Research article

# How does proactive personality affect employee creativity and ostracism? The mediating role of envy

Wen-Gang Zhang [a],[1], Yi Ding [a],[1], Feng Xu [b],*

[a] School of Economics and Management, Anhui Polytechnic University, China
[b] School of Humanities, Social Sciences & Law, Harbin Institute of Technology, China

A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

When working alongside proactive colleagues, do you elevate yourself through benign envy or resort to malicious envy? To address this intriguing question, we constructed a model based on social comparison theory to measure the double-edged sword effects of proactive personality on employee outcomes. We hypothesized that proactive employees would induce two distinct tendencies in their peers—workplace ostracism and employee creativity—due to peer envy. The study analyzed 389 valid responses from full-time employees in Chinese organizations using structural equation modeling. Results indicate that proactive personality positively influences benign envy among peers, which in turn positively affects employee creativity. Moreover, benign envy mediates the relationship between proactive personality and employee creativity. On the other hand, proactive personality positively influences malicious envy among peers, which in turn positively affects workplace ostracism. Additionally, malicious envy mediates the relationship between proactive personality and workplace ostracism. This study intertwines personality, emotions, and workplace outcomes, thereby advancing the existing literature on social comparison theory. Additionally, it furnishes valuable insights for organizational human resource management, particularly in the realms of employee recruitment and workplace relationship management.

## 1. Introduction

Proactive personality plays a pivotal role in enabling individuals to uphold a competitive edge within intricate and dynamic environments [1,2]. With its growing efficacy surpassing the big-five model in predicting outcomes relevant to organizations [3,4], the positive repercussions of proactivity have been extensively documented [5–8]. These consequences encompass various domains such as performance, voice, learning, creativity, organizational citizenship, and career success [9,10]. Additionally, organizations anticipate employees to advance industry practices through proactive initiatives [11]. A meta-analysis affirmed the advantageous impact of proactive personality on both individuals and organizations [10]. In alignment with this, recent studies continue to underscore the positive outcomes associated with proactive personality [12–14].

The preceding studies have underscored the substantial advantages associated with proactive personality in the contemporary workplace, yet the 'potential unintended consequences' have been overlooked [8]. Contrary to the prevalent affirmation of proactive

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behavior at work, it is noteworthy that colleagues may not consistently endorse anes [5]. Proactivity can be perceived as 'counter-productive' and deemed 'tiring and strenuous' [6,15]. Recent research has suggested that proactive employees might induce peers' inattention, perceived threats, and even workplace sabotage [8,16,17].

Despite the considerable research on proactive personality, several challenges persist. Firstly, the existing body of research tends to approach the positive or negative consequences of proactive personality in a single-dimensional manner, creating an incomplete portrayal. It is acknowledged that, under specific circumstances and timeframes, 'traits rarely have unalloyed advantages (or disadvantages)' [18]. Secondly, the current research predominantly relies on the perspectives of proactive employees themselves, neglecting the reactions of peers when encountering proactive individuals—an aspect crucial to any organizational context [19]. Thirdly, understanding the internal pathway influencing proactivity and employee feedback remains an unexplored area. Investigating this mediation mechanism is instrumental in comprehending the holistic value of proactivity.

To address these challenges, we adopt social comparison theory (SCT) to scrutinize the 'trade-off' impact of workplace proactivity [20]. SCT posits that envy arises when proactive individuals are perceived as competitors by their peers [20,21]. Envy, rooted in upward social comparison, typically accompanies pain [22]. Following the principle of 'no pain, no gain' [23], envy has evolved into two subtypes: benign envy and malicious envy [24]. These subtypes involve envying others for their advantages and gloating over the advantages others lack, respectively [25]. While both subtypes signify 'pain at another's good fortune' [26], their distinctions in experience and motivation lead to different consequences [27]. Functionalism posits that benign envy arises when the superiority of the envied is deemed worthwhile [28]. In contrast, when extra efforts seem incapable of altering the status quo, the optimal choice is 'levelling the envied person down' [29].

Proactive personality is regarded as 'a form of dominance' [30], and envy is postulated to confer selective advantages for survival and reproduction in a competitive environment with limited resources [27]). This interplay may yield two consequences: (a) when peers aspire to emulate proactive employees, such positive attention may lead to benign envy, considered a 'more productive emotion' [31], driving employees to invest more energy in self-enhancement and consequently fostering employee creativity [32]; (b) when proactive employees are perceived as threats, it may give rise to malicious envy, a hostile emotion associated with negative behaviors such as workplace ostracism [8,33].

In sum, our study makes several contributions to the existing literature on personality. Firstly, we offer a relatively balanced perspective in exploring the paradoxical mechanisms of proactive personality, challenging previous notions that exclusively portrayed proactive personality as beneficial for organizations. We argue that proactive personality not only enhances employee creativity but also paradoxically leads to workplace ostracism. Secondly, we illuminate the process of envy release by concurrently examining benign envy and malicious envy as opposing variables. This demonstration highlights the mediating mechanism through which proactive personality influences workplace feedback. Lastly, the empirical results of our model broaden the applicability of SCT, further affirming the relationship between creativity and the dark side—specifically, the association between creativity and workplace ostracism. Fig. 1 illustrates the theoretical model.

## 2. Development of hypotheses

### 2.1. Proactive personality and envy subtypes

Proactive personality, characterized as 'a relatively stable tendency to effect environmental change' [3], is commonly associated with positive outcomes [9,10]. Nevertheless, recent research highlights that proactive employees, in their pursuit of influencing the work environment, may encounter interpersonal conflicts leading to group resistance against individual proactive initiatives, ultimately hindering the dynamic impact of proactive individuals [34]. Additionally, proactive individuals may experience frustration, particularly in situations involving work–family conflict, where a perceived loss of control over their environment ensues [35].

Grounded in Social Comparison Theory (SCT), individuals possess an innate motivation to assess their abilities, often resorting to subjective standards by comparing themselves to similar peers [20]. The boundary-less nature of contemporary work facilitates horizontal comparisons [21], intensifying competition for scarce resources and opportunities in today's uncertain environment [10]. Proactive employees, inherently dominating their peers through subconscious comparisons, may incite envy when their positive
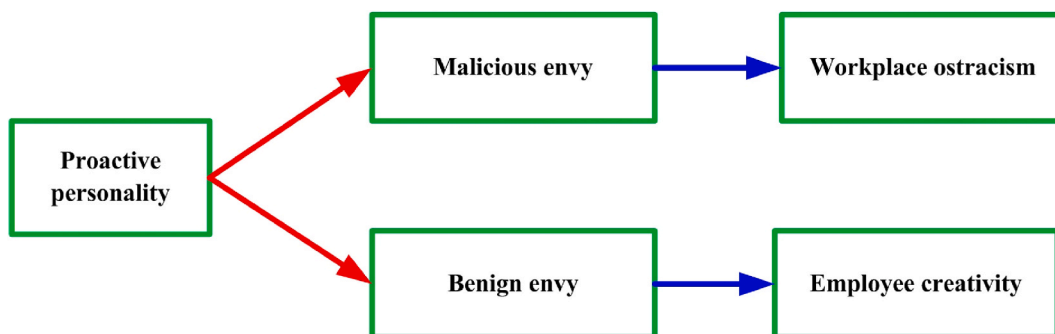


**Fig. 1.** Hypothetical model.

changes challenge colleagues, eliciting implicit shifts in formal and/or informal status hierarchies [8]. When proactive employees make positive changes that make colleagues feel challenged, implicit changes in formal and/or informal status breed envy [36].

Envy, rooted in upward social comparison, manifests as a sensation of pain regarding the superior qualities, achievements, or possessions of others [28]. An envious individual may either desire the envied advantage (e.g., proactivity) or wish for the envied person to lack said advantages [20]. While envy encompasses negative emotions arising from feelings of inferiority [22], individual differences in envious tendencies result in distinct subtypes: benign envy and malicious envy [28]. The former reflects a desire for personal progress, whereas the latter denotes hostility and a desire to diminish the advantages of the envied [24].

Benign envy arises when the envied advantage (e.g., proactivity) is subjectively deemed deserved, and the envier believes in having high control. Conversely, malicious envy emerges when the advantage is perceived as unworthy, and the envier has weak control over personal outcomes [27,29]. For instance, coworkers often consider employee relative position as a prominent attribute at work [37]. The relatively superior work performance of proactive employees makes them objects of envy among coworkers [8]. While proactive personality serves as an exemplar for coworkers due to outstanding qualities—such as being a self-starter, change-oriented, and future-focused—it also leads to perceptions of resource loss among coworkers, given its tendency to gain control and dominate, resulting in a sense of 'being dominated' and potential hostility from coworkers [8,21]. Thus.

**H1a**.   Proactive personality is positively related to benign envy.

**H1b**.   Proactive personality is positively related to malicious envy.

## 2.2. Consequences of envy: employee creativity and workplace ostracism

Lange and Crusius (2015) proposed the evolution of envy into two subtypes driven by pain, an instantaneous reaction rooted in an inferiority complex [28]. Benign and malicious envies represent more enduring attitudes, with benign enviers adopting self-enhancement behaviors to elevate their relative status, while malicious enviers often engage in denigrating the superiority of others [29,38].

The response elicited by envy is generally perceived as a means to repair damaged self-esteem and social status. However, the behavioral tendencies resulting from the duality of envy vary [27,28]. Festinger (1954) posited that 'given a range of possible persons for comparison, someone close to one's ability or opinion will be chosen for comparison' [20]. Envy manifests in two distinct forms in a series of social comparisons, typically upward, mapping to diverse approaches to social status [39,40]. For example, benign enviers usually perceive strong control over themselves and believe they highly deserve the advantages of those they envy. This stimulates and improves their performance, encouraging them to bridge the gap or surpass common goals [29,41]. This is associated with higher well-being, vitality, and life satisfaction [42,43]. In contrast, malicious enviers have low personal control and believe that others' advantages are undeserved, triggering an aggressive desire to disparage the outstanding attributes of colleagues [28,31]. This induces anxiety, resulting in demotivation, harassment, and social exclusion of competitors [42,44,45].

In both forms of envy, excellent standards related to the self—the level of the envied person—are highly valued by enviers to emphasize the gap between the self and others, suggesting a problematic difference [27,28,41]. This provides motivation to address the gap [46]. The two possible reactions of envy are learning and destruction [44]. Envy offers employees a valuable peer-based learning opportunity, mobilizing personal resources to narrow the perceived gap. While obtaining what the envied person possesses may be difficult or unrealistic, the only viable option might be to acquire something superior [41]. The desire for success encourages employees to perform better in the face of setbacks, achieving 'gain' beyond pain [29]. Thus, benign envy inspires ambitious behaviors based on self-enhancement [28], fostering the generation of new and useful ideas [32,47]. Additionally, envy induces employees to provide negative feedback in a work environment where a threat is perceived [44]. In such cases, envious coworkers may also socially sabotage relatively high-status employees in the group to alleviate their sense of distress [8,33]. Therefore, based on the self-protection strategy, malicious envy increases the social distance between enviers and the envied, reducing the risk that enviers will be punished for deviant behavior [48]. Thus.

**H2a**.   Peers' benign envy is positively related to their own creativity.

**H2b**.   Peers' malicious envy is positively related to their workplace ostracism of coworkers.

## 2.3. The mediating role of envy

Proactive personality signals a pursuit of self-excellence, with relentless efforts potentially culminating in professional success [48]. Colleagues instinctively gravitate towards the 'standard setter', an individual endowed with exceptional qualities, as their benchmark for comparison [39]. Consequently, employees find motivation in their envy, propelling them either to enhance personal performance or ascend to the level of the envied individual. Benign envy instigates motivational behaviors among employees, fostering a sense of pride in their efforts. Conversely, malicious envy triggers hostile tendencies, leading individuals to relish others' distress through interpersonal stimulation [28]. As Sun et al. (2021) suggested, we 'examine how proactivity and relative standings play their roles in shaping the two different types of envy' [8]. Thus.

**H3a**.   Proactive personality has a positive indirect impact on employee creativity via benign envy.

**H3b**.   Proactive personality has a positive indirect impact on employee ostracism via malicious envy.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Sample and procedures

The data are collected from full-time employees of 11 companies in northeast China, encompassing the banking, materials engineering, education, and pharmaceutical industries. All procedures have been approved by local ethics committee and meet the standards of the Helsinki Declaration. We transparently communicated the voluntary and confidential nature of the research objectives and procedures to all participants. With their consent secured, the study was able to progress. With the help of the HR managers, we distributed 500 questionnaires; 426 were returned—response rate, 85.2%—and the final valid sample was 389. Males accounted for 67.1%; average age was 34.21 years (SD = 3.36); average organizational tenure was 4.53 years (SD = 1.84); and average duration of education was 13.40 years (SD = 2.07).

### 3.2. Analysis approach

We used SPSS PROCESS 3.3 and AMOS 24.0 for data analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to validate the fit of the model. A series of common indexes, such as the goodness of fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used to evaluate the model fit. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used for subsequent analysis. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a latent variable path modeling method known for its advantages in minimizing residuals of endogenous variables and addressing issues of collinearity among observed variables [49]. Particularly beneficial when dealing with small sample sizes and non-normally distributed data, SEM provides robust estimates for structural models [50]. Furthermore, SEM accommodates the simultaneous examination of relationships among multiple independent and dependent variables, overcoming limitations and deficiencies associated with single linear regression models [48]. Its ability to capture the comprehensive nature of indirect effects makes SEM particularly well-suited for this study, aligning with the practical considerations of our research.

### 3.3. Measurement

Following [48]Brislin (1980), we used back-translation to generate Chinese measures. We selected two bilingual scholars to translate and retranslate the entire questionnaire, and a third bilingual management professor compared the Chinese and English versions to confirm the stability of the scale. Unless otherwise specified, all items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with a range from 1, indicating strong disagreement, to 5, indicating strong agreement.

Proactive personality was measured using a 10-item scale [51]. A sample item is: 'I can spot a good opportunity long before others can'. Cronbach's alpha value was 0.91. Benign envy was measured using a 5-item scale [28]. A sample item is: 'Envying others motivates me to accomplish my goals'. Cronbach's alpha value was 0.90. Malicious envy was measured using a 5-item scale [28]. A sample item is: 'Seeing other people's achievements makes me resent them'. Cronbach's alpha value was 0.88. Employee creativity was assessed using a 4-item scale developed by Farmer et al. (2003) [47]. A sample item is: 'He/she tries new ideas or methods first'. Cronbach's alpha value was 0.84. Workplace ostracism was evaluated using a 10-item scale developed by Ferris et al. (2008) [33]. A sample item is: 'Others avoided you at work'. Cronbach's alpha value was 0.93. Additionally, gender, age, education, and organizational tenure were controlled for in the model estimation.

## 4. Results

CFA results show that the model fits well with the data ($x^2$/df = 1.825, GFI = 0.879, AGFI = 0.862, IFI = 0.943, TLI = 0.938, CFI = 0.943, RMSEA = 0.046). Moreover, all factor loads exceed 0.60, revealing high construct validity.

We used SPSS23.0 for descriptive statistical analysis of variables. Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficient, which lays the foundation for subsequent research. Furthermore, we used AMOS24.0 to conduct the structural

**Table 1**
Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

|  | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender dummy-male | 0.671 | 0.470 | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender dummy-female | 0.329 | 0.470 | −1.00** | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Age | 3.360 | 1.090 | 0.014 | −0.014 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Education | 2.070 | 0.353 | −0.022 | 0.022 | −0.076 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Tenure | 1.840 | 0.501 | −.438** | .438** | 0.014 | 0.048 | 1 | | | | | |
| Proactive personality | 3.732 | 0.784 | −0.012 | 0.012 | 0.018 | 0.008 | 0.035 | 1 | | | | |
| Malicious envy | 3.794 | 0.783 | 0.073 | −0.073 | −0.013 | 0.007 | −0.054 | .368** | 1 | | | |
| Benign envy | 3.630 | 0.946 | −0.013 | 0.013 | −0.046 | 0.022 | −0.028 | .445** | .428** | 1 | | |
| Employee creativity | 3.623 | 0.778 | 0.013 | −0.013 | −0.059 | 0.007 | −0.035 | .303** | .325** | .390** | 1 | |
| Workplace ostracism | 3.766 | 0.780 | 0.057 | −0.057 | −0.013 | 0.082 | −0.084 | .471** | .392** | .434** | .438** | 1 |

Note: N = 389; **p < 0.05.

equation model (SEM) path analysis on the hypotheses.

As shown in Table 2, proactive personality was positively related to benign envy (0.507, P < 0.001), and proactive personality was positively related to malicious envy (0.443, P < 0.001)—H1a and H1b are supported. Benign envy was positively related to employee creativity (0.338, P < 0.001), and malicious envy was positively related to workplace ostracism (0.464, P < 0.001)—H2a and H2b are supported.

As shown in Table 3, benign envy had a significant mediating effect between proactive personality and employee creativity (0.205, CI [0.115, 0.307], P < 0.001), whereas malicious envy had a significant mediating effect between proactive personality and workplace ostracism (0.171, CI [0.088,0.258], P < 0.001)—H3a and H3b are supported. Fig. 2 demonstrated the results of mediation model. Additionally, the structural validity and factor loading of the variables were presented in Appendix A.

## 5. Discussion

The principal objective of this study is to redirect scholarly dialogue within the field of personality literature towards exploring the potential ramifications stemming from personality traits, specifically focusing on scrutinizing the comparative and interpersonal repercussions emanating from proactive personality. Through empirical scrutiny, we investigated the intricate relationships among personality, emotions, and workplace feedback.

Our findings indicate that proactive personality has the capacity to elicit envy among colleagues, manifesting either benign or malicious. The discernible subtypes of envy give rise to distinct and consequential outcomes—proactive personality, acting through the mediating influence of benign envy, exerts a positive impact on creativity, while conversely, it positively influences workplace ostracism through the mediating role of malicious envy. Although the variances in the mediating effects may not be overt, this represents an underemphasized direction within the existing literature.

These revelations underscore the interrelations among proactive personality, benign envy, malicious envy, employee creativity, and workplace ostracism, providing substantial support for our conceptual model. Consequently, this study contributes valuable theoretical insights by elucidating the nuanced pathways through which proactive personality influences the emotional dynamics among peers, subsequently leading to differentiated feedback. Furthermore, it furnishes profound insights for organizational managers in the realms of industry recruitment and process management.

### 5.1. Theoretical implications

First, diverging from the majority of studies [1,5,9,10], our findings unveil that proactive personality doesn't universally yield benefits. The proactive behavior of an employee may elicit a sense of threat among colleagues, jeopardizing their expectations of organizational resources and triggering emotional hostility that may culminate in divergent paths [22]. This aligns with the perspective that proactive personality can be 'counterproductive' [15]. In essence, workplace relationships don't consistently follow the adage 'after rain the sky appears blue', but rather encapsulate the experience of 'every white has its black and every sweet its sour'. Nielsen et al. (2022) investigated the interactive effects of proactive personality and stressors on diverse workplace behaviors further corroborates our standpoint [52].

Second, our research contributes to a nuanced understanding of envy subtypes by embracing an alternative framework of envy dimensions, distinguishing between benign and malicious forms. Drawing on SCT [20], individuals evaluate their abilities or performance through comparisons with others. As an unfolding temporal episode [22], when enviers perceive similarities with those they envy and view them as friendly or enthusiastic, they recognize the envied as a valuable exemplar. This stimulation prompts active exploration of novel problem-solving approaches and even attempts to emulate despite the accompanying pain [42,46]. Conversely, when adverse consequences of social comparison undermine self-evaluation and professional identity [39], individual self-sanctions' efficacy in mitigating workplace ostracism may be compromised, underscoring the significance of studying envy's consequences for comprehendingthe social functional perspective of the SCT.

Last, our study offers a nuanced perspective on the positive and negative consequences of proactive personality in the workplace through envy subtypes. Remarkably, the positive and indirect impact of proactive personality on workplace ostracism through malicious envy surpasses the positive and indirect impact on employee creativity through benign envy. This asymmetry arises from the forced comparability within teams and a lingering tendency for incomparability, potentially triggering chain negative reactions amid pressure from the continuous fragmentation of minorities [20,42,46]. While group characteristics may stimulate ability, the attributes essential for generating ability are likely to be immutable [20].

**Table 2**
Path coefficient test of SEM.

| Hypothetical path | | | Path coefficient | S.E. | C.R. | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BE | ← | PP | 0.507 | 0.060 | 9.117 | *** |
| ME | ← | PP | 0.443 | 0.047 | 7.935 | *** |
| WO | ← | ME | 0.464 | 0.061 | 8.212 | *** |
| EC | ← | BE | 0.338 | 0.041 | 5.754 | *** |

Note: BE=Benign envy, PP=Proactive personality, ME = Malicious envy, EC = Employee creativity, WO=Workplace ostracism, ***P < 0.001.

**Table 3**
Path coefficient test of mediation of SEM.

| Mediation path | Effect | Lower | Upper | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PP→ME→WO | 0.205 | 0.115 | 0.307 | *** |
| PP→BE→EC | 0.171 | 0.088 | 0.258 | *** |

Note: BE=Benign envy, PP=Proactive personality, ME = Malicious envy, EC = Employee creativity, WO=Workplace ostracism, ***P < 0.001.
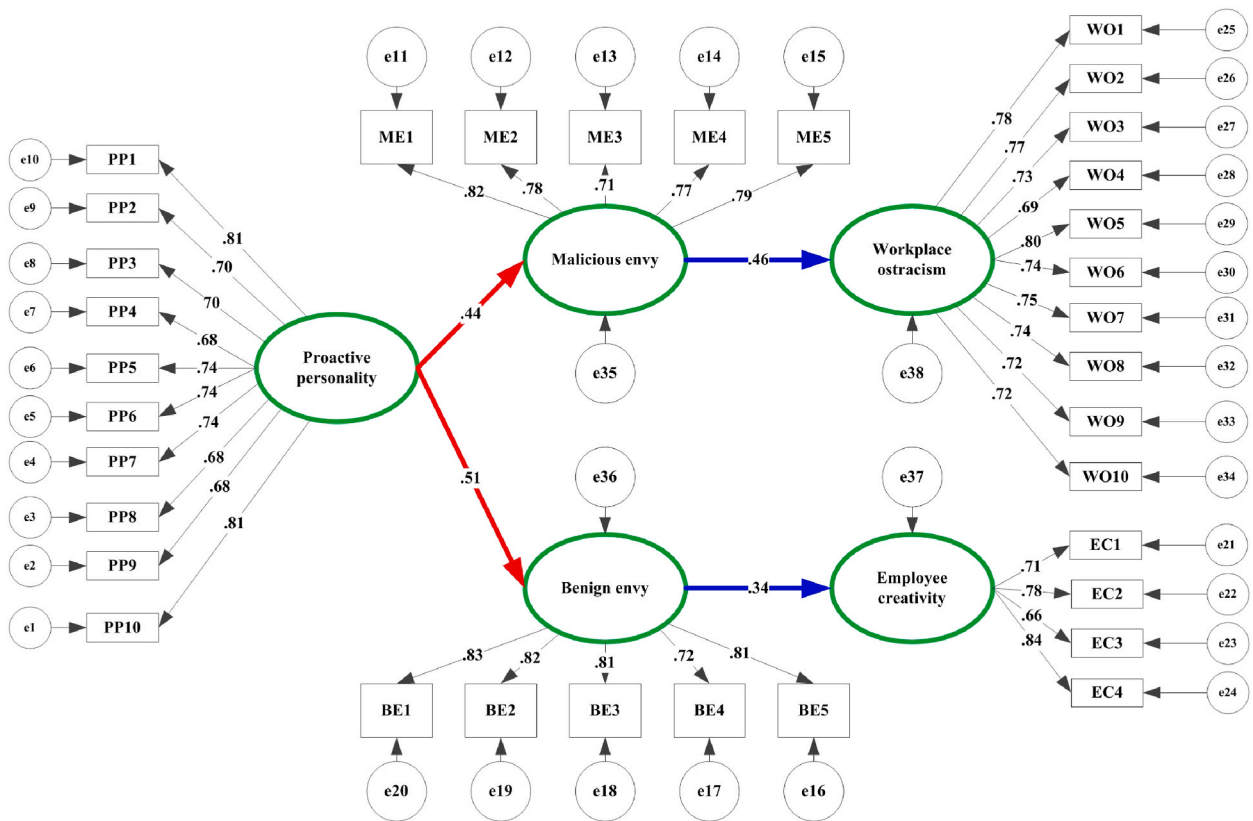


**Fig. 2.** The results of path coefficient analysis.

### 5.2. Practical implications

Our research findings contribute substantial insights to organizational career management from a scholarly perspective. First, the conventional human resources system encounters limitations in talent placement due to the escalating diversity in employment [20]. To effectively navigate the challenges posed by proactive employees, organizations should embrace a more inclusive approach, steering away from the metaphorical notion of allowing them to 'pack their own parachutes' [53]. This transformative approach aims to eliminate adverse effects on mental health and work performance [2]. Managers play a pivotal role in this paradigm shift by developing transparent criteria for reward and distribution differentiation, providing a straightforward framework for interpretation.

Second, the duality of envy leads to different workplace results. Envy leads to a painful psychological experience, which is not always harmful. In addition to workplace ostracism caused by malicious envy, benign envy induces upward behaviour [44]. Organizations can adopt flexible management policies, such as psychological counselling to eliminate misunderstandings and unfair mentality. In China, people who are termed proactive after psychological counselling may feel a sense of 'shame' and be regarded as weak; this can be avoided via confidentiality, that is, an anonymous communication in the form of numbers. Additionally, the social sabotage caused by envy must be prohibited [46]. Proactive employees should be encouraged to contribute more to interpersonal expenditures in vocational training courses, striking a balance between personal benefits and organizational costs. This approach fosters inter-group trust and cooperation, ultimately promoting creativity within the organization [8,48].

### 5.3. Limitations and future scope

First, this study gathered data from multiple sources; however, its cross-sectional design limited the explanation of causation. In the

future, longitudinal research can be used to explore the cumulative effect of personality and work outcomes. Second, although we distinguished the different consequences caused by the mediation effects of benign envy and malicious envy, the transformation mechanism between the two remains ambiguous. Future research may further elaborate the transmutation process between the two through laboratory experiments. Finally, this study revealed the underlying mechanism of proactive personality influencing workplace outcomes; however, the boundaries of this mechanism remain vague. This can be explored from perspectives such as organizational self-esteem and organizational justice.

## 6. Conclusion

In previous research, proactive personality has often been regarded as a beneficial trait capable of fostering the growth of team members and organizations. In contrast, our study provides an inclusive argument, suggesting that proactive personality not only enhances creativity in the workplace but also triggers interpersonal ostracism among peers. These divergent outcomes are differentiated through envy subtypes (benevolent and malicious). Therefore, it is worthwhile to prospectively consider the potential equilibrium effects of proactive personality.

## Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

## Ethics approval

The study protocol was approved in advance by the Institute of Neuroscience and Cognitive Psychology of Anhui Polytechnic University (No. AHPU-SEM-2023-04).

## Consent to participate

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

## Consent for publication

All authors gave their consent to publish the manuscript.

## CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Wen-Gang Zhang:** Writing – original draft, Resources, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology. **Yi Ding:** Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Resources, Project administration, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Feng Xu:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Supervision, Software, Resources, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization, Project administration.

## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

## Acknowledgment

## Appendix A

**Table A**
Reliability of the Constructs and Factor Loadings of Indicators

| Constructs and Items | CR | AVE | FL |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |

**Table A** (*continued*)

| Constructs and Items | CR | AVE | FL |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Proactive Personality (PP)** | 0.918 | 0.530 | |
| I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life. | | | 0.805 |
| Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change. | | | 0.699 |
| Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality. | | | 0.695 |
| If I see something I don't like, I fix it. | | | 0.680 |
| No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen. | | | 0.738 |
| I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition. | | | 0.737 |
| I excel at identifying opportunities. | | | 0.741 |
| I am always looking for better ways to do things. | | | 0.680 |
| If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen. | | | 0.683 |
| I can spot a good opportunity long before others can. | | | 0.810 |
| **Benign Envy (BE)** | 0.897 | 0.636 | |
| When I envy others, I focus on how I can become equally successful in the future. | | | 0.810 |
| If I notice that another person is better than me, I try to improve myself. | | | 0.723 |
| Envying others motivates me to accomplish my goals. | | | 0.808 |
| I strive to reach other people's superior achievements. | | | 0.822 |
| If someone has superior qualities, achievements, or possessions, I try to attain them for myself. | | | 0.828 |
| **Malicious Envy (ME)** | 0.884 | 0.605 | |
| I wish that superior people lose their advantage. | | | 0.827 |
| If other people have something that I want for myself, I wish to take it away from them. | | | 0.781 |
| I feel ill will toward people I envy. | | | 0.711 |
| Envious feelings cause me to dislike the other person. | | | 0.773 |
| Seeing other people's achievements makes me resent them. | | | 0.793 |
| **Employee Creativity (EC)** | 0.841 | 0.571 | |
| He/She tries new ideas or methods first. | | | 0.713 |
| He/She seeks new ideas and ways to solve problems. | | | 0.783 |
| He/She generates ground-breaking ideas related to the field. | | | 0.663 |
| He/She is a good role model for creativity. | | | 0.844 |
| **Workplace Ostracism (WO)** | 0.926 | 0.556 | |
| Others ignored you at work. | | | 0.776 |
| Others left the area when you entered. | | | 0.771 |
| Your greetings have gone unanswered at work. | | | 0.730 |
| You involuntarily sat alone in a crowded lunchroom at work. | | | 0.693 |
| Others avoided you at work. | | | 0.803 |
| You noticed others would not look at you at work. | | | 0.735 |
| Others at work shut you out of the conversation. | | | 0.747 |
| Others refused to talk to you at work. | | | 0.742 |
| Others at work treated you as if you weren't there. | | | 0.720 |
| Others at work did not invite you or ask you if you wanted anything when they went out for a coffee break. | | | 0.722 |

Note: N = 389; Composite reliability = CR; Average variance extracted = AVE; Factor loadings = FL.

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