

Workplace Jealousy: The Role of Core Self-evaluation and Organizational Justice as Predictors of Jealousy among Egyptian Women Employees^(*)

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Abstract

Objective: Perceived workplace jealousy is a prevalent emotion. Moreover, jealousy may influence in organizational behavior and interpersonal relations. However, the focus on perceived jealousy in the workplace is limited to Egypt. This study is the first to investigate perceived workplace jealousy from the Egyptian perspective. Toward this end, the current study examines the relationships between core self-evaluation, organizational justice, and jealousy, in addition, to reveal the role of core self-evaluation and organizational justice as predictors of jealousy among women employees.

Methods: A convenience sample of 120 Egyptian women employees in administrative positions, aged from 25 to 55 years, was selected from governmental organizations. They responded to three questionnaires that assessed core self-evaluation, organizational justice, as well as workplace jealousy.

Results: The statistical analysis revealed a significant negative correlation relationship exists between core self-evaluation and jealousy. It also showed a negative correlation relationship between organizational justice and jealousy. Finally, results also showed that core self-evaluation and organizational justice predicted jealousy among women employees.

Keywords: Core Self-evaluation, Organizational Justice, Jealousy, Employees.

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الملخص باللغة العربية

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى بحث دور التقييم الجوهري للذات والعدالة التنظيمية في التنبؤ بالغيرة المهنية لدى عينة من الموظفين المصريين. وتمثل الغيرة في مجال العمل مجموعة من المشاعر والانفعالات السلبية المركبة التي تهدد تقييم الفرد وتقديره لذاته ولعلاقاته الاجتماعية نتيجة لخوفه من فقدان مكانته المهنية، كما تهدد إدراكه للعدالة في بيئة العمل. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من ١٢٠ من الموظفين المصريين ممن يعملون في مناصب إدارية بالمؤسسات الحكومية، وتراوحت أعمارهم بين ٢٥-٥٥ سنة، وبلغ متوسط أعمارهم (٦.٧±٤٠.٢) سنة. وطُبِّق على أفراد العينة مقياس التقييم الجوهري للذات إعداد جودج وزملائه (Judge et al., 2003)، ترجمة آية الله سليمان، ونصرة منصور. ومقياس العدالة التنظيمية لنيهوف ومورمان (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993)، ترجمة آية الله سليمان، ونصرة منصور. ومقياس الغيرة المهنية من إعداد الباحثين. وكشفت نتائج الدراسة عن وجود علاقة ارتباطية سلبية بين التقييم الجوهري للذات والغيرة المهنية لدى الموظفين. كما توصلت الدراسة إلى وجود علاقة ارتباطية سلبية بين العدالة التنظيمية والغيرة المهنية لدى الموظفين. وأظهرت النتائج أيضاً أن التقييم الجوهري للذات والعدالة التنظيمية يؤديان دوراً في التنبؤ بالغيرة المهنية لدى عينة الدراسة. ونوقشت النتائج في ضوء مدى اتساقها مع الدراسات السابقة والأطر النظرية، وانتهت الدراسة ببعض الخلاصات والتساؤلات المستقبلية.

Introduction

Workplace jealousy is defined as a complex emotion that threatens self-esteem and relationship [1]. It is also defined as an experience that arises in response to a feeling of threat or fear of losing a valuable relationship. It is associated with actual threats or rivals to the relationship [2]. Theorists in the literature on jealousy have developed theories or models such as the multidimensional theory of jealousy [3], the jealousy components model [4], and the jealousy consequences models [2]. According to Lazarus [5], jealousy can be described as a negative emotion related to hostile and aggressive responses.

It should be noted that previous studies were conducted to investigate jealousy either in samples of romantic and marital relationships or samples of students [6,7,8]. Therefore, the current study is concerned with examining jealousy that arises from the context of interpersonal interactions in the workplace with a different sample of women employees. Our goal in the present study was to contribute to the body of research on workplace behaviors, jealousy, core self-evaluation, and organizational justice.

Jealousy has three components: First, the cognitive component: relates to the person's thoughts and doubts about the other person threatening the relationship [1]. Second, the emotional component relates to feelings of anxiety, fear, frustration, and insecurity [9]. Third, the behavioral component relates to the behaviors that an individual performs to protect the relationship [10]. Furthermore, jealousy has different patterns including reactivity, anxiety, and possessiveness. It may be positive or negative [11]. The current study seeks to investigate the negative pattern of jealousy in the workplace.

It should be noted that jealousy differs from envy in some aspects. First, jealousy includes three parties (the actor, the target, and the rival) While envy includes two targets (individual or group) [12]. Second, Jealousy is related to the fear of losing valuable things, possession, or people whereas envy is associated with

feelings of inferiority, comparing oneself to the target, and low feelings of energy [13]. Lastly, Jealousy is considered more suitable as one is defending his or her possession; whereas envy is disgraceful because of the covetous underpinnings. Envy and jealousy can co-occur, but each generally arises from different situations and interactive experiences [14].

With the beginning of the women's movement in the seventies, Staines and his colleagues conducted an important early study in which they formulated the concept called queen bee. This study was explaining the behaviors of women within the workplace [15].

There are many roles for women today [16]. They are wives, housewives, and workers. In the early 1980s, there was a shift in the awareness of women and work became part of their identification [17]. Previous studies indicate the importance of studying concepts related to women's work, including jealousy, social comparison, harmful behaviors, and envy [18,19]. There are distinctions between women and men in competitions. Women treat each other as competitors and get involved in frustrating and negative competitions [20]. Zurriaga's and his colleagues study found that a rival's characteristics lead to higher degrees of jealousy in both men and women at work [21].

Recently, researchers have been interested in examining the characteristics of the situation, individuals, and relationships that provoke emotional responses to jealousy at work [22]. The study jealousy at work is one of the important problems that have negative effects on employee performance and well-being [23]. In addition, it was found that jealousy leads to the spread of gossip and tarnishes the reputation of others. It may produce conflicts, either between co-workers, clients, or supervisors. It also reduces organizational citizenship behaviors [21].

Jealousy at work is shaped by a triadic relationship (focal employee, superiors, and co-workers) [24]. Competition arises between employees and their colleagues over these rewards. The focal employee-superior relationship is important because

organizational benefits relate to this relationship [25]. Although jealousy affects competitors, also affects individuals. Actors who suffer from jealousy have difficulty with their trust in others and are suspicious of achieving their goals [26], and often have a strong focus on relationship threats [27]. In addition, jealousy causes organizational troubles which may reduce performance and work efficiency due to the disturbance of the jealousy experience [28].

Employees who experience jealousy may engage in negative behaviors including violence, deviance, and low job performance [24]. It also involves competitiveness, and an attempt to exclude or discourage their rival's work [28]. Therefore, the current study is concerned with examining the variables that predict jealousy at work, such as core self-evaluation and organizational justice.

Core self-evaluation (CSE) is a higher-order personality trait concept, it consists of four factors namely self-esteem, Self-efficacy, emotional stability, and locus of control [29]. CSE construct has established much research attention in the last two decades, specifically in industrial psychology [30]. There are three main criteria related to CSE. First, the traits express the individual's self-assessment. Second, these traits should be related to the rest of other sub-traits. Third, it should be characterized by a wide range of evaluations [31].

A literature review using Meta-analysis and exploratory factor analysis techniques revealed a correlation between the four traits with each other. On the other hand, it revealed a general factor that includes these traits [32, 33]. According to CSE theory, evaluation depends on the main belief system in an individual's personality. It affects other evaluations performed by the individual in various aspects of his life. It relates to the assessment of events, individuals, and the world as a whole [32].

Judge et al., (2003) developed a CSE scale composed of 12 items that measure self-esteem, Self-efficacy, emotional stability (low) neuroticism, and locus of control. Numerous studies have been conducted that revealed its high reliability and validity [34].

Employees who have high CSE are characterized by the ability to perform and self-control because they treat themselves as more competent and worthy which helps them achieve success [35]. (Additionally, given that individuals with positive CSE evaluate situations differently, is more effective concerning self-management, and display a higher motivation to invest in opportunities compared to individuals who are less confident in their abilities [36].

On the other side, the study is concerned with organizational justice which means the extent to which employees believe in fairness, the way they are dealt with, the appreciation of their efforts, and the commitment to expected ethical rules [24]. It is important because it influences the attitudes and conditions of the work environment. It also affects the interactive behaviors of the employees [37]. Organizational justice is a central predictor of organizational negative behaviors. Specifically, the justice perception proposes that workplace behaviors are a reaction to the injustice perceived by employees in their work life. Negative actions of employees cause harm to both the organization and its members [38].

Literature review

Core Self-Evaluations (CSE) and Workplace Jealousy

Core Self-Evaluations (CSE) can be defined as fundamental appraisals people hold for their value, competence, and capabilities [39]. Employees with high CSE scores can evaluate themselves and are characterized by self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Furthermore, they can perform or achieve tasks successfully [40]. They express the extent of their ability to control their lives and this is related to their behaviors toward the situations and events. They are also characterized by the ability to overcome frustrations, emotional control, and emotional stability [41]. There are differences between women who try to achieve higher positions at work and improve their performance and women who feel low self-esteem related to CSE which exposes them to behavior of jealousy in the workplace [42].

Empirical studies revealed that there is a relationship between jealousy and one or more personality traits that express CSE, such as self-esteem, and neuroticism [43,44]. Individuals with higher levels of self-esteem have lower levels of jealousy, while individuals scoring high on neuroticism are rated as being more jealous [45].

In addition, two studies also showed that neuroticism is positively related to jealousy [46,47].

On the other hand, Bareld and Dijkstra found that there is evidence that three types of jealousy (reactive, anxious, and preventive) are associated with dark and bright personality traits in a sample of students [45].

H1: Core self-evaluation is negatively related to jealousy in the workplace.

Organizational justice and Workplace Jealousy

The concept of organizational justice submitted by Greenberg is described as the overall perception of what is fair within the workplace [48]. There are different types of organizational justice: First, distributive justice includes rewards, promotions, salaries, and advantages. Second, procedural justice which concerned with decisions to distribute rewards. Third, interactive justice which concerned with organizing and implementing policies [49].

There is a relationship between justice and different organizational outcomes. According to equity theory, when employees are exposed to high levels of distributive inequality, they are more likely to have negative emotions such as anger and sadness that lead to their engaging in harmful jealous behaviors [50].

Extension studies have indicated the impact of injustice on employee attitudes and behaviors. It is also associated with lower performance, turnover intentions, and harmful behaviors [51]. Khan's study revealed that jealousy mediates the negative impact of distributive and interactional injustice on workplace outcomes, such as job deviance, turnover intentions, and job performance [24].

H2: Organizational justice is negatively related to jealousy in the workplace.

Core self-evaluations (CSE), Organizational justice, and Workplace Jealousy

Jealousy, as a complex emotion, can be associated with CES and Organizational justice [52]. Some previous studies have provided support for the relationship between CSE and other work outcomes [53,54]. Such as job satisfaction [55], well-being [39], and jealousy [24]. According to Judge and colleagues, those with higher CSE scores perform better and are more satisfied and successful in their jobs. They report low levels of conflict and stress. In addition, they use effective coping strategies to deal with obstacles [56]. These strategies enable them to control their negative emotions and behaviors toward others in the workplace. It is important to note that their ability to manage their emotions and moods is associated with lower levels of jealousy when interacting with other co-workers [57].

Recent research indicated that organizational justice has an impact on work outcomes [51,24]. Employees' perceptions of organizational justice can be positively related to organizational commitment, citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and trust in management [58] while unfairness can be associated with poor psychological well-being, lower organizational performance, competition with colleagues, and may generate negative emotions towards them [59]. A low level of organizational justice predicts an increase in jealousy at work [24].

According to previous literature, we can expect that CSE and organizational justice may contribute to predicting workplace jealousy.

H3: Core self-evaluations and organizational justice contribute to predicting jealousy in the workplace.

Methodology

participants

A Purposive sampling procedure was used for one hundred twenty Egyptian women employees full-time in administrative positions from governmental organizations in Cairo. Aged from 25 to 55, the average age was 40. 2 years, (SD= 6. 7). The working experience ranges from five to thirty-two years. The sample characteristics are shown in Table (1).

Table 1. Sample Characteristics.

Characteristic	women employees (N=120)	
Age	M= 40.2 years ± SD= 6. 7 years	
Marital status	Single	16.7%
	Married	68.3%
	Absolute	10.8%
	Widower	4.2%
Educational level	High school	12.5%
	Associate degree	70.8%
	Diploma degree	16.7%
Functional class	First	43.3%
	Second	20.9%
	Third	35.8%

Measurements

This research is based on three tests (core self-evaluation, organizational justice, and jealousy). This is in addition to the preliminary data Form used to collect the demographic variables of interest to the current study, as follows:

Core self-evaluation Scale

was used to evaluate the participants' core self-evaluation (CSES; Judge et al., 2003). The CSES is composed of 12 items and includes 4 specific core traits (self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control), with response options presented in a 5-point Likert-scale provided anchored at 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree.

In terms of cross-cultural validity, CSE has been tested in different countries, such as China [60], Israel [31], Japan [61], and Greece [41]; these results provide cross-cultural validation. The factorial structure of CSES displayed a unitary factor structure. Overall, the CSES is a valid measure.

In current study, The internal consistency of the scale was tested via Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was obtained as 0.87.

Organizational justice

was measured by Niehoff & Moorman, 1993 [62] the scale includes 20 items comprising three dimensions: one related to distributive justice (5 items), second (6 items) for procedural justice, and a third (9 items) for interactional justice, with response options presented in a 5-point Likert-scale format ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The scale is characterized by acceptable fit indices (e.g., CFI = 0.92).

Niehoff and Moorman scale have been widely used and translated in several some many languages [63,64,65]. In this study, the internal consistency of the scale was tested via Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was obtained as 0.94.

Also, in the current study investigation of the validity of the core self-evaluation and organizational justice scales would be studied was realized as follows: Initially, the scale was translated into Arabic by the authors of the present article. Then, an assessment of forward translations was performed by an experienced professors at English department, Cairo University* to check that the meaning is not lost.

Workplace Jealousy Scale

Developed by Nasra Mansour and Aya Allah Soliman. To develop this scale, some items were adopted from review scales in previous studies [28,66]. This scale consists of twenty items that include cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. Items were

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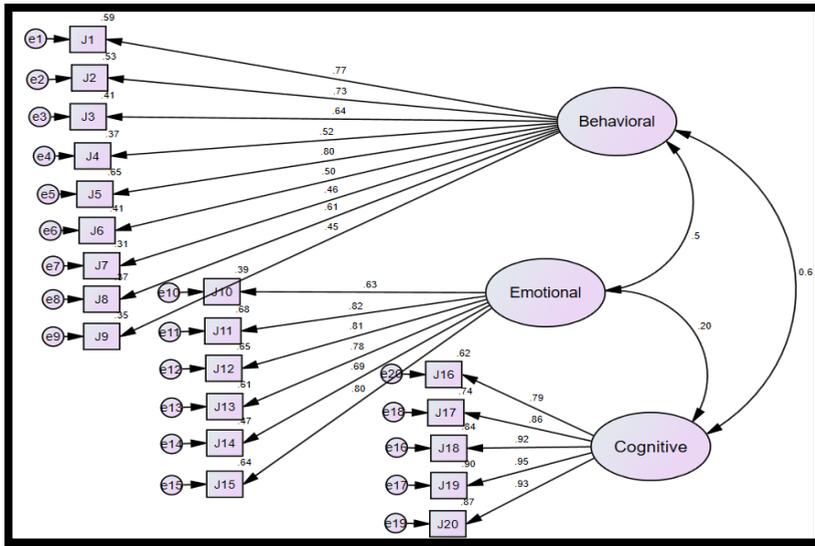
scored on a 5-point Likert scale anchored by 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree, where higher scores indicated higher career jealousy. All items were negatively scored. An example item was “It upsets me to hear my supervisor praise another employee”. Internal consistency reliability was estimated to be high ($\alpha=0.92$).

In current study, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to establish the construct validity of workplace jealousy (WJ). The construct validity of the Urdu version of WJ was established by conducting CFA with maximum likelihood estimation in Amos-23.

A model of three interrelated factors was tested. Findings revealed a good model fit for the respective model. To signify the likelihood that individual items influence this model fit, individual item properties were also examined. It was observed that factor loadings of all Items were above the acceptable value .30. Results of confirmatory factor analysis of WJ are given in Table (2).

χ^2	df	χ^2 / df	GFI	IFI	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
253.686	167	1.519	.828	.938	.937	.838	.04

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis of WJ Scale in Total (N=120). Overall findings reveal that values of χ^2/df , GFI, IFI, CFI, NFI, and RMSEA lie in acceptable ranges [67,68].



Figur.1 Measurement model of workplace jealousy scale (WJS) (20 items). shows the graphical picture of the model. All the items show factor loading > .30. Overall factor loadings range from .50 to .99 providing evidence of a good fit measurement model.

Data Collection

In the beginning, the consent of the participants was obtained and was informed that their participation was voluntary and their responses were confidential. Thus, the participants were not required to state their names on the forms. Tests were completed in one-on-one sessions. The current study was conducted during the period from January 2022 to May 2022. This study received no funds from commercial, public, or not-for-profit funding agencies.

Results

To test the first and second hypotheses, Pearson correlation was calculated to determine the correlation between two variables as shown in Table (3).

Cases	Strongly correlated
core self-evaluation & jealousy	-.542**
Organizational justice & jealousy	-.422**

**Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Pearson correlation among research variables. The results revealed from the Pearson correlation coefficient show a negative correlation coefficient between variables of core self-evaluation and jealousy; i.e., the level of jealousy in the workplace will rise when a sense of core self-evaluation is low.

On the other side, the results showed a negative correlation coefficient between organizational justice and jealousy; i.e., the level of jealousy in the workplace will rise when the perception of organizational justice is low.

To test the third hypothesis, multivariable regression was calculated to analyze two or more independent variables in the variations of the dependent variables, as shown in Table (4).

Predicted variables	Predictive variables	Beta	t	p
Jealousy	core self-evaluations	.257	2.738	.00
	organizational justice	.208	20219	.02

R2 = 0.157; Adjusted R2 = 0.143; P < 0.05

Table 4. Multivariable regression to recognize variables influencing jealousy. To predict the variation of scores of jealousy, multivariable regression (using Enter) has been used through independent variables. Our mean of R2 is to assess the variance of

jealousy which is determined by 15% of the set of independent variables in this research. There is a meaningful relation between the set of independent variables and the dependent variable of the research.

Discussion

Regarding the findings, there is a negative relationship between core self-evaluation and jealousy. In addition, there is a negative relationship between organizational justice and jealousy. Further, core self-evaluation and organizational justice are predictors of jealousy at work. Accordingly, the research hypothesis is accepted.

This result emphasizes the effect both of core self-evaluation and organizational justice on the sense of jealousy. Based on Judge and his colleagues believes that individuals with CSE can perform their tasks effectively. Whenever individuals evaluate themselves positively, they see themselves as more valuable and more able to face situations in an appropriate [32]. While those with a low level of CSE suffer from anxiety and depression. They also experience difficulties in controlling their emotions. As a result, they report an increased level of violence and hostility associated with their feelings of jealousy at work [40].

In this context, a study conducted by Barney (2013) revealed that CSE is related to deviant behavior in the workplace, which can be defined as a violation of organizational principles and norms that threaten the well-being of the organization. Another dimension of deflector workplace behavior is interpersonal deflector, including bullying, violence, and aggression. Harmful jealousy in the workplace is a form of negative behavior that contributes to reduced productivity and leads to conflict with co-workers [10].

Thus, women employees with high self-esteem (as part of CSE), are more capable of fulfilling work requirements and have a greater sense of worth and competence. On the other hand, they are more persistent and more confident in their ability to achieve success [69]. In addition, it is important to note that women employees with general self-efficacy are more motivated and more able to face stressful

situations that contribute to enhancing their performance at work [70]. Also, Locus of control enables them to control their life situations, influence their environments, and overcome career obstacles [71]. As well, their emotional stability also contributes to increasing their ability to manage stress, accept criticism, and overcome mistakes [40].

On the other side, organizational justice is an important concept for understanding workplace behavior. It has received increasing attention in recent years and affects the behaviors of employees in the workplace [48]. Organizational justice is centered on the principle that the organization's treatment is important to keep loyal employees and create an appropriate work environment [72].

Justice described as an individual's perspective of fairness within an organization depends on the organization's outcomes, processes, and encounters with its employees [73]. It is argued in the organizational justice literature that a high perception of justice at work causes positive behaviors among employees [74].

Justice can be understood through three dimensions: distributive, procedural, and interactional. Justice is based not only on the results but also on the procedures and the way of interaction during the performance of activities [75].

In addition, competition in the workplace can create positive or negative effects. Negative effects include stress and jealousy [76]. An employee who has the same characteristics and competencies is expected to perceive his other colleague as a rival [28]. In some situations, managers take advantage of this competition for the benefit of their business. When the manager uses unfair patterns with a favorite employee, this negative behavior generates jealousy and establishes conflict with other colleagues. Therefore, the behavior of the manager has a direct impact on the employees' feelings [77]. When managers can resist jealousy at work, employees can perform their work better [76].

Ethical leaders retain fair treatment in their interactions with subordinates. They are less likely to excite jealousy in their subordinates [78]. When ethical leaders act fairly, this justice can

reduce jealousy and protect employees from comparisons with other co-workers [79]. Based on the comparisons of resources (input and output), it was debated that employees evaluate their justice in terms of their efforts. If these input-outcome does not complement each other, inequity comes into play generating feelings of discomfort and jealousy [80].

Also, Wang and Sung found evidence that ethical leadership is associated with workplace jealousy. The justice of leaders also contributes to increasing the degree of the well-being of the subordinates. As well, as help them avoid potential fears of losing their relationship with leaders [78].

Thus, the basis of jealousy is the social comparison with another person [81]. Social comparisons, the comparison of one's traits and qualities to others, are a common occurrence in social life, where individuals compare their abilities, performance, and skills with others [82]. Social comparison takes place in two ways: upward or downward. First, the individual compares himself with a more capable individual and status. Second, the individual compares himself with an individual who has few abilities and skills as a way to overcome his negative feelings [83]. In the jealousy context, an individual faces a triangle (person P, person B, and rival R). In this process, the person tries to answer five issues: The extent of the relationship of competitor R with the other person B, the extent of love between person P and the other person B, the extent of the values of person P, the psychological health of the person P, and the characteristics of the person P) [84].

Importantly, the self-concept literature proposes that individuals often perceive their traits and aptitudes as unusual and unique. People are normally striving to feel better about themselves and they tend to see themselves positively. Therefore, positive self-evaluations are associated with a lower level of social comparison that reduces feelings of jealousy [81]. On the other hand, negative self-evaluations are associated with a higher level of social comparison that provokes jealousy from co-workers at work [85].

In general, it can be the conclusion that when women employees perceive the presence of justice in their work in an organization and observe it; they feel a new good sense and increase their core self-evaluation. They express this good sense in their behaviors as well as they transfer it to others. Thus, they feel less jealous.

Limitations and future research

Although the current research contributes to the extant organizational literature in the Egyptian context, it has limitations. First, the sample design of the study (Purposive sample) limits the generalization of results. In other meaning, the findings may not apply to all Egyptian women employees. Second, the current research overlooked various factors. So, future research would benefit from assessing the role of demographic and cultural factors, including gender, income, level of education, and social class. This would provide a more complete understanding of jealousy in the workplace. Finally, these results open new questions for both theoretical and applied future research. For example, the study mediation model through which core self-evaluation relates to decreased cognitive, emotional, and behavioral jealousy, and was not considered in this article.

Conclusion

This effort sheds light on the jealous problem of the workplace within organizations that is with negative consequences on the individual's life, including mental health, occupational roles, and social networks. In applying the general results of this research, it must be stated that organizations can develop by applying fairness in their organizational policies and procedures. So, by highlighting the role of justice perceptions among employees, the current research will offer guidelines for managers concerning certain management practices and interventions that may be implemented to foster fairness in the workplace and decrease jealousy among employees. In addition, these results constitute indeed evidence for core self-evaluation as a protective factor against jealousy and its negative consequences.

Data availability

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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"N.M.A and A.A.S. wrote the main manuscript text and A.A.S Analyzed the data. All authors reviewed the manuscript."

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Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

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Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.