

THE COST OF PERCEIVED INJUSTICE: HOW PROCEDURAL AND INTERACTIONAL JUSTICE SHAPE IMPOSTOR FEELINGS THROUGH A GENDER IDENTITY LENS

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July, 2026

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ABSTRACT

Workplace injustice is widespread, costing U.S. organizations an estimated \$914.7 billion annually through lost productivity and turnover. Research further suggests that women, in particular, may face unique forms of workplace discrimination and bias, including limited advancement opportunities, pay disparities, and heightened evaluative scrutiny, which can shape their experiences of fairness and belonging at work (Prakash et al., 2024; Feenstra et al., 2020). Accordingly, it is important to consider the role of social identities in shaping how employees perceive and respond to organizational justice. The present study examined how procedural justice (fairness in decision-making) and interactional justice (fairness in interpersonal treatment) influence impostor feelings, defined as internal experiences of self-doubt in which competent individuals struggle to internalize their accomplishments and fear being exposed as frauds. Although these constructs have been extensively studied independently, research examining their intersection in workplace contexts remains limited. Drawing on identity theory, this study focused on gender identity prominence to examine how social identities influence responses to workplace injustice. Using a 2 (procedural justice: high vs. low) x 2 (interactional justice: high

vs. low) experimental vignette design with a sample of working women and non-binary individuals, participants reported impostor feelings, workability, and related self-perceptions. Results indicated that individuals in the high interactional justice condition reported lower perceptions of impostor feelings compared to those in the low interactional justice condition. Additionally, individuals in the high procedural justice condition reported higher perceptions of impostor feelings compared to those in the low procedural justice condition, suggesting that organizational procedures and decision-making may influence individuals' internal self-evaluations in different ways. Notably, the interaction between procedural and interactional justice was not significant, further indicating that these forms of justice operate independently in predicting impostor feelings. Gender identity prominence was positively related to impostor feelings but did not moderate the relationship between justice and impostor feelings. Additionally, impostor feelings did not predict workability, whereas self-esteem and general self-efficacy emerged as stronger predictors of workability. These findings highlight the multidimensional nature of organizational justice and support a contextualized understanding of impostor feelings as workplace experiences.

**The Cost of Perceived Injustice: How Procedural and Interactional Justice Shape Impostor
Feelings Through a Gender Identity Lens**

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Department of Psychology
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Psychology

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July, 2026

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Courtney L. Baker for serving as my thesis chair and for her guidance, encouragement, and support throughout this process. Her mentorship, enthusiasm, and thoughtful feedback were invaluable in shaping this project from its earliest development through completion. I would also like to thank Dr. Alex M. Schoemann and Dr. Mark C. Bowler for serving on my committee and for their insightful feedback, methodological expertise, and thought-provoking questions, all of which strengthened this work. Finally, I am deeply grateful to my family, friends, and colleagues who supported me throughout my graduate journey. Completing this thesis has been both a challenging and rewarding experience, and I am thankful for the encouragement that helped me persevere. This project further strengthened my passion for understanding workplace experiences and the psychological processes that shape them, and I look forward to continuing this work in future research.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS OR ABBREVIATIONS

Human Resource (HR).....	5
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

According to the 2024 *State of Workplace Injustice Report*, 66% of participants reported experiencing workplace injustice in the past year, with 23% encountering it monthly. The report estimates that U.S. employers lose approximately \$914.7 billion annually due to employee disengagement and turnover stemming from perceptions of injustice (BusinessWire, 2024). These findings underscore the critical importance of fostering organizational justice to enhance employee well-being and company performance. Notably, experiences of workplace injustice are not uniform across employees. Research suggests that women, in particular, may face unique forms of workplace discrimination and bias, including limited advancement opportunities, pay disparities, and heightened evaluative scrutiny, which can shape their experiences of fairness and belonging at work (Prakash et al., 2024; Feenstra et al., 2020). For these reasons, it is important to consider the role of social identities in shaping how employees perceive and respond to organizational justice.

Organizational justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness within the workplace, encompassing four dimensions: the fairness of resource distribution (distributive justice), the consistency and impartiality of decision-making processes (procedural justice), the respect and dignity shown in interpersonal interactions (interactional justice), and the adequacy and honesty of explanations provided during those processes (informational justice) (Colquitt et al., 2023; Cropanzano et al., 2007). Although extensive research demonstrates that organizational injustice negatively affects both individual and organizational outcomes, less is known about *how* these perceptions contribute to internalized self-doubt. The present thesis aims to examine how procedural and interactional injustice influence impostor feelings, which, in turn, impair employee workability. Furthermore, this relationship will be explored through the lens of

identity prominence, which is hypothesized to amplify the effects of organizational injustice and intensify impostor experiences.

When employees perceive injustice, such as biased promotion decisions (procedural injustice) or inconsistent managerial feedback (interactional justice), it can trigger negative emotional responses and maladaptive behaviors, such as depressive symptoms, sleeping problems (Bernhard-Oettel et al., 2019), and long-term sickness absence (Leineweber et al., 2017; Peristera et al., 2023; Tenhiälä et al., 2013; Ybema et al., 2016), as outlined by Bobocel and Gosse (2015). These outcomes ultimately undermine organizational effectiveness, contributing to reduced cooperation (Tyler & Blader, 2000), increased turnover (Posthuma et al., 2007), workplace theft (Greenberg, 1993), and counterproductive work behaviors (Dalal, 2005; Hershcovis et al., 2007). Injustice not only affects organizational outcomes but has lasting psychological effects on employees, particularly in the form of heightened stress (Vermunt & Steensma, 2005), increased negative emotions (Barclay et al., 2005), declines in job performance (Aryee et al., 2004; Williams, 1999; Zapara-Phelan et al., 2009), and negative shaping of self-perception, such as distorted self-evaluations (Gilliland, 1994; Ployhart et al., 1999; Schroth & Shah, 2000). The current proposal seeks to understand the nuanced roles that procedural and interactional injustice play in impacting a specific type of self-perception, impostor feelings.

Known as the impostor phenomenon or impostor syndrome (Clance & Imes, 1978), impostor feelings refer to the internal experiences of intellectual phoniness, in which competent individuals struggle to internalize their accomplishments and live in persistent fear of being exposed as frauds (Bernard et al., 2002). Perceptions of unfairness in the workplace can significantly influence how individuals see themselves. In particular, organizational injustice can reinforce feelings of not belonging or being undervalued, which can intensify impostor feelings.

Research indicates that nearly 70% of individuals report having experienced impostor feelings at some point in their lives, suggesting that such experiences are widespread but not necessarily clinical in nature (Gravois, 2007; Sakulku & Alexander, 2011). Although impostor feelings can affect anyone, they are disproportionately experienced by those with marginalized identities, like women and members of ethnic minority groups (Bravata et al., 2019; Feenstra et al., 2020). For these individuals, identity prominence (the personal importance of that identity to one's self-concept) may intensify impostor feelings, as organizational threats or invalidation of their identities are interpreted as personal failures rather than situational challenges.

Impostor feelings are not formed in isolation but are often shaped by contextual factors such as organizational culture, leadership behavior, and interpersonal dynamics (Clance & O'Toole, 1987; Feenstra et al., 2020). They can impact the way that the employee views themselves. As such, impostor feelings may potentially have downstream effects on workability, one's capability to cope with the demands of work (Kim, 2021). By examining these outcomes, this study sheds light on how perceptions of fairness shape employees' self-perceptions, particularly impostor feelings, and how these influence their perceived ability to meet job demands.

The current thesis aims to make three contributions to the current literature. First, although organizational justice and impostor feelings have been extensively studied within their respective domains, research examining their intersection in workplace contexts remains limited (Bravata et al., 2019; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021). Most existing studies on impostor feelings focus on educational settings (Feenstra et al., 2020; Cokley et al., 2017) and often conceptualize it through a clinical psychology lens, treating it as a fixed personality trait (Feenstra et al., 2020). Although few studies have begun to explore impostor feelings in

organizational contexts (Bennett, 2024; Feenstra et al., 2020; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021), this work remains sparse within the field of industrial-organizational psychology. This study addresses this gap by exploring how perceptions of procedural and interactional injustice contribute to the development of impostor feelings in workplace settings. This perspective is critical, as it particularly highlights fairness in decision-making and interpersonal treatment by authority figures in shaping employees' internal experiences. By adopting a social psychological lens, this research emphasizes situational and contextual influences over dispositional explanations. This view is particularly important given growing evidence that social contexts, such as how individuals are treated by others, play a critical role in the development of impostor feelings (Feenstra et al., 2020). As Feenstra et al. (2020) argued, there is a pressing need to reconceptualize impostor feelings in ways that account for its environmental roots. Framing impostor experiences as a response to organizational climates, especially perceptions of fairness and respect, contributes to a more nuanced and contextually grounded understanding of the phenomenon and addresses a significant gap in the organizational behavior literature. Accordingly, we conceptualize impostor feelings as a context-sensitive, subclinical experience shaped by organizational injustice.

A second key contribution of this study is its application of an identity-based lens to examine how employees experience workplace injustice and impostor feelings. Individuals from marginalized groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and younger workers, may be especially vulnerable to the negative effects of perceived injustice due to experiences of bias, exclusion, and stereotype threat (Yadlosky, 2019). These situations can heighten the prominence of social identities in the workplace (Markowski & Serpe, 2021). As a result, individuals may become more accustomed

to cues of unfair treatment and more susceptible to internalizing negative self-perceptions, such as impostor feelings. Despite this, existing research rarely considers how social identities might moderate the relationship between justice perceptions and impostor feelings. This gap risks reinforcing a uniform model of employee experience, ignoring the complex ways in which identity shapes psychological outcomes. Drawing on identity theory (Stets & Burke, 2014; Stets et al., 2020), this study investigates how identity prominence may influence the justice–impostor relationship. In doing so, it advances a more inclusive and intersectional understanding of organizational dynamics, offering insights into how identity-based disparities manifest in perceptions of fairness and self-worth at work.

Finally, this study makes both methodological and practical contributions by employing an experimental vignette design to examine the causal impact of workplace justice perceptions on impostor feelings and their effects on workability. Vignette methodology enables the controlled manipulation of procedural and interactional justice cues, simulating realistic workplace scenarios while maintaining internal validity (Martin et al., 2024). This approach allows for the isolation of justice-related variables and their psychological consequences, minimizing confounding influences and allowing for stronger inferences about causal relationships compared to purely correlational designs. Moreover, by presenting participants with varied justice conditions, the study captures a range of responses to different organizational climates (Eberlin & Tatum, 2007). This design not only enhances the rigor of the research but also provides actionable insights for 5 professionals and organizational leaders. The findings can inform evidence-based interventions aimed at fostering fairness, strengthening leadership practices, and mitigating impostor-related outcomes, particularly among employees from marginalized backgrounds.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Justice

Social psychologists have long emphasized justice as a foundational element for effective organizational functioning and employee satisfaction (Greenberg, 1990; Moore, 1978; Okun, 1975). However, experiences of fairness and mistreatment in the workplace are not uniform across employees. Women, in particular, are more likely to encounter systemic barriers such as pay inequities, limited advancement opportunities, gender-based stereotypes, sexual harassment, and heightened evaluative scrutiny (Prakash et al., 2024). Workplace gender discrimination arises from both structural and interpersonal factors, shaping perceptions of fairness and belonging for women at work (Prakash et al., 2024; Feenstra et al., 2020). These experiences reflect inequities within organizational systems, ultimately influencing how individuals perceive and interpret fairness.

Early theories of justice, such as distributive justice theory (Homans, 1961), equity theory (Adams, 1965), and relative deprivation theory (Pettigrew, 2015), originated from broader social interactions but have since been applied extensively to organizational contexts. The modern organizational literature identifies four key dimensions of justice that shape employees' perceptions of fairness: distributive, procedural, interactional, and informational justice (Colquitt et al., 2023). Distributive justice concerns the perceived fairness of outcome allocations, often evaluated through principles of equity theory (Adams, 1965; Homans, 1961). Equity theory (Adams, 1965) states that individuals evaluate fairness by comparing the ratio of their inputs (e.g., effort, experience, skills) to the outcomes they receive (e.g., pay, recognition), relative to others (Cropanzano et al., 2007). When employees perceive that their contributions are not matched by appropriate rewards, especially in comparison to their peers, they may experience

feelings of inequity, sparking dissatisfaction and disengagement (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Cropanzano et al., 2007). Procedural justice focuses on the perceptions of consistent, accurate, and unbiased decision-making processes (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). For instance, when promotion criteria are unclear or applied inconsistently, employees may perceive the process as unfair (Colquitt et al., 2023).

Interactional justice, sometimes referred to as interpersonal justice, pertains to the degree of dignity, respect, and fairness conveyed in interpersonal interactions (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993). A supervisor who consistently delivers feedback dismissively or disrespectfully may violate this form of justice, leading subordinates to feel devalued (Colquitt et al., 2023). Meanwhile, informational justice concerns the perceived adequacy and honesty of explanations provided during decision-making (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993). Employees may feel this dimension is lacking when they receive vague or misleading reasons for organizational changes (Colquitt et al., 2023).

Greenberg (1987) was the first to formally introduce the term *organizational justice*, combining research on distributive and procedural justice. Over time, empirical studies have demonstrated the distinct relevance of each justice dimension across various workplace events. For example, Greenberg (1986) found that managers conducting performance evaluations considered both process and outcome fairness, Folger and Konovsky (1989) showed that employees valued consistency and impartiality in compensation procedures, and the work of Bies (1987) and Greenberg (1990, 1994) illustrated the importance of communication and informational thoroughness in the workplace justice landscape (Colquitt et al., 2023). While distributive and informational justice have significantly advanced researchers' comprehension of workplace injustice, this review focuses on procedural and interactional justice due to their

strong empirical connections to identity-relevant outcomes, such as feelings of self-worth and personal significance, arising from unfair decision-making processes and disrespectful interpersonal treatment (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Cropanzano et al., 2007).

Decades after Greenberg's (1987) foundational review, organizational justice remains a central topic due to its profound influence on employee attitudes and behaviors (Colquitt et al., 2001). One key mechanism through which justice operates is its effect on employees' cognitive evaluations of their relationships with supervisors and organizations, particularly through interactional justice, which aligns with Blau's (1964) concept of social exchange relationships (Colquitt et al., 2023; Cropanzano & Byrne, 2000). This perspective recognizes that workplace relationships are characterized by mutual trust, commitment, and a sense of obligation (Colquitt et al., 2014). When justice-related norms such as equity, respect, and transparency are violated, employees often experience strong emotional reactions (Colquitt et al., 2015). Importantly, these evaluations and emotional responses influence how employees choose to reciprocate within the organization. For example, early research on justice highlighted its role in promoting organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). Organ (1990) argued that fair treatment signals to employees that their contributions are valued, motivating them to engage in cooperative behaviors that may not be formally rewarded. This connection to Blau's (1964) social exchange theory helps explain why justice perceptions influence discretionary behaviors like OCBs. For these reasons, organizational injustice negatively affects employee engagement, sense of belonging, and the willingness to contribute beyond formal job duties (Colquitt et al., 2023).

The theoretical grounding for these negative effects is connected to fairness theory (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001), which explains how individuals cognitively respond to perceived injustice. According to the theory, employees engage in counterfactual thinking, reflecting on

what *would*, *could*, and *should* have happened in a given situation. When recipients conclude that a negative event, whether related to outcomes, procedures, or interpersonal treatment, was both avoidable and unjustified, they are more likely to assign blame to the party involved (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015). In organizational settings, these injustice perceptions are often socially constructed. Employees often observe how others are treated and discuss these experiences, which can amplify feelings of workplace unfairness (Colquitt et al., 2023). These cognitive evaluations can spill over into the workplace, fostering negative outcomes of resentment and disengagement (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015).

Beyond cognitive processes, justice violations carry relevance for employee mental and physical health (Colquitt et al., 2023). Justice-related cognitions and emotions have been shown to influence on-the-job behaviors and well-being (Colquitt et al., 2001, 2023). In particular, procedural and interactional justice have been identified as critical determinants of employee performance, emotional health, and physical well-being (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Kivimäki et al., 2007; Zapara-Phelan et al., 2009). For example, Kivimäki et al. (2007) examined the relationship between procedural and interactional injustice and employee health, in conjunction with effort-reward imbalance (Siegrist, 2017). This model posits that when high effort is met with low reward, it prompts negative emotions and stress responses that may lead to long-term health issues (Siegrist, 2017). Their findings suggest that procedural and interactional justice are closely linked to self-esteem, one of the core components of reward, and that violations in these areas significantly increase the risk of poor self-rated health, diagnosed depression, and other health concerns (Kivimäki et al., 2007).

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) complements this perspective by supporting the emphasis on how injustice experiences shape employees' sense of belonging and

self-worth. The theory posits that individuals derive part of their identity from the groups to which they belong (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Lind and Tyler (1988, 1992) extended this idea by arguing that decision-making procedures convey information about an individual's status within a social group, making procedural justice a key factor in shaping social identity and self-worth. Similarly, perceptions of interactional justice play a major role in how valued and included employees feel within their organizations. Research consistently links perceived procedural and interactional injustice to negative outcomes, including psychological distress, psychiatric morbidity (Elovainio et al., 2002; Ferrie et al., 2006; Kivimäki et al., 2007), burnout (Ndjaboué et al., 2012; Pérez-Rodríguez et al., 2019), and diminished self-worth (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Therefore, injustice perceptions not only impact employees' general well-being but also shape how individuals perceive themselves in relation to their work environment. When workers experience procedural and interactional injustice, the implicit message conveyed is that they are less valued, less competent, or undeserving of belonging in their organization (Kivimäki et al., 2007; Cropanzano et al., 2007). Such signals can undermine one's social identity and self-worth, fostering stress and self-perceptions that are inconsistent with objective indicators of success (Cropanzano et al., 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986).

One manifestation of these distorted self-perceptions is impostor feelings, a psychological experience marked by persistent self-doubt and fear of being exposed as a fraud (Clance & Imes, 1978). Given that organizational decision-making processes and interpersonal treatment influence workers' sense of belonging and self-regard (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Colquitt et al., 2023), impostor feelings may be conceptualized as a maladaptive psychological response to unjust events at work. Moreover, while prior research has linked organizational injustice to stress outcomes, the role of positive and negative self-perceptions and emotional

reactions has received relatively little empirical attention (Nordhall & Knez, 2018; Pérez-Rodríguez et al., 2019). This highlights the need for further research examining how procedural and interactional injustice may contribute to harmful self-perceptions, such as impostor feelings, that may emerge in response to unfair treatment within the workplace.

Impostor Feelings

Impostor feelings, commonly referred to as “impostor syndrome” or the “impostor phenomenon,” was first characterized by Dr. Pauline Clance through her clinical observations of female clients in therapeutic settings (Clance & Imes, 1978; Clance, 1985). The term describes the “internal experience of intellectual phoniness” (Matthews & Clance, 1985, p.71) in individuals who are successful by external standards but struggle to internalize their achievements (Bernard et al., 2002; Clance & Imes, 1978; Sakulku & Alexander, 2011). Those experiencing impostor feelings often believe their accomplishments are undeserved and fear being exposed as frauds, causing distress and maladaptive behaviors such as perfectionism, emotional exhaustion, and anxiety triggered by fear of failure (Clance, 1985; Harvey & Katz, 1985; Kolligian & Sternberg, 1991; Sakulku & Alexander, 2011; Sonnak & Towell, 2001). Clance (1985) identified six characteristics of impostor feelings, collectively known as the Impostor Cycle: the need to be special or the best, superman/superwoman behaviors, fear of failure, denial of competence, discounting praise, and fear or guilt about success. Experiencing at least two of these traits may indicate that one has impostor feelings (Sakulku & Alexander, 2011).

Research suggests that a staggering 70% of people may feel like an impostor at some point in their lives, with high achievers and individuals in competitive workplaces reporting a greater prevalence (Feenstra et al., 2020). Traditionally, scholars have examined impostor

feelings through a clinical psychology lens, treating it as a personality trait originating within the individual (Bravata et al., 2019; Feenstra et al., 2020). This emphasis on the individual likely stems from the phenomenon's connection to a negative and critical self-concept (Bravata et al., 2020). Although Clance and Imes (1978) introduced the term "impostor phenomenon," both academic research and the public commonly refer to it as "impostor syndrome" (Bravata et al., 2019; Feenstra et al., 2020). Depicting this phenomenon as a "syndrome" reinforces an individual-level, pathological framing of the experience, giving the impression that those affected are "patients" (Feenstra et al. 2020). This framing aligns with a medical model of dysfunction (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Feenstra et al., 2020) and has fueled an individual-focused research agenda. Consequently, researchers have predominantly focused on the individual to understand the root causes of impostor feelings (Feenstra et al., 2020), such as individuals' perfectionistic tendencies (e.g., Henning et al., 1998; Dudău, 2014), attachment styles (e.g., Sonnak & Towell, 2001; Gibson-Beverly & Schwartz, 2008), personality (e.g., Harvey, 1981; Bernard et al., 2002; Vergauwe et al., 2014), and the Impostor Cycle itself (Clance, 1985).

Because of this individualized framing, many proposed solutions for impostor feelings focus on "fixing" the individual, including clinical therapy (Langford & Clance, 1993), coaching and confidence training (Zanchetta et al., 2020), and motivational strategies to "overcome" one's own impostor "syndrome" (Dickerson, 2019; Feenstra et al., 2020). Additionally, Bravata et al. (2019) recommend that impostor feelings should be considered for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) so that the approach of patients with impostor symptoms can be codified for behavioral providers, such as cognitive behavioral therapy. However, Feenstra et al. (2020) argue that these approaches likely fall short because they neglect the

broader social context that may contribute to one's impostor feelings. By focusing narrowly on individual deficits, such solutions may reinforce notions of victim-blaming, implying the individual is the "problem" and is responsible for "fixing" their own situation (Feenstra et al., 2020; Crawford, 1977; Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985; Niemi & Young, 2016). This social contextual shift allows researchers to evaluate impostor feelings as a psychological phenomenon rather than a clinical syndrome.

At the same time, framing impostor feelings primarily as a diagnosable syndrome risks exaggerating the severity and obscuring the fact that, for many, impostor feelings are everyday experiences that do not necessarily impair functioning. Much like other psychological constructs that exist along a continuum (e.g., anxiety, perfectionism, or even everyday sadism), impostor feelings can manifest in both clinical and subclinical forms (Bravata et al., 2019; Feenstra et al., 2020). Recognizing this spectrum underscores the importance of examining impostor experiences not only in terms of pathology, but also as routine, subclinical phenomena that may reflect broader workplace and cultural dynamics. Feenstra et al. (2020) call for a shift beyond the individual level, advocating for a contextual perspective to fully comprehend the impostor phenomenon.

While Clance acknowledged that impostor experiences might be influenced by "interpersonal and social contexts" (Clance et al., 1995, p.80), little theoretical and empirical attention has been devoted to these social roots. Feenstra et al. (2020) propose that this pervasive phenomenon is shaped by multiple levels of context: societal and cultural norms, organizational and institutional structures, and interpersonal interactions. Similarly, Hudson and Gonzalez-Gomez (2021) highlight that past research emphasizes how workplace environments and structures profoundly influence employee emotions and outcomes such as satisfaction,

motivation (Amabile et al., 1996; Amabile & Pratt, 2016), and creativity (Gonzalez-Gomez & Richter, 2015). Yet, few studies have examined how contextual characteristics may shape the experience and consequences of impostor feelings at work. This emerging pattern of contextual refocus suggests the need to reconceptualize the impostor phenomenon, considering how organizational landscapes, including workplace culture, leadership, injustice perceptions, and interpersonal dynamics, impact employees' well-being and self-concept. Therefore, the current thesis aims to evaluate impostor feelings as everyday experiences, rather than as symptoms of a clinical disorder.

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) provides a valuable framework for understanding how impostor feelings manifest in organizational contexts. The theory details that individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect valuable resources, such as social support, job security, and emotional energy, and that resource loss is more psychologically impactful than resource gain (Holmgreen et al., 2017). When resources are depleted, individuals become more vulnerable to further losses, leading to stress and burnout (Holmgreen et al., 2017). Conversely, resource gains create upward spirals, enhancing resilience and well-being. COR highlights the importance of resource-preserving strategies, including supportive leadership, work-life balance, and organizational practices that strengthen employee resources (Holmgreen et al., 2017). Within this framework, Hudson and Gonzalez-Gomez (2021) argue that individuals experiencing impostor feelings may “overspend” their psychological and emotional resources, such as time, energy, and self-monitoring, in an effort to conceal perceived incompetence. This excessive resource depletion can result in burnout, disengagement, and even heightened engagement in OCBs to restore self-worth and repair one's perceived image (Bravata et al., 2019; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021).

The relationship between organizational justice and impostor feelings is particularly relevant in workplace settings. When employees perceive social injustice or unfair treatment, they may experience diminished self-efficacy and a distorted self-image, contributing to the development of impostor feelings (Chrisman et al., 1995; Sakulku & Alexander, 2011). Bandura (1977) emphasized that feelings of unworthiness can significantly impact an individual's belief in their ability to succeed and manage challenges, while Clance and Imes (1978) noted that individuals with high impostor tendencies often underestimate their skills, engage in self-handicapping (Cowman & Ferrari, 2002), and feel inadequate in their roles (Gardner et al., 2019). In addition, these individuals may fail to effectively leverage their personal resources (Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021).

Because procedural and interactional justice convey critical information about one's standing in social groups and role in organizational decision-making, they directly shape employees' perceptions of value, competence, and belonging (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015). Procedural injustice, which involves inconsistent decision-making processes, communicates to employees that their skills, input, and voice are undervalued, undermining their sense of legitimacy and control (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Zapara-Phelan et al., 2009). Similarly, interactional injustice, characterized by disrespectful interpersonal treatment, signals social rejection and loss of relational belonging (Zapara-Phelan et al., 2009). Together, these experiences threaten core aspects of one's self-worth and concept, prompting individuals to question their abilities and internalize feelings of inadequacy, all key features of impostor experiences (Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021).

When workers perceive that unjust organizational procedures and strained interpersonal interactions reflect something about their identity or competence, they may feel like frauds or

undeserving of their roles (Feenstra et al., 2020). Despite growing interest in impostor feelings, research examining its intersection with organizational injustice remains limited and has been largely situated in educational settings rather than workplace contexts (Feenstra et al., 2020; Cokley et al., 2017). This gap highlights the need to examine impostor experiences within organizational contexts and through the lens of justice perceptions. As such, this leads to the study's first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1(a): Those who are in the high procedural justice condition will report less impostor feelings than those who are in the low procedural justice condition.

Hypothesis 1(b): Those who are in the high interactional justice condition will report less impostor feelings than those who are in the low interactional justice condition.

As prior research suggests (Feenstra et al., 2020; Pérez-Rodríguez et al., 2019; Kivimäki et al., 2007; Cropanzano et al., 2007), both interactional and procedural injustice interact to shape employees' well-being and self-concept in ways that foster impostor feelings. Interactional injustice directly undermines one's sense of self-worth (Feenstra et al., 2020). Everyday social evaluative cues, such as being overlooked for input, excluded from discussions, or treated as less competent, signal whether peers view someone as valuable and deserving of belonging in a social group (Feenstra et al., 2020; Huo & Binning, 2008; Lind & Tyler, 1988). For example, in traditionally White and male-dominated occupations, women and ethnic minority group members are often subtly devalued, perpetuating self-doubt and work disengagement that can evolve into impostor experiences (Feenstra et al., 2020; Begeny et al., 2020; Holleran et al., 2011). In this way, interactional injustice communicates a violation of respect and propriety rules, while signaling that fair procedural and ethical standards were not upheld, striking at an individual's self-schema (Zapara-Phelan et al., 2009).

Procedural injustice reflects inequities embedded in organizational systems and decision-making structures, such as underrepresentation in leadership roles, unequal pay, or the lack of role models (Catalyst, 2018; Feenstra et al., 2020; Lyness & Thompson, 2000). These systemic inequities can elicit doubts about belonging and suitability within an organization (Feenstra et al., 2020; Peters et al., 2012). From a social identity theory (SIT) perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), decision-making procedures convey one's relative status in the group, suggesting that procedural injustice has significant implications for social identity and, ultimately, self-worth (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015).

While procedural injustice reflects broader systemic inequities, its impact may be magnified when paired with interactional injustice, which makes these inequities personally visible and socially reinforced in everyday experiences. In this case, these two forms of justice are not merely additive, but may interact with one another to shape impostor feelings of diminished self-worth in the workplace. Procedural injustice (e.g., inequitable systems, exclusion from leadership pipelines) sets the stage for interactional injustice to occur (Cropanzano et al., 2007; Feenstra et al., 2020). When employees are systemically overlooked in organizational structures (procedural), they may also encounter dismissive or disrespectful treatment in interpersonal exchanges (interactional) (Feenstra et al., 2020). This layering makes social cues of exclusion more credible and harder to discount, intensifying impostor experiences (Feenstra et al., 2020). Simultaneously, procedural inequities heighten sensitivity to such cues. Together, these two forms of injustice may reinforce each other, amplifying doubt and self-questioning beyond what either could produce alone. According to SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), procedural injustice lowers one's perceived group standing, whereas interactional injustice makes that

lowered status visible and personally salient (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015), compounding identity threat and fostering impostor experiences.

Such experiences communicate to employees that they are unworthy or undeserving of belonging in the eyes of their coworkers and supervisors (Cropanzano et al., 2007; Feenstra et al., 2020). Moreover, interactional injustice often conveys that procedural injustice has already occurred, compounding its harmful effects (Zapara-Phelan et al., 2009). Therefore, this leads to the study's second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: There is an interaction between interactional justice and procedural justice on impostor feelings.

Workability

As perceptions of injustice and impostor feelings threaten resources and undermine effective functioning, attention must be given to their broader implications for well-being and performance at work (Bravata et al., 2019; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021). One way individuals can be analyzed in terms of their effectiveness and well-being is by their ability to cope with work demands, or workability. Workability is broadly defined as an individual's capacity to cope with work demands while balancing personal resources and the work environment (Ilmarinen & Tuomi, 2004; Ilmarinen, 2006). Depending on the practitioner, whether health care providers, legislators, or employers, there is not one cohesive definition for the term (Ilmarinen, 2008). Though perspectives vary, there is a consensus that workability cannot solely be analyzed according to the characteristics of the individual; rather, work and the surrounding environment must also be considered (Ilmarinen, 2008; Kim, 2021). Therefore, it is the task of research to determine which factors affect or are associated with workability and to clarify their significance across different stages of an employee's career (Ilmarinen, 2008).

Workability enables workers to perform their tasks and responsibilities at the workplace, although job stress interferes with the functional capacity of an employee to efficiently meet their job requirements (Kim, 2021). For instance, when job stress, such as a high workload or poor work relations, reaches an acute level of discomfort, it harms individual well-being, resulting in reduced performance and workability (Jalagat, 2017; Kim, 2021). This multidimensional construct includes physical, mental, intellectual, and social resources, as well as competencies and occupational virtues relevant to one's role (Kim, 2021). Over time, the concept has shifted away from a purely medical perspective toward a more balanced view, emphasizing the relationship between individual resources and work conditions, and more recently, to a multidimensional perspective that situates workability within broader social and organizational contexts (Ilmarinen, 2008). As such, like impostor feelings, workability cannot be understood solely as an individual trait but must consider environmental and organizational influences (Ilmarinen, 2008; Kim, 2021).

Workplace stress has been identified as one factor that may influence workability (Kim, 2021). Work-related stress undermines employee well-being and organizational effectiveness, leading to lower performance, higher turnover, negative emotions towards work, and health issues that increase absenteeism, such as headaches, anxiety, and depression (Kim, 2021). Notably, stress is not conceptualized as a component of workability itself, but rather as a contextual factor that influences an individual's capacity to meet work demands (Ilmarinen, 2008; Kim, 2021). In the present study, impostor feelings may be conceptualized as a psychological stressor, as persistent self-doubt about one's competence may deplete cognitive and emotional resources needed for effective work functioning. According to Olsen et al. (2017), employees' performance may depend on various factors, such as the ability to work, the support

given for doing the job, and the level of effort put into doing the work. More broadly, employee performance and workability are significantly related to an organization's effectiveness, survival, and profitability (Kim, 2021). Prolonged stress may be particularly harmful to workability, as it can diminish employees' capacity to meet job demands and increase the risk of stress-related illnesses and anxiety disorders (Eldor, 2018; El Sayed et al., 2019; Harris & Fleming, 2017; Jalagat, 2017).

From a COR theory perspective (Hobfoll, 1989), diminished workability can be understood as a consequence of resource loss or insufficient resource replenishment. When personal and job-related stressors outweigh available resources, employees face strain and reduced capacity to meet work expectations (Farkash et al., 2022; Holmgreen et al., 2017; Jalagat, 2017). Workers may attempt to cope with stressful conditions to preserve workability, but when organizations fail to supply adequate resources, employees lack the means to replenish these losses (Ilmarinen, 2008; Kim, 2021). As mentioned earlier, when losses stem from organizational dysfunction, such as procedural or interactional injustice, employees may experience negative self-perceptions, such as impostor feelings, that can diminish key resources (Feenstra et al., 2020; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021). In this way, injustice may prompt impostor feelings that deplete resources essential for maintaining workability, such as confidence in meeting job demands, perceived fit, and psychological energy. Consequently, stress not only reduces workability but may indirectly foster impostor experiences that undermine employees' functional capacity. (Feenstra et al., 2020; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021; Ilmarinen, 2008; Kim, 2021).

Organizational justice plays a critical role in this stress dynamic. Procedural and interactional injustice are closely tied to stress outcomes, as unfair treatment, poor

communication and decision-making processes, and disrespectful interactions signal a lack of value and belonging, amplifying job stress while attacking employees' sense of self-worth (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Kim, 2021; Spanier et al., 2014). As procedural and interactional justice are typically understood as key representations of organizational justice, these dimensions have been shown to relate to certified sick leave, self-rated health, and mental health (Spanier et al., 2014), causing diminished workability. Dinh (2020) further highlighted the role of interactional injustice, noting that poor relationships between employees, supervisors, and colleagues increase workplace stress. Likewise, Kim (2021) emphasized that procedural injustice, such as being subjected to excessive performance appraisals or being overlooked for promotions, can intensify stress and frustration. These findings suggest that managers hold a substantial responsibility for either increasing or reducing stress among their employees (Ilmarinen, 2008; Kim, 2021). Significantly, organizational stressors such as procedural and interactional injustice require active leadership intervention to mitigate their harmful effects (Kim, 2021). Such violations not only create stress but may also contribute to impostor feelings, which in turn diminish employees' ability to utilize their resources and effectively perform (Kim, 2021). For that reason, justice violations may distort employees' self-perceptions and intensify their impact on workability.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that perceptions of procedural and interactional injustice may simultaneously heighten impostor feelings and reduce workability (Dinh, 2020; Feenstra et al., 2020; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021; Spanier et al., 2014; Kim, 2021). When employees doubt their competence and feel undervalued, their ability to sustain performance in the face of work demands may be compromised (Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021; Sakulku & Alexander, 2011). Moreover, as Kim (2021) recommends, future research

should continue to investigate additional workplace stressors that may undermine employees' workability (such as organizational injustice on impostor experiences) across diverse occupational settings. Building on prior literature linking organizational justice, stress, and impostor experiences, the current study proposes the following:

Hypothesis 3: Impostor feelings will mediate the relationship between procedural and interactional injustice and workability.

While low procedural and interactional justice heighten stress and possibly reduce workability, they may do so in complementary ways that reinforce one another. Workability, an employee's balance between personal resources and the demands of their job, depends on fair structures and supportive relationships (Ilmarinen, 2008). Procedural injustice undermines this balance by embedding inequities into decision-making systems that control employee workloads, promotions, and access to resources (Kim, 2021; Zapara-Phelan et al., 2009). These chronic inequities diminish the structural support workers need to meet performance expectations, reducing their capacity to sustain productivity and health at work (Dinh, 2020; Eldor, 2018; Kim, 2021).

Interactional injustice further weakens workability by damaging relational and emotional resources through disrespectful treatment, exclusion, or lack of recognition (Bies & Moag, 1986; Colquitt et al., 2023; Feenstra et al., 2020). By doing this, organizations signal to workers that they have low worth and belonging in the workplace (Bies & Moag, 1986; Colquitt et al., 2023; Feenstra et al., 2020). Together, they may form a reinforcing cycle, such that low procedural justice depletes structural and material resources, while low interactional justice harms the social and emotional resources needed to buffer depletion, diminishing worker workability (Ilmarinen, 2008; Kim, 2021). This leads to the study's fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: There is an interaction between interactional justice and procedural justice on workability.

Identity Prominence

The impact of injustice and impostor feelings on workability is not experienced uniformly across individuals; rather, employees' identities influence how they interpret and navigate these experiences. Identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1968, 1980) emphasizes that identities represent the internalized meanings individuals use to define themselves, whether through group membership, social roles, or personal uniqueness. Complementing this perspective, social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) explains how individuals classify themselves and others into social categories (e.g., organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender, ethnicity, age cohort) partly to enhance self-esteem (Hogg & Turner, 1985; Markowski & Serpe, 2021; Tajfel, 1978). These classifications not only order the social world but also inform one's social identification, which is the perception of belonging to a collective group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). By distinguishing personal identity (individual attributes) from social identity (membership in salient groups), social identification provides a partial answer to the question: "Who am I?" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Markowski & Serpe, 2021; Turner, 1985).

In this case, social identities are inherently relational and comparative as individuals share in the successes and status of their groups. Therefore, within an organizational context, social identification can be a key source for meaning and self-esteem, as employees derive part of their sense of self from their affiliation with the organization, department, or work group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). However, these same identities can be harmed through experiences of workplace mistreatment and organizational injustice, which can undermine workers' sense of

belonging and respect. When fairness or dignity is violated, individuals may experience identity misalignment and frustration, as the organization no longer supports a central part of their self-concept (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Zapara-Phelan et al., 2009).

Building on this perspective, it is important to consider which identities are most prominent in a workplace context. Given that individuals hold multiple identities simultaneously, the present study focuses on gender identity. Prior research demonstrates that women are more likely to experience workplace bias, underrepresentation, and heightened evaluative scrutiny, which can shape perceptions of organizational justice (Prakash et al., 2024; Feenstra et al., 2020). As a result, gender may represent a prominent identity when examining how individuals interpret organizational injustice and internalize workplace experiences. Additionally, because impostor feelings are often linked to women and members of ethnic minority groups (Bravata et al., 2019; Feenstra et al., 2020), it is important to examine the role of gender identity in the relationship between organizational justice and impostor feelings, especially where gender-based disparities are more pronounced. To understand how identities influence these processes, it is important to distinguish between different dimensions of identity.

Since the establishment of SIT, two dimensions of identity within its framework have gained significant attention: salience and prominence (Markowski & Serpe, 2021). *Salience* refers to the likelihood that a given identity will be invoked or enacted across situations (Stryker, 1968, 1980; Markowski & Serpe, 2021). It reflects how often individuals expect to express an identity in daily life, guided by their roles and social interactions. On the other hand, *prominence* is defined as the degree to which an identity shapes how individuals see and evaluate themselves (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Markowski & Serpe, 2021). It represents how deeply an identity is integrated into one's self-concept and emotional investment, influencing when identities are

expressed and why they matter (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Markowski & Serpe, 2021; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Like salience, prominence is shaped by social structure and guides behavior, yet it is theoretically and empirically distinct in that it reflects how personally valued and meaningful an identity is to the self (Brenner et al., 2014; Ellestad & Stets, 1998; McCall & Simmons, 1978; Serpe et al., 2019; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). In organizational contexts, prominence is impactful as the workplace is a central domain for self-definition and validation (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Feenstra et al., 2020). When employees view their professional or organizational identity as highly prominent, for example, they interpret workplace experiences (e.g., getting recognition, inclusion, and fairness) as direct reflections of self-worth (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Within organizations, this social identity process has direct implications for justice. Interactional justice shapes daily interpersonal exchanges and the quality of social relationships (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993), while procedural justice reflects decision makers' structuring of rules, evaluations, and opportunities (Greenberg, 1987; Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Both forms can bias which identities are recognized and reinforced in the workplace, sparking inner conflict over privileged and marginalized identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Markowski & Serpe, 2021). When procedural or interactional injustice occurs, it can strike at the core of one's self-concept (Cropanzano et al., 2007; Kivimäki et al., 2007; Markowski & Serpe, 2021). Procedural injustice may communicate that one's voice or contributions are undervalued to the organization, while interactional injustice diminishes feelings of dignity and belonging in daily work relations (Cropanzano et al., 2007; Kivimäki et al., 2007). When an employee's highly prominent identity is criticized at work, their experiences are not just

situational frustrations, but threats to a deeply held factor of who they are, making them more vulnerable to feelings of self-doubt and lowered self-worth (Markowski & Serpe, 2021, 2018).

Identities matter not only because they organize social behavior, but because they serve as a foundation for self-evaluation and well-being (Stets & Burke, 2014; Stets et al., 2020; Markowski & Serpe, 2021). Prominent identities reinforce self-esteem, confidence, and coherence between one's internal self and external behavior, strengthening psychological resources that buffer against strain (Cast & Burke, 2002; Markowski & Serpe, 2021; Stets & Burke, 2014). However, when individuals experience incongruence between their valued identities and how they are treated, self-evaluations weaken, depleting psychological resources and increasing susceptibility to self-doubt and work disengagement (Markowski & Serpe, 2021). Such incongruity is particularly damaging in unjust environments, where procedural or interactional unfairness can disrupt the validation of identities, leading individuals to question their competence, worth, and authenticity (Feenstra et al., 2020; Markowski & Serpe, 2021). These processes suggest that identity prominence may be closely tied to characteristics of impostor feelings, influencing how workers react to organizational injustice (Bravata et al., 2019; Feenstra et al., 2020; Markowski & Serpe, 2021).

As relatively stable aspects of the self that guide how one interprets social experiences, prominence influences how individuals evaluate their competence and legitimacy within roles, which are central elements of impostor feelings (Markowski & Serpe, 2021). When workers are treated unfairly or disrespectfully, particularly through procedural and interactional injustices that signal exclusion and devaluation, their recognized identities are threatened (Markowski & Serpe, 2021; Feenstra et al., 2020). Such threats diminish self-validation and belonging, amplifying impostor feelings and weakening the psychological foundation necessary for healthy

work engagement (Cropanzano et al., 2007; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021; Kivimäki et al., 2007). These effects are especially pronounced for individuals whose prominent identities place them within underrepresented or stigmatized social categories, where their sense of belonging is continually challenged.

Minority identity, one's self-concept tied to a member of a marginalized group, is closely tied to minority stress and its impact on well-being (Meyer, 2003). Group identities are essential for individual emotional functioning, as they help balance the competing needs for individuation and affiliation (Brewer, 1991; Meyer, 2003). However, when feedback from others or organizational cues is inconsistent with one's valued identity, such as being perceived as less competent due to one's gender or ethnicity, this "identity interruption" causes distress and can trigger impostor experiences (Burke, 1991). At the same time, minority identity can foster stronger affiliations with one's marginalized community, which may buffer the impact of stress through shared understanding and collective coping (Branscombe et al., 1999; Brown et al., 1999; Crocker & Major, 1989; Meyer, 2003).

Consistent with this, research showcases that impostor feelings are often linked to women and members of ethnic minority groups (Bravata et al., 2019; Feenstra et al., 2020). Initially, early research suggested that the phenomenon was believed to only affect professional women, as the term itself derived from the clinical observation of female clients (Clance & Imes, 1978). Decades of research have since expanded this view, recognizing that while gender patterns remain, impostor experiences are prevalent among everyone, particularly in multiple ethnic minority groups (Bravata et al., 2019; Feenstra et al., 2020). Importantly, these experiences are consistently associated with worsened outcomes in both academic and professional contexts (Bravata et al., 2019; Cokley et al., 2017; Feenstra et al., 2020). For

example, in academic settings, perceived discrimination has been shown to harm ethnic minority students' health through its link to impostor feelings, leading researchers to recommend including environmental and academic stressors in student mental health assessments (Cokley et al., 2017). This suggests how one's most visible or socially recognized identity can profoundly influence how they are perceived and treated in the workplace, and additionally, how they perceive themselves.

Minority Stress Theory (MST; Meyer, 2003), an extension of SIT, provides a useful framework for understanding how one's marginalized identity and injustice processes may interact to produce impostor feelings. MST highlights that individuals with marginalized statuses experience "excess stress" due to environments that view them as different, abnormal, or devalued (Meyer, 2003). In organizational contexts, structural and interpersonal injustices can function as minority stressors, leading individuals to attribute their hardships to their minority identities and signaling that their salient identities are incongruent with organizational norms (Markowski & Serpe, 2021; Meyer, 2003). For instance, women and ethnic minority individuals remain disproportionately represented in certain jobs (e.g., underrepresented in surgery but more common in nursing), organizational roles (e.g., underrepresented in IT but more common in HR), and organizational hierarchical levels (e.g., underrepresented in leadership but more common in lower positions) (Feenstra et al., 2020). When these individuals are placed in these uncommon roles, these disparities may reflect cultural negative stereotypes (e.g., women as "insecure" or "soft," ethnic minorities as "unintelligent" or "unachieving") and everyday social evaluative cues that influence self-worth, esteem, and the sense of being worthy of their role within a group (Feenstra et al., 2020).

In traditionally white and male-dominated fields, these biases often result in women and ethnic minority workers being perceived and treated differently, intensifying feelings of inadequacy and fear of being exposed as a fraud, even when performance is objectively strong (Feenstra et al., 2020). For workers with highly prominent minority identities, these experiences are taxing as unfair or disrespectful treatment can trigger identity threats that deplete resources and heighten internalized impostor feelings (McEwen, 2002; Meyer, 2003). Therefore, the prominence of one's marginalized identity may serve as a moderator that influences the strength of the relationship between minority stress and organizational injustice on impostor feelings and related behavioral outcomes (Feenstra et al., 2020; McEwen, 2002; Meyer, 2003).

Given the strong theoretical and empirical links between gender and impostor feelings, the present study focuses specifically on gender identity prominence. Past literature has consistently shown that women, in particular, experience heightened impostor feelings due to underrepresentation, stereotype-based expectations, and increased evaluative scrutiny in workplace contexts (Feenstra et al., 2020; Bravata et al., 2019). Accordingly, the present study recruited a sample consisting primarily of women to more directly examine how gender identity prominence shapes responses to organizational justice and self-perceptions in the workplace.

Taken together, identity prominence may intensify the psychological impact of unfair treatment in the workplace (Markowski & Serpe, 2021; Meyer, 2003). When an identity is highly central to the self, individuals are more likely to interpret instances of procedural and interactional injustice as threats to their self-concept, depleting resources and reinforcing impostor feelings (Feenstra et al., 2020; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). In contrast, when prominence is lower, such experiences may present less of a personal threat (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Therefore, gender identity prominence is expected to moderate the relationship between

perceived procedural and interactional justice in predicting impostor feelings. The conceptual model guiding the present study, which integrates procedural and interactional justice, impostor feelings, workability, and gender identity prominence, is presented in Figure 1. This leads to the fifth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: Gender identity prominence will moderate the interaction between procedural and interactional justice on impostor feelings.

CHAPTER 2: METHODS

Participants

The study's participants were recruited through CloudResearch's Connect platform (Litman et al., 2017). The survey was created and hosted in Qualtrics and distributed through this platform. CloudResearch Connect was selected because it provides high-quality participant data and greater reliability compared to other online crowdsourcing platforms, such as MTurk or Qualtrics panels (Douglas et al., 2023). Specifically, Douglas et al. (2023) found that participants recruited through CloudResearch are more likely to pass attention checks, provide meaningful responses, and follow instructions carefully, demonstrating higher data integrity. Furthermore, CloudResearch provided access to a broad pool of working adults, which was critical for a study focused on perceptions of procedural and interactional injustice in workplace settings (Douglas et al., 2023; Peer et al., 2021).

Eligible participants included employed adults residing in the United States who were at least 18 years of age, proficient in English, and identified as women based on prescreening criteria in CloudResearch. Participants were required to work either part-time or full-time. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, part-time employment was defined as working between 1 and 34 hours per week, and full-time employment as working 35 hours or more per week. Observing both full and part-time workers was appropriate, as employees across schedules are subject to organizational dynamics that shape perceptions of injustice (Skinner et al., 2018). To ensure generalizability across occupational contexts, a broad range of industries was included in the study.

An a priori G*Power 3.1 analysis was conducted to determine the minimum sample size required for this study. A linear multiple regression (*Fixed Model, R² increase*) was specified to

test the hypothesized moderation effect (identity prominence x justice). A conservative semi-partial R^2 of .03 for the interaction term ($f^2 = 0.03$) was used to reflect modest effect sizes commonly observed in organizational research. Using an alpha level of .05 and a desired power of .80, the analysis indicated that approximately 314 participants were required. The estimate was based on a model including multiple predictors and interaction terms. Although the final model was simplified following study refinement, the original estimate provided a conservative sample size sufficient to detect the effects of interest. To account for potential data exclusions, recruitment was increased by 20%, resulting in a target sample of approximately 377 participants.

Following data collection, a total of 384 participants completed the survey and were compensated \$2.35 for their participation. To ensure high-quality information, several data quality checks were implemented. Two instructed-response attention checks were embedded (Select “Applies a bit” and Select “Strongly agree”), as such items effectively capture inattentive responding (Gummer et al., 2018; Meade & Craig, 2012). One open-ended validity check item was also included to assess potential bot behavior (“Please think about your typical workplace experiences. Describe how you usually feel at work. Are there times you would describe yourself as feeling like you don't belong?”). Participants were required to correctly answer the attention checks and an open-ended question to remain in the dataset. In the study, no participants failed the attention check items, and two participants were removed for suspicious open-ended responses.

IP addresses were screened to identify duplicate responses, resulting in the removal of eight participants. Response times were evaluated relative to the average completion time ($M = 21.92$ minutes), and participants with completion times beyond ± 2 standard deviations from the

mean were flagged and compared with the full sample to assess response validity. No participants were removed based on response time after inspection. Additionally, the *careless* package (Yentes & Wilhelm, 2023) in R (R Core Team, 2023) was used to assess data quality using Mahalanobis distance ($p < .05$) and longstring analysis (> 3 consecutive identical responses) criteria computed from the five items of the Brief Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (B-RSES; Monteiro, 2021). This analysis resulted in the removal of four participants who met both criteria. One additional participant was removed due to implausible demographic information (e.g., reporting work experience beginning in early childhood). These analyses resulted in a sample of 370 participants being retained.

Four manipulation checks were included to verify that participants accurately perceived the assigned scenarios. Two items assessed basic vignette comprehension (e.g., recalling the manager's name [Jordan] and identifying the outcome of the promotion decision) and two assessed condition-specific content (e.g., how Jordan greeted the participant upon entering the office and whether Jordan acknowledged past work contributions). These items served as screening checks, as participants who could not recall core elements of the scenario would not be able to meaningfully evaluate the justice cues. Participants who failed one or more manipulation checks were excluded from the final sample to ensure accurate interpretation of the vignette manipulations. A total of 38 participants were removed due to failing at least one manipulation check, with some failing multiple items. Specifically, one participant failed the manager name question, six failed the promotion outcome question, 14 failed the vignette-based greeting question, and 24 failed the vignette-based acknowledgment question. Although excluding participants based on manipulation checks may influence results, this approach was implemented

to ensure that participants were able to accurately interpret the experimental manipulations. This resulted in a final analytic sample of 331 participants.

The participant sample ranged in age from 20 to 80 years, with a mean age of 41.88 years ($SD = 12.18$). The sample consisted primarily of women (98.79%), as recruitment targeted female participants. Four participants (1.21%) self-identified as non-binary through an open-ended response option and were retained in the sample, as they represented gender minority identities relevant to the study's focus on gender-related experiences. In terms of race/ethnicity, 236 participants (71.30%) identified as White, and 95 participants (28.70%) identified as non-White or multiracial. Participants reported a range of racial and ethnic identities, including Black or African American ($n = 50$), Latinx or Hispanic American ($n = 19$), East Asian or Asian American ($n = 19$), Native American or Alaskan Native ($n = 10$), Middle Eastern or Arab American ($n = 4$), and South Asian or Indian American ($n = 1$). Because participants were able to select multiple racial or ethnic identities, category counts exceed the total number of participants. For analysis, race was grouped into White and non-White categories.

The majority of participants were employed either full-time (76.36%) or part-time (20.30%), with a smaller proportion reporting self-employment (3.03%) or retirement (0.30%). Participants reported working an average of 36.84 hours per week ($SD = 10.15$), with hours ranging from 4 to 80 per week. Individuals reported working an average of 42.18% of the time ($SD = 42.05$) remotely, with responses ranging from fully in-person (0%) to fully remote (100%). Regarding job tenure, participants reported an average tenure of 5.76 years ($SD = 6.15$), with tenure ranging from 0.02 to 33.33 years. Participants represented a variety of occupational fields, with the most reported categories including Education, Training, and Library (18.18%),

Business and Financial Operations (9.39%), Other occupational categories (e.g., non-profit, retail, freelance; 9.39%), and Office and Administrative Support (8.79%).

Design and Procedure

Design. This study utilized a 2 (Interactional: Justice vs. Injustice) x 2 (Procedural: Justice vs. Injustice) experimental vignette-based design. This approach was chosen because it allowed for the direct manipulation of organizational justice within a manager-employee scenario, enabling the examination of how participants perceive procedural and interactional injustice and their subsequent effects on impostor feelings and work-related outcomes. Vignette-based designs present realistic workplace situations in a controlled manner, providing the experimental control necessary to test causal hypotheses that would otherwise be difficult to examine in field settings (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014).

Four experimental conditions were developed based on the justice combinations: procedural injustice/interactional injustice, procedural justice/interactional injustice, procedural injustice/interactional justice, and procedural justice/interactional justice. These vignettes were pretested with 62 undergraduate participants recruited through the SONA platform, following the justice vignette foundation by Barling et al. (1993), to ensure the scenarios were clear, realistic, and accurately reflected the intended justice conditions. Six participants were excluded for failing both the attention checks and initial vignette-comprehension items (e.g., recalling the manager's name [Jordan] and identifying the outcome of the promotion decision), leaving 56 cases for evaluation. Most participants correctly identified the intended justice conditions (Manipulation Check Question 3: 53 correct, 2 incorrect; Manipulation Check Question 4: 51 correct, 4 incorrect), supporting the validity and clarity of the vignettes. These results provide

confidence that the vignette conditions effectively communicated the intended procedural and interactional justice manipulations.

Procedure. The survey was administered through CloudResearch Connect. Participants were first presented with a brief overview of the study (see Appendix A). In Qualtrics, participants were provided with an option to electronically consent to participate and have their responses recorded (see Appendix B). Participant identity remained anonymous, and no personally identifiable information was linked to the survey responses. After providing consent, participants took the gender identity prominence measure (Brenner et al., 2014) and read both a shared setup story and a randomly assigned vignette depicting a managerial scenario corresponding to one of the four justice conditions (see Appendix C). Participants then completed a set of randomly ordered questionnaire measures assessing organizational justice (Colquitt, 2001), impostor feelings (Jansen, 2024), workability (Tuomi et al., 1991), general self-efficacy (Doll et al., 2021), self-esteem (Monteiro, 2021), and work self-efficacy (Avallone et al., 2007), based on their perceptions of the workplace scenario and how they would imagine feeling. Although work self-efficacy was collected as part of the broader study, it was not included in the present analyses. Attention check and manipulation check questions were embedded throughout the survey to ensure data quality. At the end of the survey, participants provided demographic information (see Appendix D for all survey materials) and were debriefed with a summary of the study's purpose and contact information for follow-up questions (see Appendix E).

Measures

Organizational Justice. Perceptions of procedural and interactional justice were measured using the corresponding subscales of the Organizational Justice Scale (Colquitt, 2001).

This scale assessed fairness in decision-making processes (procedural justice) and interpersonal treatment (interactional justice). Participants responded using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) *to a small extent* to (5) *to a large extent*. The adapted measure included eleven items, with seven measuring procedural justice and four measuring interactional justice. Sample items include “Were you able to appeal the promotion denial arrived at by those procedures?” (procedural) and “Did Jordan treat you in a polite manner?” (interactional). The scale has shown strong reliability, with alpha coefficients ranging from .78 to .93 across studies (Omar et al., 2018). In the current sample, both procedural justice ($\alpha = .89$, $\omega = .96$) and interactional justice ($\alpha = .99$, $\omega = .99$) demonstrated strong internal consistency, indicating reliable measurement of both justice dimensions. Although the internal consistency for interactional justice was high, this likely reflects the conceptual similarity of items within the scale rather than redundancy (Streiner, 2003; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Scale scores were computed by averaging items within each justice subscale.

Impostor Feelings. Impostor feelings were measured using the Impostor Phenomenon Short Scale (IPSS-3; Jansen, 2024). The three-item measure captures self-doubt, fear of failure, and concern about being exposed as a fraud. Participants responded on a 6-point Likert scale from (1) *does not apply at all* to (6) *absolutely applies*. Sample items include “Though I am successful, I would be afraid of failing again at every request,” and “I would often fear not being able to meet the expectations of others, even though I have already achieved a lot.” This scale demonstrates acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .76-.80$; $\omega = .77-.80$) and a unidimensional factor structure supported by confirmatory factor analysis. In this study’s sample, the scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .91$, $\omega = .92$). Items were averaged to create a total score, with higher scores indicating more intense impostor feelings.

Identity Prominence. Identity prominence was assessed using a four-item scale adapted from Serpe (1987), Serpe and Stryker (1987), and Stryker and Serpe (1982, 1994) (Brenner et al., 2014). The scale measures the subjective importance of a specific social identity to an individual's self-concept. Participants were specifically asked to reflect on how central gender was to their self-concept while completing the measure items. Responses were on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) *strongly disagree* to (5) *strongly agree*. Sample items include "My gender is an important part of my self-image" and "I have a strong sense of belonging to the community of my gender." Prior scale research has demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .84-.88$ across time waves; Brenner et al., 2014), along with the current sample ($\alpha = .88$, $\omega = .91$). The items will be averaged, with higher values indicating higher gender identity prominence.

Workability. Workability was assessed using an adapted set of items from the Work Ability Index (WAI; Tuomi et al., 1991). The original WAI is a multidimensional measure consisting of seven components assessing workability in relation to job demands, health status, and mental resources. For this study, items were adapted to reflect participants' perceived ability to meet the physical and mental demands of the job described in the vignette. Participants responded to five items using a 5-point Likert scale from (1) *cannot work at all* to (5) *work ability at its lifetime best*. Sample items include "How many points would you give your current work ability to work?" and "Thinking about the [physical, mental, interpersonal] demands of your job, how do you rate your current ability to meet those demands?" In the current sample, the WAI demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$, $\omega = .94$). Responses were averaged to form a composite score, with higher values indicating greater perceived workability.

General Self-Efficacy. General self-efficacy was assessed using the three-item General Self-Efficacy Short Scale (GSE-3; Doll et al., 2021) and was measured as a covariate. This

adapted scale assesses beliefs in one's general ability to cope with challenges. Participants responded on a 5-point scale from (1) *does not apply at all* to (5) *applies completely*. Sample items include "I could rely on my own abilities in difficult situations," and "I could usually solve even challenging and complex tasks well." The GSE-3 scale has demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\omega = .91$) and good test-retest reliability over a 3-to-4-week period ($r = .71$). In this study's sample, the scale demonstrated great internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$, $\omega = .91$). The items were averaged, with higher scores indicating stronger generalized self-efficacy beliefs.

Self-Esteem. Self-esteem was measured with the five-item Brief Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (B-RSES; Monteiro, 2021) and was observed as a covariate. Participants rated the adapted items on a 4-point scale from (1) *strongly disagree* to (4) *strongly agree*. Sample items include "At times I would think I am no good at all," and "I would feel I do have much to be proud of." The B-RSES has demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .89$) and a unidimensional factor structure, with item loadings ranging from .71 to .85. Additionally, the B-RSES has shown strong convergent validity with the full Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale ($r = .86$), supporting its use as a reliable measure of self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1979). In this sample, the B-RSES demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .95$, $\omega = .95$). The scale was averaged after reverse-scoring the first two items, with higher scores reflecting greater self-esteem.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

All analyses were conducted using R version 4.3.1 (R Core Team, 2023). To assess potential differences in response quality based on survey completion time, independent samples t-tests were conducted comparing flagged participants (i.e., those whose completion times fell beyond the ± 2 standard deviations from the mean, corresponding to less than 5 minutes or more than 30 minutes) and normal-timed participants. A total of 35 participants (10.57%) were flagged based on survey duration, while 296 participants (89.43%) fell within the expected completion range. All study variables were examined, except procedural and interactional justice, because these variables reflected experimental manipulations. Results indicated no statistically significant differences between flagged and normal-timed participants across all measures (all $p > .137$; see Table 1). These findings suggest that response quality did not differ as a function of completion time. Therefore, all remaining participants were retained for further analyses.

Manipulation Checks

A two-way factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess whether the experimental conditions successfully influenced participants' perceptions of procedural and interactional justice. For procedural justice perceptions, there was a significant main effect of procedural justice, $F(1, 327) = 191.54, p < .001$, such that participants in the high procedural justice condition reported higher procedural justice perceptions than those in the low procedural justice condition. There was also a significant main effect of interactional justice, $F(1, 327) = 60.78, p < .001$. Importantly, the interaction between procedural and interactional justice was significant, $F(1, 327) = 29.54, p < .001$, indicating that perceptions of procedural justice were

influenced by both experimental manipulations. These results suggest that the effects of procedural justice on perceptions were contingent on the interactional justice condition.

For interactional justice perceptions, there was also a significant main effect of interactional justice, $F(1, 329) = 1739.00, p < .001$, such that participants in the high interactional justice condition reported substantially higher perceptions of interactional justice ($M = 4.36, SD = 0.79$) compared to those in the low interactional justice condition ($M = 1.22, SD = 0.55$). There was a significant main effect of procedural justice, $F(1, 327) = 8.87, p = .003$. The interaction between procedural and interactional justice was significant, $F(1, 327) = 11.66, p < .001$, indicating that perceptions of interactional justice were also influenced by both experimental manipulations. These results suggest that the effects of interactional justice were contingent on the procedural justice condition. Overall, the findings indicate that the vignette manipulations were effective in influencing their intended constructs. However, the presence of significant cross-over effects and interactions suggests that participants may have formed broader perceptions of overall fairness, such that when one form of justice was manipulated, the other was inferred to be similarly high or low.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics and correlations among all study variables are presented in Table 2. Procedural justice perceptions were positively associated with interactional justice perceptions ($r = .43, p < .001$), as well as with workability ($r = .18, p = .001$), self-esteem ($r = .13, p = .017$), and general self-efficacy ($r = .20, p < .001$), indicating that individuals who perceived higher procedural fairness also reported higher personal resources and work functioning. Procedural justice was not significantly related to impostor feelings ($r = -.03, p = .649$), whereas interactional justice was negatively associated with impostor feelings ($r = -.25, p < .001$) and

positively related to workability ($r = .22, p < .001$), self-esteem ($r = .22, p < .001$), and general self-efficacy ($r = .30, p < .001$), suggesting that respectful interpersonal treatment is linked to both lower impostor feelings and greater personal and work-related functioning.

Impostor feelings were negatively related to both self-esteem ($r = -.66, p < .001$) and general self-efficacy ($r = -.52, p < .001$), indicating that as individuals' self-esteem and general self-efficacy increased, impostor feelings decreased. Impostor feelings were also negatively associated with workability ($r = -.42, p < .001$). Workability was positively related to both self-esteem ($r = .53, p < .001$) and general self-efficacy ($r = .57, p < .001$), suggesting that as self-esteem and general self-efficacy increased, participants reported greater perceived work functioning. Identity prominence was positively associated with self-esteem ($r = .12, p = .034$) and general self-efficacy ($r = .11, p = .046$) but was not significantly related to impostor feelings or workability.

Among demographic variables, age was negatively associated with impostor feelings ($r = -.21, p < .001$) and positively associated with workability ($r = .15, p = .006$), self-esteem ($r = .21, p < .001$), and general self-efficacy ($r = .17, p = .002$), indicating that as age increased, participants tended to report lower impostor feelings and higher personal and work-related functioning. Tenure was negatively associated with impostor feelings ($r = -.15, p = .005$), suggesting that as tenure increased, participants reported lower impostor feelings, but tenure was not significantly related to workability. Lastly, race (coded as White = 1, non-White or multiracial = 0) was not significantly related to the core study variables.

Hypothesis Testing

A combination of path and multiple regression analyses was used to test Hypotheses 1-5. In all analyses, identity prominence, self-esteem, general self-efficacy, age, tenure, and race were

included as covariates. These variables were controlled as prior research has shown that demographic characteristics can influence workplace perceptions and self-related outcomes (e.g., Pérez-Rodríguez et al., 2019; Kivimäki et al., 2007), and that identity and personal resources are associated with self-perceptions and work functioning (e.g., Feenstra et al., 2020; Markowski & Serpe, 2021; Meyer, 2003). In models testing moderation, identity prominence was specified as a moderator through interaction terms. Before conducting regression analyses, assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of residuals, and multicollinearity were evaluated. Results indicated no violations of these assumptions were detected.

Hypotheses 1a and 1b were tested using a path model examining the effects of procedural justice and interactional justice on impostor feelings. Hypothesis 1a predicted that individuals in the high procedural justice condition would report lower impostor feelings compared to those in the low procedural justice condition. Contrary to this prediction, procedural justice had a significant positive effect on impostor feelings ($b = 0.23, p = .035$; see Table 3), indicating that individuals in the high procedural justice condition reported higher impostor feelings than those in the low procedural justice condition. This unexpected direction suggests that the relationship between procedural justice and impostor feelings may be more complex than initially hypothesized. Therefore, Hypothesis 1a was not supported.

Hypothesis 1b predicted that individuals in the high interactional justice condition would report lower impostor feelings compared to those in the low interactional justice condition. Results supported this hypothesis, as interactional justice had a significant negative effect on impostor feelings ($b = -0.24, p = .030$; see Table 3), indicating that individuals in the high interactional justice condition reported lower impostor feelings than those in the low interactional justice condition. Mean differences in impostor feelings across procedural and

interactional justice conditions are presented in Figure 2; these represent unadjusted group means. Therefore, Hypothesis 1b was supported. Among the covariates, gender identity prominence was positively related to impostor feelings ($b = 0.23, p < .001$), indicating that individuals who reported their female gender as more central to their identity experienced greater impostor feelings. In contrast, self-esteem ($b = -1.01, p < .001$) and general self-efficacy ($b = -0.31, p < .001$) were negatively related to impostor feelings, suggesting that individuals with stronger positive self-evaluations and confidence in their abilities reported lower impostor feelings. Age, tenure, and race were not significant. The model accounted for approximately 48.20% of the variance in impostor feelings.

Hypothesis 2 was tested using multiple regression to examine whether procedural justice and interactional justice interacted to predict impostor feelings. Findings showed that the interaction between procedural and interactional justice was not statistically significant ($b = 0.07, p = .736$; see Table 4), suggesting that the relationship between procedural justice and impostor feelings did not depend on the interactional justice condition. Consistent with the pattern observed in Hypothesis 1, gender identity prominence ($b = 0.23, p < .001$) was positively related to impostor feelings, whereas self-esteem ($b = -1.01, p = .001$) and general self-efficacy ($b = -0.31, p < .001$) were negatively related. The overall model was significant, $F(9, 319) = 38.09, p < .001$, explaining approximately 51.80% of the variance in impostor feelings ($R^2 = .52$). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Hypothesis 3 was tested using structural equation modeling with 5,000 bootstrap samples to examine whether impostor feelings mediated the relationship between procedural and interactional justice and workability. Results indicated that procedural justice ($b = 0.23, p = .041$) and interactional justice ($b = -0.24, p = .030$; see Table 5) had significant effects on

impostor feelings. However, impostor feelings did not significantly predict workability ($b = -0.00, p = .920$), suggesting that the proposed mediator was not associated with the outcome. Consistent with this, the indirect effects of procedural justice ($b = -0.00, 95\% CI [-0.02, 0.02]$) and interactional justice ($b = 0.00, 95\% CI [-0.02, 0.02]$) on workability through impostor feelings were not significant. Among the covariates, self-esteem ($b = 0.34, p < .001$) and general self-efficacy ($b = 0.28, p < .001$) were positively related to workability, indicating that individuals with more positive self-evaluations and greater confidence in their abilities reported higher perceived work functioning. The remaining covariates were not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4 was tested using multiple regression to examine whether procedural justice and interactional justice interacted to predict workability. Findings showed that the interaction between procedural and interactional justice was not statistically significant ($b = 0.09, p = .495$; see Table 6), suggesting that the relationship between procedural justice and workability did not differ across interactional justice conditions. Consistent with the pattern observed in Hypothesis 3, self-esteem ($b = 0.34, p < .001$) and general self-efficacy ($b = 0.28, p < .001$) were positively related to workability. The overall model was significant, $F(9, 319) = 24.37, p < .001$, explaining approximately 40.75% of the variance in workability ($R^2 = .41$). Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Hypothesis 5 was tested using multiple regression to examine whether gender identity prominence moderated the interaction between procedural justice and interactional justice in predicting impostor feelings. Results indicated that the three-way interaction between procedural justice, interactional justice, and identity prominence was not statistically significant ($b = 0.30, p = .248$; see Table 7), suggesting that gender identity prominence did not moderate the combined

effect of the justice conditions on impostor feelings. Additionally, the lower-order two-way interaction terms involving identity prominence were not statistically significant (procedural justice x identity prominence: $b = -0.06, p = .747$; interactional justice x identity prominence: $b = -0.17, p = .376$). Consistent with prior models, self-esteem ($b = -1.00, p < .001$) and general self-efficacy ($b = -0.31, p < .001$) were negatively related to impostor feelings. The overall model was significant, $F(12, 316) = 28.61, p < .001$, explaining approximately 52.08% of the variance in impostor feelings ($R^2 = .52$). In conclusion, Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The present study examined how procedural and interactional justice shape impostor feelings and workability, along with the mediating role of impostor feelings and moderating role of gender identity prominence. Given past literature on gender workplace inequities (Prakash et al., 2024; Feenstra et al., 2020), this investigation focused on women's experiences in organizational contexts. Overall, the findings revealed a nuanced pattern, suggesting that different forms of justice may influence self-perceptions through distinct psychological mechanisms. Consistent with prior research supporting how respectful interpersonal treatment shapes employees' sense of self-worth and belonging in the workplace (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021; Zapara-Phelan et al., 2009), high interactional justice was associated with lowered impostor feelings.

However, contrary to expectations and prior research suggesting that unfair procedures undermine employees' sense of value and belonging (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021; Feenstra et al., 2020), high procedural justice was positively associated with higher impostor feelings. This could have potentially occurred because more procedural fairness in the workplace may trigger more internal experiences of feeling like a fraud. Additionally, impostor feelings did not significantly predict workability and therefore did not mediate the relationship between justice and workability. Instead, aligning with COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Holmgreen et al., 2017), self-esteem and general self-efficacy emerged as strong predictors of workability, indicating how self-perceptions motivate individual work functioning. Finally, gender identity prominence was positively associated with impostor feelings, suggesting that identity-related processes may play an important role in shaping workplace self-perceptions.

Justice and Impostor Feelings

One of the most notable findings of this study is the contrasting effects of procedural and interactional justice on impostor feelings, suggesting that different forms of fairness may operate through distinct psychological mechanisms. While interactional justice functioned as expected, such that participants in the high interactional justice condition reported lower impostor feelings than those in the low interactional justice condition, participants in the high procedural justice condition unexpectedly reported higher impostor feelings than those in the low procedural justice condition. Procedural justice may reflect a more structural or “cold” form of fairness, characterized by consistency, objectivity, and rule-based decision-making processes (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). With this perception, workers may be less able to attribute negative experiences to external factors when procedural justice is high.

Drawing from fairness theory (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001), when outcomes are perceived as procedurally fair, individuals may shift toward internal blame and pressure (e.g., “If the system is fair, then any shortcomings must be due to me”), increasing self-scrutiny and self-doubt. This attributional shift may help explain why higher procedural justice was associated with greater impostor feelings. Additionally, procedural justice may signal higher standards and competent peers, especially in competitive environments. From a SIT lens (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), such structured environments may prompt social comparison, leading individuals to question whether they truly belong or deserve their position. Furthermore, this supports the justice literature (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988, 1992) by showcasing how decision-making procedures convey information about one’s status within a social group, shaping individuals’ social identity and self-worth. Therefore, rather than alleviating uncertainty, procedural fairness may intensify identity-relevant evaluations and amplify impostor feelings.

In contrast, interactional justice may represent a more interpersonal or “warm” form of fairness, characterized by respect, empathy, and clear communication (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993). Consistent with prior research suggesting that respectful treatment plays a critical role in reinforcing positive self-perceptions and work belonging (e.g., Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021; Zapara-Phelan et al., 2009), participants in the high interactional justice condition reported lower impostor feelings than those in the low interactional justice condition. In accordance with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), positive interpersonal interactions signal that individuals are valued members of the organization, which may reduce uncertainty about one’s own competence and legitimacy. Furthermore, as COR theory insinuates, interactional justice may function as a psychological resource that buffers against the emotional strain associated with impostor feelings (Holmgreen et al., 2017; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021). Because individuals experiencing impostor feelings often engage in heightened self-monitoring and emotional regulation (Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021), supportive relational treatment and belonging may reduce resource depletion and protect against self-doubt.

Another potential explanation for the unexpected positive relationship between procedural justice and impostor feelings may lie in differences between experimental and self-reported justice perceptions. Much of the prior literature on organizational justice and impostor feelings relies on self-reported perceptions of fairness, which likely reflect broader, global evaluations of the workplace. In contrast, the present study experimentally manipulated justice conditions, isolating specific procedural and interactional cues. As a result, participants may have responded not only to the fairness of the situation, but also to the meaning they attributed to the scenario outcome. Drawing on attribution theory (Heider, 1920; Malle, 2022), individuals

who experience fair procedures paired with a negative outcome (e.g., not receiving a promotion) may be more likely to make internal attributions, such as questioning their own competence or worthiness, thereby increasing impostor feelings. In contrast, when procedures are perceived as unfair, individuals may be more likely to attribute outcomes externally, which could buffer against self-doubt. Future research should directly examine attribution processes in response to justice manipulations, as these mechanisms may help explain when and why fairness cues lead to different self-evaluative outcomes.

Furthermore, the hypothesized interaction effects between procedural and interactional justice were not supported, suggesting that their effects on impostor feelings and workability may operate independently rather than in combination. This pattern further reinforces the interpretation that procedural and interactional justice convey different types of information, structural versus relational, which may be processed through differing psychological mechanisms. Taken together, these findings challenge past research suggesting that procedural and interactional justice jointly shape employee experiences (Feenstra et al., 2020; Cropanzano et al., 2007) and instead suggest that these forms of justice may operate through distinct pathways in shaping impostor feelings. Specifically, procedural justice may shape how individuals interpret outcomes and assign responsibility, whereas interactional justice may directly influence how individuals feel about themselves within the workplace. This distinction highlights the significance of examining justice as a multidimensional construct, rather than a unified experience.

Identity Prominence and Impostor Feelings

The positive relationship between gender identity prominence and impostor feelings provides additional insight into how identity processes shape workplace experiences. Individuals

who viewed their gender as more central to their identity reported greater impostor feelings, suggesting that identity centrality may heighten vulnerability to self-doubt in work environments. Drawing from identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1968, 1980) and SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), individuals with highly prominent identities are more likely to interpret workplace experiences as social identification and affiliation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). As a result, evaluative situations may carry greater psychological weight, increasing sensitivity to perceived discrepancies between one's self-concept, socialization, and performance.

Additionally, consistent with MST (Meyer, 2003), individuals with more central marginalized statuses may be more attuned to potential bias, stereotypes, and identity-relevant cues in the workplace. This heightened awareness may increase self-monitoring and perceived pressure to perform, both of which are characteristic of impostor feelings (Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021; Sakulku & Alexander, 2011). It is also important to consider the role of the present sample, which consisted primarily of women, with a small number of participants identifying as non-binary. Prior research indicates that women and ethnic minority individuals remain disproportionately represented across certain occupations, organizational positions, and hierarchical levels and roles (Feenstra et al., 2020). When individuals from these groups occupy underrepresented positions, they may be more susceptible to heightened evaluative scrutiny and negative stereotypes (e.g., women being perceived as “soft” or “less competent”), which can undermine self-worth and belonging (Feenstra et al., 2020). These contextual dynamics may contribute to stronger impostor feelings, particularly when workers perceive that their presence in a role is uncommon or subject to greater evaluation.

This interpretation is further supported by qualitative responses within the present study, in which several participants described feelings of not belonging or being perceived as less

intelligent by peers because of their gender, especially when they were the only woman on their team, working in male-dominated fields, or occupying leadership roles. Such experiences highlight how workplace situations can reinforce identity-relevant pressures and contribute to impostor feelings. Importantly, this finding does not suggest that identity prominence is inherently negative. Rather, it indicates that when identities are central to the self, workplace experiences may have stronger psychological consequences, particularly for individuals with marginalized identities. It is also possible that shared experiences of discrimination or marginalization may contribute to both stronger identification with one's social group and increased impostor feelings. Overall, the findings further support a contextualized understanding of impostor feelings, suggesting that identity experiences within organizational environments play a critical role in shaping employee self-perceptions.

Furthermore, contrary to expectations, gender identity prominence did not moderate the relationships between procedural justice, interactional justice, and impostor feelings. This suggests that identity processes may exert a more direct influence on impostor feelings, rather than shaping how workers respond to justice perceptions. In other words, identity prominence may independently heighten sensitivity to self-relevant evaluations, regardless of perceived fairness. Alternatively, it is possible that the vignette-based design did not sufficiently activate identity-relevant experiences needed to detect moderation effects. Because identity-based responses are often shaped by lived experiences and repeated exposure to workplace dynamics, hypothetical scenarios may not fully capture the salience or emotional intensity required to prompt these processes. Future research may benefit from examining identity prominence within real-world or longitudinal contexts, where identity-relevant cues and workplace experiences are more activated with perceptions of organizational justice.

Impostor Feelings and Workability

Contrary to expectations, impostor feelings did not significantly predict workability and did not mediate the relationship between justice and workability. These results suggest that impostor feelings may not function as the primary mechanism linking workplace fairness to work functioning in this context. One possible explanation is that impostor feelings, particularly at subclinical levels, may not necessarily impair individuals' ability or the perception of their ability to meet work demands. As discussed in prior literature (Bravata et al., 2019; Feenstra et al., 2020), impostor feelings exist along a continuum and may reflect internal self-doubt that does not always translate into observable performance deficits. These individuals, successful by external standards (Chrisman et al., 1995; Clance & Imes, 1978), may continue to perform effectively despite experiencing feelings of inadequacy, particularly when they possess strong personal resources. Consistent with this, prior research has shown that individuals experiencing impostor feelings are often still able to fulfill their academic or work requirements despite self-perceived fraudulence (Sakulku & Alexander, 2011). Alternatively, this finding may reflect the use of a contrived workplace scenario, which may not have fully captured the complexity of job demands or evoked participants' perceptions of their ability to manage those demands.

Consistent with this interpretation, self-esteem and general self-efficacy emerged as strong positive predictors of workability. This suggests that individual self-evaluative resources may play a larger role in shaping work functioning than impostor feelings. Individuals with higher self-worth and greater confidence in their ability to execute work behaviors may be better equipped to cope with work demands, regardless of their level of self-doubt. These findings highlight an important direction for future research. Rather than treating self-esteem and general self-efficacy as control variables, future models may benefit from examining them as key

outcomes of workplace experiences. Doing so may provide a clearer understanding of how organizational outcomes influence employees' capacity to function effectively at work.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the multidimensional nature of organizational justice and demonstrating that different forms of fairness, such as procedural and interactional justice, may have distinct, and even opposing, effects on self-perceptions. While prior research has largely emphasized the benefits of fairness (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2001; Organ, 1990; Kivimäki et al., 2007), the present findings suggest that procedural justice may, under certain conditions, intensify self-doubt through internal attribution processes. Specifically, when decision-making systems are perceived as fair and unbiased, individuals may be more likely to attribute negative outcomes or doubts about competence to themselves, thereby amplifying impostor feelings. The finding challenges the assumption that fairness is uniformly beneficial and instead suggests that its psychological consequences may depend on how individuals interpret fair systems in their workplace. In line with fairness theory (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001), when procedures are perceived as fair, individuals may engage in counterfactual thinking and attribute negative outcomes to internal causes, increasing self-scrutiny and self-doubt.

In addition, this study extends research on impostor feelings by situating it within a broader organizational and social context. Rather than conceptualizing impostor feelings as a “syndrome” or solely as an individual-level deficit, the findings support a contextual perspective in which workplace structures, interpersonal interactions, and identity processes jointly shape self-perceptions. This aligns with recent calls in the literature, specifically Feenstra et al. (2020), to move beyond individual-focused explanations and diagnoses, and consider the role of organizational environments in fostering or mitigating impostor experiences. Furthermore, the

present findings provide support for MST (Meyer, 2003), identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1968, 1980), and SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) by demonstrating that individuals with more central marginalized identities may experience heightened impostor feelings regardless of the mistreatment experienced at work. In particular, individuals who identify as women or non-binary may be more susceptible to self-doubt in workplace contexts where they experience increased visibility, scrutiny, or are underrepresented in certain roles, particularly leadership or male-dominated fields. These findings suggest that impostor feelings may reflect adaptive responses to identity-relevant workplace dynamics, rather than purely internal deficits.

Another key contribution of this study is the development and validation of experimental vignette manipulations for high and low procedural and interactional justice. Although organizational justice has been widely studied, experimental vignette approaches that distinctly capture both procedural and interactional justice remain limited in the literature, with existing vignette-based approaches often relying on earlier work (e.g., Barling et al., 1993), highlighting the need for updated and contextually relevant manipulations. The manipulation checks indicated that these vignettes effectively influenced participants' perceptions of fairness, suggesting that they capture meaningful distinctions between structural and interpersonal justice experiences. As such, these vignettes may serve as useful tools for future experimental research examining organizational justice and its psychological and behavioral outcomes.

Finally, the results underscore the importance of personal psychological resources, specifically self-esteem and general self-efficacy, in shaping workability. Although impostor feelings were not a significant predictor of workability, these covariates emerged as strong and consistent predictors of workers' perceived ability to meet job demands. This finding aligns with COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which emphasizes the role of personal resources in sustaining

performance and workplace well-being. It may suggest that core self-evaluations may be better determinants of work functioning than impostor feelings, providing an important direction for future research. Notably, the strong and consistent effects of self-esteem and general self-efficacy across models raise important questions about the distinctiveness of the related constructs, such as impostor feelings and workability. Conceptually, these constructs all involve self-perceptions of competence, capability, and one's ability to meet demands effectively (Kim, 2021; Sakulku & Alexander, 2011), which may contribute to overlapping variance. This finding suggests that future research should closely examine the discriminant validity of impostor feelings and workability in relation to core self-evaluations, as well as whether these constructs capture unique variance beyond general self-perceptions.

Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that organizations should consider not only whether their systems are fair, but also how fairness is experienced at an interpersonal level. While procedural fairness is essential for maintaining consistency, transparency, and objectivity in decision-making, the present findings indicate that it may not be sufficient on its own for supporting employees' psychological well-being. In some cases, highly structured and competitively fair systems may increase self-scrutiny and internalized pressure, particularly when individuals interpret outcomes as solely reflective of their own ability. Rather than minimizing procedural fairness, organizations should complement these systems with strong interactional justice practices that foster respectful communication, provide clear and supportive feedback, and ensure that their workers feel valued and included. Managers and leaders play a critical role in shaping these experiences, as everyday interactions signal whether employees are respected, competent, and worthy of belonging. These interpersonal practices may be especially

important in reducing impostor feelings, as they provide affirmation and reduce uncertainty surrounding evaluation and job performance.

Additionally, these findings highlight the significance of supporting employees' personal resources, particularly self-esteem and general self-efficacy. Because these self-perceptions emerged as strong predictors of workability, organizations may benefit from implementing interventions aimed at strengthening employees' confidence in their abilities. Training programs, mentorship and development opportunities, and supportive leadership practices may help build these resources and improve employees' capacities to manage work demands effectively. Lastly, these findings have relevance for organizations seeking to support individuals from underrepresented or marginalized groups. Because female and non-binary gender identity prominence was associated with higher impostor feelings, companies should be mindful of the additional pressures experienced by employees in minority or non-traditional roles. By creating inclusive environments, promoting representation, and addressing subtle forms of bias, leadership may help reduce identity-related self-doubt and foster a stronger sense of belonging in the workplace.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the present study's findings. First, the use of vignette methodology may limit ecological validity, as participants responded to hypothetical scenarios rather than real workplace experiences. Although vignettes allow for experimental control, they may not fully capture the complexity, emotional intensity, or repeated exposure associated with real-world organizational contexts, particularly for identity experiences. Second, although the experimental vignette design supports causal inferences regarding the effects of the justice manipulations on participants' perceptions, the cross-sectional

nature of the data limits the ability to draw causal conclusions about the relationships among impostor feelings, workability, and related individual differences. While the justice conditions were experimentally manipulated, these psychological outcomes were assessed through a self-report at a single time point, preventing strong conclusions about their causal relationships. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as consistent with mediation rather than as a direct test of causal mediation. Longitudinal or experimental field designs would be needed to establish temporal ordering among these variables.

Third, participants' responses may not solely reflect their immediate reactions to the experimental scenarios, but also broader self-perceptions activated during the task. That is, rather than responding exclusively to the vignette, participants may have drawn on existing self-schemas or general workplace experiences when reporting impostor feelings and workability. As a result, it is difficult to determine whether responses reflect state-based reactions to the manipulation or more stable, trait-like self-evaluations. This issue may be compounded by the fact that the outcome measures were not explicitly framed in relation to the vignette scenario. Future research should aim to better isolate these processes by incorporating more context-specific or state-based measures.

Fourth, the present study relied on self-report measures for all key variables. Although self-report is appropriate for capturing subjective experiences such as impostor feelings and self-perceptions, it may introduce concerns related to common method variance and social desirability bias. Participants may have underreported feelings of inadequacy or overreported positive self-evaluations, which could influence the observed relationships among variables. Future research may benefit from incorporating multiple sources of data to provide a more comprehensive assessment of workplace functioning. Lastly, the sample consisted primarily of

women, with a small number of participants identifying as non-binary. This sampling approach aligns with the study's focus on gender and identity processes and represents a strength in examining populations that are often underrepresented in organizational research. Future research may extend these findings by examining more diverse samples and exploring how these processes operate across different demographic and occupational contexts.

Future research should examine these variable relationships in real-world organizational settings and consider longitudinal designs to better capture how justice perceptions and impostor feelings develop over time. Additionally, future studies may explore alternative mechanisms, such as self-esteem or perceived organizational support, which may more directly link workplace experiences to work-related outcomes. Given the strong effects of self-esteem and general self-efficacy on workability, future research may also benefit from having these variables as primary outcomes rather than covariates. Doing so may provide greater insight into how organizational environments shape employees' core self-evaluations and influence their ability to function effectively at work. Future research should continue to refine the measurement of impostor feelings, particularly within workplace contexts. Although widely used impostor phenomenon scales (e.g., Doll et al., 2021; Clance, 1985) capture general feelings of self-doubt and perceived fraudulence, they may not fully reflect how these experiences manifest in specific organizational settings. For example, workplace-specific factors such as performance evaluations, leadership roles, and interpersonal dynamics may shape impostor feelings in ways that are not fully captured by general measures. Developing and validating context-specific measures of impostor feelings may help clarify how these experiences operate within organizational environments and improve the precision of future research in this area.

Furthermore, future research should continue to examine the role of identity processes in organizational contexts. Investigating identity prominence in more naturalistic settings, as well as exploring additional identity-based moderators (e.g., intersectionality, perceived discrimination), may help clarify when and how identity influences responses to workplace fairness. Lastly, future research should continue to examine impostor feelings through an industrial-organizational psychology lens rather than through a solely clinical framework. Traditionally, impostor feelings have been conceptualized as an individual-level deficit or “syndrome,” emphasizing internal traits and psychological dysfunction. However, the present findings support a shift toward understanding impostor feelings as contextually embedded experiences shaped by organizational structures, interpersonal interactions, and identity-related processes. By adopting this perspective, it may allow researchers and practitioners to move beyond “fixing” individuals and instead address the workplace conditions that contribute to these hidden layers of self-doubt.

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Table 1*Independent Samples t-Tests Comparing Flagged vs. Non-Flagged Duration Groups*

Variable	(Not Flagged) <i>M</i>	(Flagged) <i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>Effect Size (d)</i>
Impostor Feelings	3.56	3.87	-1.51	49.29	.137	[-0.63, 0.07]	-0.28
Workability	3.43	3.43	-0.03	45.26	.974	[-0.36, 0.35]	-0.01
Identity Prominence	3.93	3.79	0.90	41.28	.375	[-0.19, 0.51]	0.16

*Note. Group 0 = Not flagged for duration; Group 1 = flagged for duration. Welch's t-tests were used due to unequal sample sizes. Effect sizes are reported as Cohen's d.

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables*

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Procedural Justice Scale	331	1.93	0.98										
2. Interactional Justice Scale	331	2.81	1.71	.43**									
3. Impostor Feelings	331	3.60	1.40	-.03	-.25**								
4. Workability	331	3.43	0.74	.18**	.22**	-.42**							
5. Identity Prominence	331	3.91	0.85	.03	.03	.05	.09						
6. Self-Esteem	331	2.71	0.71	.13*	.22**	-.66**	.53**	.12*					
7. General Self-Efficacy	331	3.59	1.04	.20**	.30**	-.52**	.57**	.11*	.54**				
8. Age	330	41.88	12.18	-.09	-.08	-.21**	.15**	.07	.21**	.17**			
9. Tenure (Years)	329	5.76	6.15	-.02	-.08	-.15**	.07	.01	.12*	.07	.33**		
10. Race (White=1)	331	0.71	0.45	.05	.02	.03	.04	-.08	-.12*	.02	.20**	.07	

*Note. * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$. Race was dummy coded (1 = White, 0 = non-White or multiracial).

Table 3*Regression Model Predicting Impostor Feelings*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Procedural Justice	0.23	0.11	.01	.035	[0.01, 0.44]
Interactional Justice	-0.24	0.11	.01	.030	[-0.47, -0.02]
Identity Prominence	0.23	0.06	.02	< .001	[0.10, 0.36]
Self-Esteem	-1.01	0.09	.17	< .001	[-1.19, -0.82]
General Self-Efficacy	-0.31	0.06	.04	< .001	[-0.44, -0.18]
Age	-0.01	0.01	.00	.217	[-0.02, 0.00]
Tenure	-0.02	0.01	.00	.103	[-0.03, 0.00]
Race	0.02	0.12	.00	.862	[-0.23, 0.27]

**Note.* Procedural and interactional justice were coded as experimental conditions (0 = low, 1 = high). Race was dummy coded (1 = White, 0 = non-White or multiracial).

Table 4*Multiple Regression Predicting Impostor Feeling*

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Procedural Justice	0.19	0.16	.00	.228	[-0.12, 0.50]
Interactional Justice	-0.28	0.16	.01	.074	[-0.59, 0.03]
Procedural x Interactional Justice	0.07	0.22	.00	.736	[-0.36, 0.51]
Identity Prominence	0.23	0.07	.02	< .001	[0.10, 0.36]
Self-Esteem	-1.01	0.10	.16	< .001	[-1.20, -0.82]
General Self-Efficacy	-0.31	0.06	.04	< .001	[-0.44, -0.18]
Age	-0.01	0.01	.00	.243	[-0.02, 0.00]
Tenure	-0.02	0.01	.00	.111	[-0.03, 0.00]
Race	0.02	0.13	.00	.879	[-0.23, 0.27]

**Note.* Procedural and interactional justice were coded as experimental conditions (0 = low, 1 = high). Race was dummy coded (1 = White, 0 = non-White or multiracial).

Table 5*Bootstrapped Mediation Model Predicting Workability through Impostor Feelings*

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Mediator: Impostor Feelings					
Procedural Justice (a1)	0.23	0.11	0.08	.041	[0.01, 0.45]
Interactional Justice (a2)	-0.24	0.11	-0.09	.030	[-0.47, -0.03]
Identity Prominence	0.23	0.06	0.14	< .001	[0.10, 0.36]
Self-Esteem	-1.01	0.10	-0.51	< .001	[-1.21, -0.81]
General Self-Efficacy	-0.31	0.06	-0.23	< .001	[-0.43, -0.18]
Age	-0.01	0.01	-0.05	.282	[-0.02, 0.01]
Tenure	-0.02	0.01	-0.07	.118	[-0.03, 0.00]
Race	0.02	0.12	0.01	.854	[-0.21, 0.25]
Outcome: Workability					
Impostor Feelings (b)	-0.00	0.03	-0.01	.920	[-0.07, 0.06]
Procedural Justice (c1)	0.08	0.07	0.05	.229	[-0.05, 0.21]
Interactional Justice (c2)	0.04	0.07	0.03	.562	[-0.09, 0.17]
Identity Prominence	0.01	0.04	0.01	.823	[-0.08, 0.10]
Self-Esteem	0.34	0.06	0.33	< .001	[0.22, 0.46]
General Self-Efficacy	0.28	0.04	0.38	< .001	[0.20, 0.36]
Age	0.00	0.00	0.01	.897	[-0.01, 0.01]
Tenure	-0.00	0.01	-0.00	.956	[-0.01, 0.01]
Race	0.12	0.08	0.07	.146	[-0.05, 0.27]
Indirect Effects (Bootstrapped)					
Procedural Justice → IF → WA	-0.001	0.01	-0.00	.928	[-0.02, 0.02]
Interactional Justice → IF → WA	0.001	0.01	0.00	.928	[-0.02, 0.02]

*Note. Confidence intervals are based on 5,000 bootstrap samples. IF = Impostor Feelings; WA = Workability. Race was dummy coded (1 = White, 0 = non-White or multiracial)

Table 6*Multiple Regression Predicting Workability*

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Procedural Justice (a1)	0.03	0.09	.00	.727	[-0.15, 0.21]
Interactional Justice (a2)	-0.00	0.09	.00	.970	[-0.18, 0.18]
Procedural x Interactional Justice	0.09	0.13	.00	.495	[-0.17, 0.35]
Identity Prominence	0.01	0.04	.00	.805	[-0.07, 0.09]
Self-Esteem	0.34	0.06	.07	< .001	[0.23, 0.45]
General Self-Efficacy	0.28	0.04	.10	< .001	[0.20, 0.35]
Age	0.00	0.00	.00	.839	[-0.01, 0.01]
Tenure	-0.00	0.01	.00	.973	[-0.01, 0.01]
Race	0.11	0.07	.00	.124	[-0.03, 0.26]

**Note.* Procedural and interactional justice were coded as experimental conditions (0 = low, 1 = high). Race was dummy coded (1 = White, 0 = non-White or multiracial).

Table 7*Multiple Regression Predicting Impostor Feelings (Three-Way Interaction)*

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Procedural Justice	0.43	0.75	.00	.567	[-1.04, 1.90]
Interactional Justice	0.40	0.78	.00	.609	[-1.14, 1.93]
Identity Prominence	0.26	0.14	.01	.062	[-0.01, 0.54]
Self-Esteem	-1.00	0.10	.16	< .001	[-1.20, -0.81]
General Self-Efficacy	-0.31	0.06	.04	< .001	[-0.44, -0.19]
Procedural x Interactional	-1.11	1.04	.00	.290	[-3.16, 0.95]
Procedural x Identity Prominence	-0.06	0.19	.00	.747	[-0.43, 0.31]
Interactional x Identity Prominence	-0.17	0.19	.00	.376	[-0.56, 0.21]
Procedural x Interactional x Identity Prominence	0.30	0.26	.00	.248	[-0.21, 0.81]
Age	-0.01	0.01	.00	.230	[-0.02, 0.00]
Tenure	-0.02	0.01	.00	.103	[-0.03, 0.00]
Race	0.01	0.13	.00	.930	[-0.24, 0.26]

**Note.* Procedural and interactional justice were coded as experimental conditions (0 = low, 1 = high). Race was dummy coded (1 = White, 0 = non-White or multiracial).

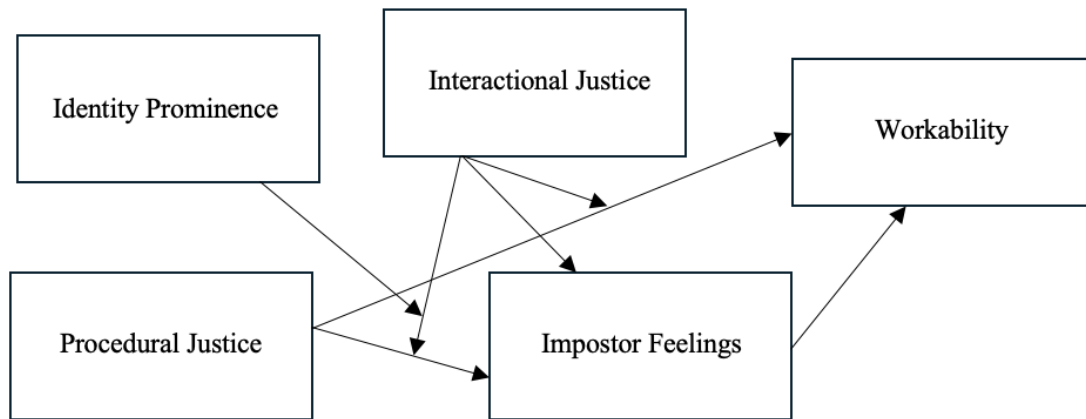
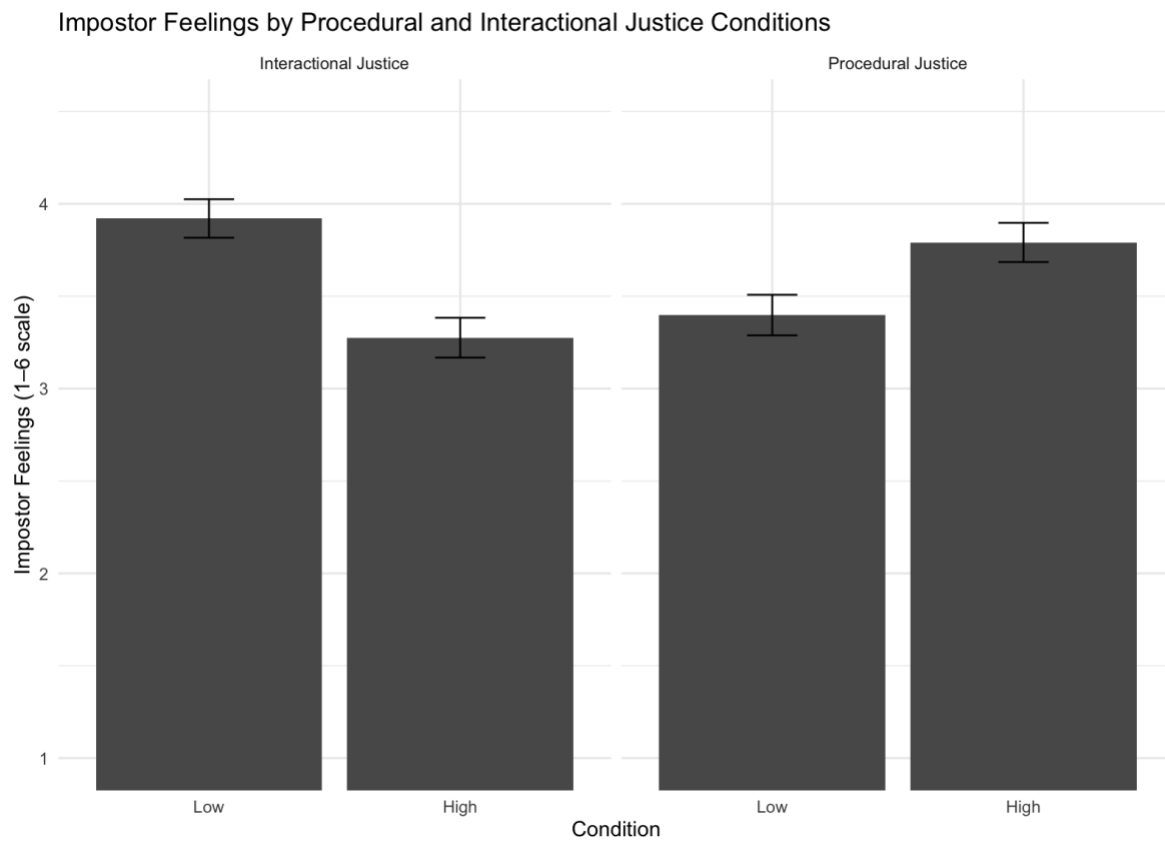
Figure 1*Conceptual Model*

Figure 2

Mean Levels of Impostor Feelings by Procedural and Interactional Justice Conditions



**Note.* Error bars represent standard errors. Procedural justice and interactional justice were experimentally manipulated, with conditions coded as 0 = low justice and 1 = high justice. Higher values indicate greater levels of impostor feelings.

APPENDICES

Appendix A A Study of Workplace Justice

Recruitment Statement: The online research study will ask you to imagine yourself in a workplace scenario, answer specific questions about your perceptions of that scenario, and provide demographic information. Participation is voluntary. The purpose of this study is to understand how workplace experiences influence how individuals feel about themselves and their work.

Qualified Participants: Only individuals who are 18 years of age or older and currently employed are eligible to participate in this study. You must also be comfortable reading and writing in English to take part in this study.

Time Commitment: If you decide to provide us with your consent to participate, you can access the survey link below. This survey should take no more than 15-20 minutes.

Confidentiality: This study is strictly anonymous, meaning that no identifying information is being collected in connection with the research data. Once you have received credit for your participation in this study, Cloud Research Connect IDs will be removed from the electronic file. All information collected will be kept in a password-protected file, and all electronic information will be secured on a password-protected computer. Cloud Research Connect IDs are not considered identifying information as Connect IDs are randomly generated number and letter sequences that are assigned to workers through Connect. The ID itself doesn't possess any personally identifiable information, and as per Cloud Research's requester use policy, requesters aren't permitted to collect other potentially identifying information (e.g., email addresses, phone numbers, etc.) to protect the workers we're gathering information from. Also, through the use of an external site to house the survey (Qualtrics in this case), this is a protective mechanism to protect the participant's identity, as no one has access to the responses beyond the research team.

Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any point in time without any penalty.

Compensation: Compensation will be provided for your time in completing this survey of \$2.35. Compensation will only be granted if you have met the following conditions: **1)** you qualify as a participant for this study, **2)** you pass the attention check questions throughout the survey, **3)** you provide your Cloud Research's Connect ID when prompted, and **4)** you provide the accurate HIT completion code provided to you at the end of the survey.

Contact us: Interested participants are invited to contact us with any questions. If you have no questions, please proceed to the study link provided via this site.

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If you have questions about your rights when taking part in this research, call the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, call the Director of Human Research Protections, at 252-744-2914.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

A Study of Workplace Justice

You are invited to participate in a study that assesses how your perception of workplace injustice influences your thoughts, feelings, and behavior in the workplace.

Key Information

- This **voluntary** study evaluates how perceptions of workplace injustice relate to individuals' self-perceptions and experiences at work.
- This study should **take approximately 15-20 minutes** and will ask you to respond to questions about a short workplace scenario.
- The benefits of this study for you will be to see the research process. For the field, the benefit of this research will help researchers better understand how fairness in the workplace influences employees' attitudes and self-perceptions.
- There are no reasonably foreseeable risks associated with participating in this study.

Eligibility

Only individuals who are 18 years of age or older and currently employed are eligible to participate in this study. You must also be comfortable reading and writing in English to take part in this study.

Description of Study

This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. You will be presented with a brief workplace scenario describing an interaction with a manager. After reading the scenario, you will answer questions about your perceptions of the manager, the fairness of the situation, your own self-perceptions, and demographic information.

Risks and Benefits

There are no reasonably foreseeable risks associated with this study. Participation is also completely voluntary, and thus, you may choose not to continue at any point. The results of this study may be published in scientific research journals and presented at professional conferences. However, your records will remain confidential. Your data will be used as part of a larger data set with no identifying information. The data set, once de-identified, could potentially be posted to a scholarly, public online medium.

Anonymity

This study is strictly anonymous, meaning that no identifying information is being collected in connection with the research data. Once you have received credit for your participation in this study, Cloud Research Connect IDs will be removed from the electronic file.

All information collected will be kept in a password-protected file, and all electronic information will be secured on a password-protected computer. Cloud Research Connect IDs are not considered identifying information as Connect IDs are randomly generated number and letter sequences that are assigned to workers through Connect. The ID itself doesn't possess any personally identifiable information, and as per Cloud Research's requester use policy, requesters aren't permitted to collect other potentially identifying information (e.g., email addresses, phone

numbers, etc.) to protect the workers we're gathering information from. Also, through the use of an external site to house the survey (Qualtrics in this case), this is a protective mechanism to protect the participant's identity, as no one has access to the responses beyond the research team.

Future Use of the Research Data

The results of this study may be published in scientific research journals and presented at professional conferences. However, your records will remain confidential. Your data will be used as part of a larger data set with no identifying information. The data set, once de-identified, could potentially be posted to a scholarly, public online medium (e.g., Open Science Framework).

Compensation

Compensation will be provided for your time in completing this survey of \$2.35. Compensation will only be granted if you have met the following conditions: **1)** you qualify as a participant for this study, **2)** you pass the attention check questions throughout the survey, **3)** you provide your Cloud Research's Connect ID when prompted, and **4)** you provide the accurate HIT completion code provided to you at the end of the survey.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You may refuse to participate by choosing "No, Exit Survey" below. Participation is also completely voluntary, and thus, you may choose not to continue at any point. You may change your mind about being in the study and quit after the survey has started. You may skip any questions you do not feel comfortable answering.

Questions

If you have questions about your rights when taking part in this research, call the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at 252-744-2914 (Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, call the Director of Human Research Protections at 252-744-2914. This research has been approved by the institutional review board of East Carolina University. If you have questions about this research study, you can contact the investigators below.

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We are interested in your response to each survey question. We assure you that you will find none of these questions threatening or harmful to you. We will tell you more about those exact details after the study is over, but we would very much appreciate your full participation without knowing those details or why they are included in the study up front. Your informed consent acknowledges the fact that there are a few things about these questions we have not told you about, and that you consent to participate in the study even though we are withholding this knowledge until after the debriefing.

By selecting “Yes, Continue with the Study”, you are acknowledging that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study and that you have read and understand the information provided above. **It is advised that you save or print a copy of this form for your own records.**

I understand the above and grant my consent to participate:

- ☐ Yes, Continue with the Study
- ☐ No, Exit the Study

Appendix C
Justice Vignette Manipulations
 (Adapted from Barling et al., 1993)

Participant Instructions: Please read the following workplace scenario carefully and imagine yourself in that situation. Then, answer the specific questions related to the scenario, followed by the demographic questions.

Shared Setup: You have been working at GreenTech Solutions for two years and recently applied for an internal promotion to Team Lead. After completing the application and interview process, you are invited to a private meeting with your manager, Jordan, to receive feedback about the decision.

Condition 1: Interpersonal Injustice + Procedural Injustice

You have been working at GreenTech Solutions for two years and recently applied for an internal promotion to Team Lead. After completing the application and interview process, you are invited to a private meeting with your manager, Jordan, to receive feedback about the decision.

When you enter the office, Jordan barely looks up from their computer and immediately begins speaking in a sharp, dismissive tone. Throughout the conversation, Jordan interrupts you several times and makes comments such as, “Honestly, you just don’t have the right skills yet. You should have known this wasn’t going to happen.” Jordan does not acknowledge your past contributions or show appreciation for your effort in applying.

When you ask about how the decision was made, Jordan shrugs and explains that a single senior leader made the call quickly without the usual panel review or standardized scoring process. Jordan admits the process was rushed and says, “That’s just how it worked this time,” leaving you feeling disrespected and frustrated both by the way the message was delivered and by the lack of a fair process.

Condition 2: Interpersonal Injustice + Procedural Justice

You have been working at GreenTech Solutions for two years and recently applied for an internal promotion to Team Lead. After completing the application and interview process, you are invited to a private meeting with your manager, Jordan, to receive feedback about the decision.

When you enter the office, Jordan barely looks up from their computer and immediately begins speaking in a sharp, dismissive tone. Throughout the conversation, Jordan interrupts you several times and makes comments such as, “Honestly, you just don’t have the right skills yet. You should have known this wasn’t going to happen.” Jordan does not acknowledge your past contributions or show appreciation for your effort in applying.

However, when you ask about how the decision was made, Jordan explains that the promotion process followed company policy. A panel of managers reviewed all candidates using the organization’s standardized rubric, and each applicant was evaluated against the same criteria. Jordan states, “The decision wasn’t personal, it’s based on scores from the review panel.” Even

though the process was fair and consistent, you still feel belittled by the disrespectful way Jordan communicated the outcome.

Condition 3: Interpersonal Justice + Procedural Injustice

You have been working at GreenTech Solutions for two years and recently applied for an internal promotion to Team Lead. After completing the application and interview process, you are invited to a private meeting with your manager, Jordan, to receive feedback about the decision.

When you enter the office, Jordan greets you warmly, makes eye contact, and thanks you for taking the time to meet. Jordan acknowledges your contributions over the past two years, saying, “You’ve done great work on your projects, and I really appreciate the dedication you’ve shown.” Jordan listens carefully as you ask questions and responds in a thoughtful, respectful manner.

Jordan then informs you that you were not selected for the Team Lead position. When you inquire about how the decision was made, Jordan admits that the usual procedures were not followed. Instead of a panel using the standardized rubric, one senior leader made the final decision without consulting others. Jordan apologizes, saying, “I know this wasn’t the typical process, and I realize it wasn’t ideal. Things got rushed this time.” While you feel respected and heard during the conversation, you are left uneasy knowing the decision process was inconsistent and unfair.

Condition 4: Interpersonal Justice + Procedural Justice

You have been working at GreenTech Solutions for two years and recently applied for an internal promotion to Team Lead. After completing the application and interview process, you are invited to a private meeting with your manager, Jordan, to receive feedback about the decision.

When you enter the office, Jordan greets you warmly, makes eye contact, and thanks you for taking the time to meet. Jordan acknowledges your contributions over the past two years, saying, “You’ve done great work on your projects, and I really appreciate the dedication you’ve shown.” Jordan listens carefully as you ask questions and responds in a thoughtful, respectful manner.

Jordan then informs you that you were not selected for the Team Lead position. When you ask about how the decision was made, Jordan explains that the process followed company policy. A panel of managers reviewed all candidates using the standardized rubric, and each applicant was evaluated against the same set of criteria. Jordan reassures you, “The decision wasn’t about you personally; the same criteria were applied to everyone. While you weren’t selected this time, I want to help you strengthen your leadership skills, so you’ll be even more competitive in the future.” You leave the meeting feeling respected and confident that the decision process was fair, even if the outcome was disappointing.

Appendix D
Survey Materials

Identity Prominence Scale (Brenner et al., 2014)

Directions: Reflect on how central gender is to your self-concept, using a scale from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree.”

Scale Anchors:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Organizational Justice Scale (Colquitt, 2001)

Procedural Justice

Directions: The following items refer to the procedures used to reach the decision described in the scenario. Please indicate the extent to which each statement reflects your perception of those procedures.

Based on the scenario you read, to what extent:

Scale Anchors:

1	2	3	4	5
To a small extent	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	To a large extent

Interactional Justice

Directions: The following items refer to Jordan, your manager *from the scenario*.

Based on the scenario you read, to what extent:

Scale Anchors:

1	2	3	4	5
To a small extent	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	To a large extent

Impostor Phenomenon Short Scale (Jansen, 2024)

Directions: Please indicate the label that best represents how true each statement would be for you *after experiencing the situation*, using a scale from “Does not apply at all” to “Absolutely applies.”

After reading the scenario, how would you anticipate feeling:

Scale Anchors:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Does not apply at all	Mostly does not apply	Does not really apply	Applies a bit	Mostly applies	Absolutely applies

Workability Index (Tuomi et al., 1991)

Directions: Please indicate how many points you would give to each item by selecting the appropriate option.

After reading the scenario:

Scale Anchors:

1	2	3	4	5
Cannot work at all	Poor	Moderate	High	Workability at its lifetime best

Brief Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Monteiro et al., 2021)

Directions: Please indicate the label that best represents how true each statement is for you *after the situation* on a scale from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree.”

After reading the scenario, how would you anticipate feeling:

Scale Anchors:

1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

General Self-Efficacy Short Scale (Doll et al., 2021)

Directions: The following statements may apply more or less to you. To what extent do you think each statement applies to you personally?

After reading the scenario, how would you anticipate feeling:

Scale Anchors:

1	2	3	4	5
Does not apply at all	Applies a bit	Applies somewhat	Applies mostly	Applies completely

Work Self-Efficacy Scale (Avalone et al., 2007)

Directions: Please indicate how capable you would feel carrying out the described action or behavior after the situation on a scale from “Now well at all” to “Very well.”

Thinking of future work, how well can you:

Scale Anchors:

1	2	3	4	5
Not well at all	Slightly well	Moderately well	Well	Very well

Manipulation Check Items

1. What was the name of your manager in the scenario?
 - a. Casey
 - b. Jordan
 - c. Taylor
 - d. Morgan
2. What was the outcome of the promotion decision?
 - a. You were promoted to Team Lead
 - b. You were denied the Team Lead promotion
3. How did Jordan greet you when you entered the office? **Condition dependent*
 - a. Greeted you warmly
 - b. Immediately started discussing the situation
4. Did Jordan acknowledge your past work contributions? **Condition dependent*
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Attention Check Items

Integrated into the previously presented measures:

1. Select “Applies a bit.”
2. Select “Strongly agree.”

Open-Ended Question

Please think about your typical workplace experiences. Describe how you usually feel at work. Are there times you would describe yourself as feeling like you don’t belong?

Demographics

1. What is your age? (in years)
2. What is your gender identity?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Trans woman/trans female
 - d. Trans man/trans male
 - e. Custom (please tell us more!) _____
 - f. Prefer not to answer
3. Which of the following best represents your racial or ethnic heritage? Choose all that apply.
 - a. Non-Hispanic White or Euro-American
 - b. Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American
 - c. Latinx or Hispanic American
 - d. East Asian or Asian American
 - e. South Asian or Indian American
 - f. Middle Eastern or Arab American
 - g. Native American or Alaskan Native
 - h. Custom (please tell us more!) _____
 - i. Prefer not to answer
4. Please indicate your employment status.
 - a. Full-time
 - b. Part-time
 - c. Not employed
 - d. Retired
 - e. Self-employed
5. Do you currently volunteer?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. On average, how many hours do you work per week at your job?
7. How many days have you been absent in the past 30 days from work?
8. How much of your job is remote?
 - a. Less than 10%
 - b. 10% - 19%
 - c. 20 % - 29%
 - d. 30 – 39%
 - e. 40 – 49%
 - f. 50 – 59%
 - g. 60% - 69%

- h. 70% - 79%
 - i. 80 – 89%
 - j. 90% or greater
9. Which of the following best describes your occupation?
- a. Architecture and Engineering
 - b. Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, or Media
 - c. Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
 - d. Business and Financial Operations
 - e. Community and Social Services
 - f. Computer and Mechanical
 - g. Construction and Extraction
 - h. Education, Training, and Library
 - i. Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
 - j. Food Preparation and Serving Related
 - k. Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
 - l. Healthcare Support
 - m. Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
 - n. Legal
 - o. Life, Physical, and Social Science
 - p. Management
 - q. Military
 - r. Office and Administrative Support
 - s. Personal Care and Services
 - t. Production
 - u. Protective Services
 - v. Sales Related
 - w. Transportation and Material Moving
 - x. Other (please specify)
10. What is your job title?
11. How long have you been at your current job?

Appendix E Debriefing

Thank You for Completing a Study of Workplace Justice!

The purpose of this study has multiple facets. First, we aimed to examine how different forms of organizational justice, specifically procedural justice (fairness of decision-making processes) and interactional justice (fairness of interpersonal treatment), shape employees' reactions to a workplace event. Second, we were interested in whether these experiences of injustice contribute to impostor feelings and, in turn, influence outcomes such as workability and job search self-efficacy. Lastly, we sought to determine whether the importance of a person's social identity, referred to as identity prominence, can change these relationships, such that individuals whose identity is more central to themselves may react more strongly to perceived injustice.

If you're interested in this topic, you can look at these articles:

- Colquitt, J. A., Hill, E. T., & De Cremer, D. (2022). Forever focused on fairness: 75 years of Organizational Justice in Personnel Psychology. *Personnel Psychology*, 76(2), 413–435. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12556>
- Feenstra, S., Begeny, C. T., Ryan, M. K., Rink, F. A., Stoker, J. I., & Jordan, J. (2020). Contextualizing the impostor “syndrome.” *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.575024>

If answering any of the questions in this study raises any issues for you, please use the resources below as a source of support:

Resource	Accessing the Resource
American Psychological Association “Psychologist Locator”	http://locator.apa.org/ or (800) 374-2723
Crisis centers in the United States	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Crisis centers Worldwide	www.allaboutcounseling.com

We would appreciate it if you would refrain from discussing any parts of this study with other participants.

You are welcome to contact Chelsea DeLapp (delappc24@students.ecu.edu) or Dr. Courtney Baker (bakerco22@ecu.edu) with any questions regarding this study. Also, if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at 252-744-2914.

Now that you've completed the study, is there anything else you'd like to tell us?