclusion. Longitudinal or experimental designs, such as diary studies that track exclusion and safety perceptions over time, could help address this unanswered question without overstepping the study’s current boundaries.

Additionally, subsequent studies should explore PS as a team-level and organization-level construct. While this research study focused on individual perceptions to remain feasible, literature on PS emphasizes its shared nature within teams (Edmondson, 1999; Frazier et al., 2017). Future research that considers additional perspectives would capture whether team-level or organization-level PS can cushion individuals against the effects of ostracism, or whether low safety climates amplify them.

In summary, future research on workplace ostracism, personality traits, and PS could benefit from methodological enhancements, broader sampling, and the use of multilevel and multimethod research designs. These suggestions build directly on the limitations of this study and help ensure that future work stays grounded in the same framework while still moving the field forward in meaningful ways.

Implications

This study revealed important ways in which workplace ostracism and personality traits influence how safe employees feel in speaking up and being themselves at work. While the findings have some limitations, they point to real opportunities for individuals

and organizations to create more welcoming and respectful workplaces. Nevertheless, the study provides a variety of social change implications for managers and organizations to consider in improving their work environment.

At the individual level, the data indicate that purposeful exclusion of an employee in the workplace can significantly diminish employees' confidence and willingness to engage. Individuals with high levels of *extroversion* experience a buffered impact, suggesting that sociability and assertiveness may provide psychological resilience in the face of exclusion. In contrast, individuals high in *agreeableness* demonstrate heightened vulnerability, as this trait amplifies the negative effects of ostracism. This finding suggests that interpersonal sensitivity, while often viewed positively, may cause agreeable individuals to internalize exclusion more deeply. Contrary to initial hypotheses, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism did not significantly moderate the relationship. However, neuroticism exhibited a significant main effect on PS, indicating a general sensitivity to workplace conditions rather than a conditional interaction with ostracism. These results indicate that everyone reacts differently to undesirable social situations, and learning about these personal differences can help people advocate for what makes them feel psychologically safer and more included at work; therefore, they can speak up without fear of retaliation. Similarly, the study results showed that a one-size-fits-all approach to workplace culture is not applicable, as different personalities require different types of support. Managers who understand these dynamics can foster more nuanced and responsive team environments, supporting resilience in extroverted employees and providing additional safeguards for those who may be more sensitive,

such as highly agreeable or neurotic individuals.

The research findings also matter in shaping society's perception of fair and healthy work environments. Laws and policies often focus on overt discrimination or harassment, but ostracism is more subtle and does real damage to employee well-being. This study is evidence for the inclusion of protection against ostracism in workplace safety regulations, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing policies that encourage employers to focus on PS. Policies that account for how different people experience inclusion can lead to more flexible and compassionate workplace practices. Moving in this direction supports a workplace culture that respects diversity—not just visible diversity, but diversity in how people experience their day-to-day interactions.

The research results provide valuable insights into the complexity of workplace dynamics. By integrating the TAT with PS and the big five personality traits, it suggests that the interaction between personality and environmental context is critical. TAT suggests that personality traits are expressed in response to relevant situational cues, indicating that context activates or brings certain traits to the forefront of behavior (Tett et al., 2021). Within this framework, the findings suggest that workplace ostracism serves as a significant situational cue that prompts trait-relevant responses. For example, individuals high in extroversion may respond to ostracism by seeking social re-engagement, which can buffer the negative effects on PS. In contrast, individuals high in agreeableness, characterized by cooperation, empathy, and a desire for social harmony, may experience greater distress when excluded, as ostracism directly opposes their social needs and values. This interaction between personality and environmental triggers

demonstrates that PS is shaped by the dynamic interplay of workplace conditions and individual traits. Integrating TAT with the PS framework highlights the necessity of examining both personality traits and situational cues to understand outcomes related to exclusion.

On a theoretical level, the study expands on the traditional idea that PS is mainly about the overall climate of a team or group. While Edmondson's (1999) foundational work emphasizes that PS is largely shaped by shared team norms and climates, this research shows that individual personality differences also significantly shape how safe people feel within those teams. In other words, PS is not just something the team creates together; it is also experienced differently by each individual depending on their unique personality traits. Recognizing this invites those studying and practicing in this field to take a more balanced approach—one that pays attention both to fostering inclusive team cultures and to understanding and supporting individual needs in those teams.

Practically, there are steps organizations could take to develop targeted interventions. They can begin by educating leaders about how personality affects reactions to exclusion, encouraging them to be more flexible and empathetic. Training managers to recognize signs of vulnerability early and offering tailored support—whether through mentoring, mental health resources, or peer groups—can make a significant difference. Workplaces may also want to set up anonymous feedback tools or regular check-ins to identify ostracism or safety issues before they escalate. Ultimately, these practices not only improve morale but also help the entire organization reach its full potential, working together.

In summary, with this research study, I aimed to test how workplace exclusion impacts employees' PS, as well as how personality can protect or expose them to these harms. Understanding the research results can help individuals gain deeper insight into their own reactions and coping strategies in the workplace. It also offers organizations a pathway to cultivate genuinely inclusive environments where PS is prioritized, rather than being treated as an afterthought. While there remains much to explore, particularly with larger and more diverse samples, as well as studies conducted over longer periods, these findings lay a strong foundation. They provide valuable direction for efforts to create workplaces that are not only more supportive and equitable but also healthier places for everyone involved.

Conclusion

In this study, I explored how workplace ostracism affects employees' PS and whether personality traits influence that relationship. The results offer clear evidence that being ignored or excluded at work significantly undermines PS—a foundational element of organizational health that supports open communication, risk-taking, and collaboration. When employees face social exclusion, their sense of safety to express themselves diminishes, limiting their willingness to contribute ideas or speak up. Among the big five personality traits, extroversion and agreeableness emerged as significant moderators, but in contrasting ways. From the big five personality model, extroversion emerged to offer a protective effect; individuals who are more outgoing and socially confident seemed better equipped to maintain PS in the face of exclusion. In contrast, agreeableness (associated with harmony and cooperation) strengthened the harm caused

by ostracism, indicating that highly agreeable individuals may be more susceptible to social disconnection, making exclusion particularly damaging to their sense of PS. On the other hand, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism did not significantly moderate the relationship between ostracism and PS. However, neuroticism did show a meaningful main effect: individuals higher in neuroticism consistently reported lower PS, regardless of whether they were being excluded. This suggests that neuroticism may function as a chronic vulnerability factor rather than one that interacts with context. These findings both affirm and extend prior theories. Echoing Edmondson's (1999) foundational work, this study reinforces the idea that PS is shaped not only by team norms but also by deeply personal experiences, such as being excluded. Integrating TAT (Tett et al., 2021), the findings also illustrate that traits, such as extroversion and agreeableness, become more behaviorally salient in response to specific social cues like ostracism. Meanwhile, traits such as neuroticism have a more generalized effect, affecting perceptions of safety across situations.

Additionally, the findings of this study underscore the importance of proactively addressing workplace ostracism and fostering PS. It also emphasizes that employees differ in their perceptions and responses to social exclusion. Therefore, leadership and HR professionals should avoid one-size-fits-all approaches and instead tailor support strategies to accommodate individual differences. By acknowledging individual differences, particularly in traits such as openness and neuroticism, organizations can foster a more supportive environment for PS, ultimately driving engagement, collaboration, and innovation.

In conclusion, PS is both a social and psychological construct, shaped by the environment and the individual. Addressing workplace exclusion and supporting individual differences are crucial steps toward building healthier, more resilient organizations that foster growth and success.

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Appendix A: Invitation for Social Media

How Your Workplace Experiences Affect Your Trust and Interpersonal Relationships—

And What Does Your Personality Have to Do with It?

You are invited to complete a 10-minute anonymous survey for a study titled: Impact of Workplace Ostracism, Moderated by Personality Traits on Psychological Safety.

Seeking volunteers that meet these requirements:

- Full-time employee of age 18 and older, working on-site
- Employed in any industry located in the United States of America
- Have direct experience with workplace ostracism within the past 6 months

The survey will be open until the end of April. Questions should be directed to



To complete the survey, please click [<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ARastovac>].

Appendix B: Demographic Information Survey

Please respond by checking the appropriate box, one per category.

1. What is your age in years?
 - a. 18 – 29
 - b. 30 – 41
 - c. 42 – 55
 - d. 56 – 64
 - e. 65+
2. What is your gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Prefer not to answer
3. What is your race?
 - a. Hispanic or Latino
 - b. White
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - e. Asian
 - f. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - g. Two or More Races
 - h. Prefer not to answer
4. Do you identify as having a visible or non-visible disability?
 - a. Yes, I have a visible or non-visible disability.
 - b. No, I do not have a disability.
 - c. Prefer not to answer
5. How long have you been at your current company?
 - a. less than 6 months
 - b. more than 6 months but less than 1 year
 - c. more than 1 year but less than 3 years
 - d. more than 3 years but less than 5 years
 - e. more than 5 years but less than 10 years
 - f. more than 10 years
6. Select your job category
 - a. Executive/Senior Level Officials and Managers
 - b. First/Mid-Level Officials and Managers

- c. Professionals
 - d. Technicians
 - e. Sales Workers
 - f. Administrative Support Workers
 - g. Craft Workers
 - h. Operatives
 - i. Laborers and Helpers
 - j. Service Workers
7. How long have you been in your current role?
- a. less than 6 months
 - b. more than 6 months but less than 1 year
 - c. more than 1 year but less than 3 years
 - d. more than 3 years but less than 5 years
 - e. more than 5 years but less than 10 years
 - f. more than 10 years
8. Workplace ostracism (exclusion or rejection by co-workers) occurred at your
- a. Current workplace
 - b. Previous workplace

Appendix C: Approved Permission to Use the Workplace Ostracism Scale



RE: Permission to use the Workplace Ostracism Scale

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Tue 10/10/2023 5:57 AM

To: [REDACTED]

1 attachment (137 KB)

Ferris et al 2008 JAP.PDF;

Hi there,

Sure, I've attached the article here, and the questionnaire is at the end of it. Only the first 10 items are used. Scoring and interpretation is easy – you just add up the scores and higher scores indicate greater ostracism.

Best,

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 1:51 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Permission to use the Workplace Ostracism Scale

Attention : courriel externe | external email

Dear [REDACTED]

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to request written permission to use your *Workplace Ostracism Scale* for my research project. I am interested in exploring the relationship between psychological safety and workplace ostracism moderated by the Big Five personality traits. I have read your work on ostracism and its relationship to anxiety, depression, affective commitment, job satisfaction, and individuals' well-being, and your modified *Workplace Ostracism Scale* would be an excellent tool for collecting data for my research project. I plan to use this instrument to collect data from a sample of individuals who directly or indirectly experienced workplace ostracism.

I understand that the *Workplace Ostracism Scale* could be copyrighted material, and I would be happy to comply with any conditions or requirements you may have for its use. Please let me know if there are any fees associated with using the measurement tool or if there are any other conditions, I should be aware of.

Obtaining written permission to use your *Workplace Ostracism Scale* is also a Walden University requirement for my proposal approval.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]
~Success is a decision, therefore go the extra mile, it's never crowded!~

Appendix D: Workplace Ostracism Scale

The following statements are designed to assess your experiences at work over the past 6 months. Please read each statement carefully and indicate how frequently you have experienced the described workplace situations during this time.

1. Others ignored you at work.
 - 1. Never
 - 2. Once in a while
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Fairly often
 - 5. Often
 - 6. Constantly
 - 7. Always
2. Others left the area when you entered.
 - 1. Never
 - 2. Once in a while
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Fairly often
 - 5. Often
 - 6. Constantly
 - 7. Always
3. Your greetings have gone unanswered at work.
 - 1. Never
 - 2. Once in a while
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Fairly often
 - 5. Often
 - 6. Constantly
 - 7. Always
4. You involuntarily sat alone in a crowded lunchroom at work.
 - 1. Never
 - 2. Once in a while
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Fairly often
 - 5. Often

- 6. Constantly
 - 7. Always
5. Others avoided you at work.
- 1. Never
 - 2. Once in a while
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Fairly often
 - 5. Often
 - 6. Constantly
 - 7. Always
6. You noticed others would not look at you at work.
- 1. Never
 - 2. Once in a while
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Fairly often
 - 5. Often
 - 6. Constantly
 - 7. Always
7. Others at work shut you out of the conversation.
- 1. Never
 - 2. Once in a while
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Fairly often
 - 5. Often
 - 6. Constantly
 - 7. Always
8. Others refused to talk to you at work.
- 1. Never
 - 2. Once in a while
 - 3. Sometimes
 - 4. Fairly often
 - 5. Often
 - 6. Constantly
 - 7. Always
9. Others at work treated you as if you weren't there.
- 1. Never
 - 2. Once in a while

- 3. Sometimes
- 4. Fairly often
- 5. Often
- 6. Constantly
- 7. Always

10. Others at work did not invite you or ask you if you wanted anything when they went out for a coffee break.

- 1. Never
- 2. Once in a while
- 3. Sometimes
- 4. Fairly often
- 5. Often
- 6. Constantly
- 7. Always

Appendix E: Permission to use the Team Learning and Psychological Safety Survey

 Outlook

Your reach out to Prof. Edmondson

From [REDACTED] >
Date Wed 10/18/2023 5:07 AM
To [REDACTED] >
Cc [REDACTED] >

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for reaching out to professor Edmondson and your enthusiasm in this field of research. Your email has been forwarded to me and I'm more than happy to follow up.

The psychological safety surveys are in the public domain, and when properly referenced can be used by you. Out of curiosity I would love to hear about your research results in the future when you have them.

You can also see and test the seven question questionnaire for measuring psychological safety on the website of the Fearless Organization Scan: <https://fearlessorganization.com/engage/free-personal-scan>

If you need any assistance on running a survey for scientific purposes through our platform (for free), please let me know.

Kindest regards,
[REDACTED]



Permission to Use the Psychological Safety Survey

From [REDACTED]**Date** Mon 10/9/2023 9:46 PM**To** [REDACTED]**Cc** [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to request written permission to use your *team learning and psychological safety survey* for my research project. I am interested in exploring the relationship between psychological safety and workplace ostracism moderated by the Big Five personality traits. I have read several of your work on psychological safety and learning behavior in teams, and your survey would be an excellent tool for collecting data for my research project. I plan to use the survey to collect data from a sample of individuals who directly or indirectly experienced workplace ostracism.

I understand that your survey could be copyrighted material, and I would be happy to comply with any conditions or requirements you may have for its use. Please let me know if there are any fees associated with using the survey or if there are any other conditions I should be aware of.

Obtaining written permission to use your *team learning and psychological safety survey* is also a Walden University requirement for my proposal approval.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

~Success is a decision, therefore go the extra mile, it's never crowded!~

Appendix F: Team Learning and Psychological Safety Survey

Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following items.

- If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you.
 - 1. Strongly Disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Somewhat Disagree
 - 4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - 5. Somewhat Agree
 - 6. Agree
 - 7. Strongly Agree
- Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.
 - 1. Strongly Disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Somewhat Disagree
 - 4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - 5. Somewhat Agree
 - 6. Agree
 - 7. Strongly Agree
- People on this team sometimes reject others for being different.
 - 1. Strongly Disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Somewhat Disagree
 - 4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - 5. Somewhat Agree
 - 6. Agree
 - 7. Strongly Agree
- It is safe to take a risk on this team.
 - 1. Strongly Disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Somewhat Disagree
 - 4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - 5. Somewhat Agree
 - 6. Agree
 - 7. Strongly Agree
- It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.

- 1. Strongly Disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Somewhat Disagree
 - 4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - 5. Somewhat Agree
 - 6. Agree
 - 7. Strongly Agree
- No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
 - 1. Strongly Disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Somewhat Disagree
 - 4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - 5. Somewhat Agree
 - 6. Agree
 - 7. Strongly Agree
- Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.
 - 1. Strongly Disagree
 - 2. Disagree
 - 3. Somewhat Disagree
 - 4. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - 5. Somewhat Agree
 - 6. Agree
 - 7. Strongly Agree

Appendix G: Permission to use the International Personality Item Pool

Obtaining permission to utilize IPIP items, scales, and inventories for any purpose is unnecessary, as the IPIP is accessible to the public in the public domain. Confirmation of this information is shown below, and it is available on the IPIP main website, [here](#) ([Permission \(ori.org\)](#)).

Obtaining Permission

Because the IPIP has been placed in the public domain, permission has already been automatically granted for any person to use IPIP items, scales, and inventories for any purpose, commercial or non-commercial.

It is not necessary to contact the IPIP site author (Lew Goldberg) or the IPIP Consultant (John A. Johnson) for permission to use IPIP materials. Requests for permission to use IPIP materials will be answered by sending the requester a link to this page.

[Return Home](#)

30.	Do not have a good imagination.	0	0	0	0	0	(5-)
31.	Talk to a lot of different people at parties.	0	0	0	0	0	(1+)
32.	Am not really interested in others.	0	0	0	0	0	(2-)
33.	Like order.	0	0	0	0	0	(3+)
34.	Change my mood a lot.	0	0	0	0	0	(4-)
35.	Am quick to understand things.	0	0	0	0	0	(5+)
36.	Don't like to draw attention to myself.	0	0	0	0	0	(1-)
37.	Take time out for others.	0	0	0	0	0	(2+)
38.	Shirk my duties.	0	0	0	0	0	(3-)
39.	Have frequent mood swings.	0	0	0	0	0	(4-)
40.	Use difficult words.	0	0	0	0	0	(5+)
41.	Don't mind being the center of attention.	0	0	0	0	0	(1+)
42.	Feel others' emotions.	0	0	0	0	0	(2+)
43.	Follow a schedule.	0	0	0	0	0	(3+)
44.	Get irritated easily.	0	0	0	0	0	(4-)
45.	Spend time reflecting on things.	0	0	0	0	0	(5+)
46.	Am quiet around strangers.	0	0	0	0	0	(1-)
47.	Make people feel at ease.	0	0	0	0	0	(2+)
48.	Am exacting in my work.	0	0	0	0	0	(3+)
49.	Often feel blue.	0	0	0	0	0	(4-)
50.	Am full of ideas.	0	0	0	0	0	(5+)

Appendix I: Scoring Instructions for the 50-item IPIP Measures

Converting IPIP Item Responses to Scale Scores

Here is how to score IPIP scales:

For + keyed items, the response "Very Inaccurate" is assigned a value of 1, "Moderately Inaccurate" a value of 2, "Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate" a 3, "Moderately Accurate" a 4, and "Very Accurate" a value of 5.

For - keyed items, the response "Very Inaccurate" is assigned a value of 5, "Moderately Inaccurate" a value of 4, "Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate" a 3, "Moderately Accurate" a 2, and "Very Accurate" a value of 1.

Once numbers are assigned for all of the items in the scale, just sum all the values to obtain a total scale score.

From *IPIP scale scoring instructions*.

(n.d.). <https://ipip.ori.org/newScoringInstructions.htm>

Interpreting Individual IPIP Scale Scores

We are sometimes asked how to interpret individual IPIP scale scores, for example, "How high does a person have to score on the Extraversion scale to be considered an Extravert?" We are also sometimes asked if we have manuals or interpretive guides that explain what is likely to be true for people who score within certain ranges on IPIP scales. If someone does score within the extraverted range, what else can be said about that person? This page provides some answers to these questions.

First, the IPIP website does not contain manuals or interpretive guides for explaining how to interpret specific scales. For most of the constructs listed on the IPIP website there is an extensive body of research that was published prior to the development of the IPIP representations of these constructs. At the bottom of both the [Multi-Construct IPIP Inventory page](#) and the [Single Construct IPIP Scales page](#) is a list of publications that refers to this research. There is also a growing body of publications describing studies that have used IPIP scales; a non-exhaustive list of these appears on the [IPIP-Related Publication page](#). IPIP scale users who want to know what people on the low and high ends of a particular construct are like should acquaint themselves with the relevant research literature.

To interpret individuals' scores, one might calculate the mean and standard deviation (SD) for a sample of persons, usually of the same sex and a particular age range, and interpret scores within one-half SD of the mean as "average." Scores outside that range can be interpreted as "low" or "high." If the scores are normally distributed, this would result in approximately 38% of persons being classified as average, about 31% as low, and 31% as high. We recommend computing means and standard deviations in one's own sample for reasons explained on the [Norms page](#) of the IPIP website.

An alternative method for showing respondents where they stand with respect to a group of respondents is to divide a set of scores into five equal parts, which are called *quintiles*. Labels for the scale anchors describe the lowest 20% and highest 20%, the label "average" is used for the middle 20%, and the remaining quintiles are labeled "somewhat." For example, labels for the quintiles on a scale that ranges from introversion to extraversion would be *introverted*, *somewhat introverted*, *average*, *somewhat extraverted*, and *extraverted*.

One of the above schemes usually works well enough for providing feedback to participants. When one conducts statistical analyses, however, one should try not to pigeon-hole individuals into type categories like introvert and extravert, given that introversion-extraversion is a continuum. Most research studies can use continuous statistical analyses of the full range of scores, such as some form of regression analysis. And even when one provides feedback to participants, one can show them where their scores lie on the full continuum of scores rather than telling them what type of person they are. In short, we caution against interpreting IPIP scale scores in terms of categories or sorting respondents into groups based on their scores.

From *Interpreting individual IPIP scale scores*. (n.d.).

<https://ipip.ori.org/InterpretingIndividualIPIPScaleScores.htm>

Appendix J: Collinearity Statistics Indicating Multicollinearity

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.011	1.041		.011	.992		
	WorkplaceOstracism	1.108	.277	.2070	4.002	<.001	.011	92.774
	Openness	.154	.268	.107	.574	.567	.083	12.074
	Conscientiousness	.025	.267	.018	.093	.926	.076	13.178
	Extroversion	-.261	.243	-.198	-1.077	.282	.086	11.662
	Agreeableness	.904	.274	.681	3.296	.001	.068	14.801
	Neuroticism	.104	.160	.094	.650	.516	.139	7.187
	WPOstracism_x_Openness	-.032	.067	-.230	-.471	.638	.012	82.759
	WPOstracism_x_Conscientiousness	-.053	.069	-.366	-.775	.439	.013	77.508
	WPOstracism_x_Extroversion	.127	.063	.753	2.019	.045	.021	48.306
	WPOstracism_x_Agreeableness	-.302	.069	-2.015	-4.407	<.001	.014	72.532
	WPOstracism_x_Neuroticism	-.071	.041	-.369	-1.708	.089	.062	16.160

^a. Dependent Variable: PsychologicalSafety

Appendix K: Collinearity Statistics Indicating No Multicollinearity

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.027	.046		65.782	<.001		
	WPOstracism_Centered	-.111	.033	-.208	-3.407	<.001	.773	1.294
	Openness_Centered	.038	.097	.026	.385	.700	.628	1.592
	Conscientiousness_Centered	-.171	.097	-.125	-1.769	.078	.579	1.726
	Extroversion_Centered	.204	.077	.154	2.642	.009	.843	1.186
	Agreeableness_Centered	-.205	.094	-.154	-2.188	.030	.580	1.724
	Neuroticism_Centered	-.155	.070	-.139	-2.200	.029	.725	1.380
	WPOstracism_Centered_x_Openness_Centered	-.032	.067	-.033	-.471	.638	.586	1.706
	WPOstracism_Centered_x_Conscientiousness_Centered	-.053	.069	-.053	-.775	.439	.620	1.612
	WPOstracism_Centered_x_Extroversion_Centered	.127	.063	.118	2.019	.045	.845	1.184
	WPOstracism_Centered_x_Agreeableness_Centered	-.302	.069	-.322	-4.407	<.001	.541	1.850
	WPOstracism_Centered_x_Neuroticism_Centered	-.071	.041	-.102	-1.708	.089	.806	1.241

^a. Dependent Variable: PsychologicalSafety*Note.* Variables are mean-centered