RESEARCH ARTICLE

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A multimethod investigation of the interpersonal effects of leader perfectionism and anger expression on employee psychological safety and creativity

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Summary

Heightened competition within and across organizations compels leaders to set inflexibly high standards and to demand creative performance from their employees. Considering recent research on the interpersonal approach to perfectionism and anger expression, we predicted that leaders' perfectionism combined with their anger expression would threaten employees' psychological safety and creative effort that, in turn, would diminish their creative performance. To test our predictions, we designed three multimethod studies: (1) a preregistered memory reconstruction study, (2) a preregistered laboratory experiment, and (3) a multi-wave and multi-source field study. We found convergent evidence that leaders' anger expressions exacerbate the negative indirect influence of their perfectionism on employees' creative performance via psychological safety and creative effort. We conclude by discussing the interpersonal consequences of leader perfectionism in the workplace.

KEYWORDS
anger expression, creativity, emotion as social information, interpersonal effects, perfectionism, psychological safety

1 | INTRODUCTION

Perfectionism, a personality characteristic that encapsulates extremely high performance standards and overly critical evaluations (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991), is on the rise in organizations owing in part to the hyper competitive economic landscape across the industrialized world (Curran & Hill, 2019). Horney (1950) describes perfectionism as the "tyranny of the shoulds" (p. 50) insofar as perfectionists exhibit reticence to failures, hypersensitivity to criticisms, and

reassurance-seeking. Organizational scholars are increasingly interested in the implications of perfectionism in the workplace (Harari et al., 2018); however, the focus of theory and empirical investigations to date has been limited to its intrapersonal consequences (i.e., the influence of an individual's perfectionism on their own intentions, experiences, and behaviors) (see Childs & Stoeber, 2012; Hill & Curran, 2016; Stoeber & Damian, 2016). Indeed, extant longitudinal and meta-analytic investigations (Ocampo et al., 2020) demonstrate the influence of this trait on an employee's own job performance

(e.g., productivity, work effort), job attitudes (e.g., satisfaction, work efficacy), and well-being (e.g., stress, burnout) in organizations.

Notwithstanding its importance for understanding work attitudes and behaviors, the intrapersonal perspective continues to represent the prevailing paradigm in perfectionism research. While relevant, this perspective overlooks the potential for perfectionism to exert interpersonal influence on other individuals. As work becomes increasingly interdependent in organizations (Courtright et al., 2015), an individual's perfectionism may also impinge on others and shape their work experiences. Therefore, taking an interpersonal approach to perfectionism (i.e., how perfectionism as an individual trait may evoke feelings and thought processes that incentivize or deter others' behaviors) complements such intrapersonal focus. This approach broadens our understanding of the range and type of effects perfectionism yields on others within organizations.

Aligned with this logic, we focus on how a leader's perfectionism influences their employees. Two factors prompt our attention to perfectionism in leader-follower dyads. First, leaders are often endowed with formal authority to manage and monitor the performance of their followers within the organizational setting. Decades of research on leadership (Bono & Judge, 2004) demonstrate that a leader's personality can have a pronounced impact on the work experiences of their employees. Second, scholars suggest that perfectionism encompasses an interpersonal dimension (Flett et al., 2016; Hewitt et al., 2003). Perfectionists not only hold themselves to impossible standards but also impose perfection on others, implying that leaders high on perfectionism may in fact expect and demand their employees to achieve perfection (Guo et al., 2020; Otto et al., 2021). Accordingly, we expect the interpersonal effect of perfectionism to be the most visible and consequential in the relationship between leaders and followers. Taken together, we heed the call made by Ocampo et al. (2020) for a systematic investigation of the interpersonal consequences of leader perfectionism on employee work outcomes.

One significant interpersonal consequence of a leader's perfectionism is the impact it has on the creativity of their employees. Amabile (1983) defines creativity as the generation of novel and useful ideas regarding products, processes, and procedures. While organizations are placing more importance on espousing creativity (Lua et al., 2024), the level of creativity exhibited by employees is greatly influenced by their work environment, particularly by the traits and behaviors of their leaders (Hughes et al., 2018). Developing this notion, some recent work begins to suggest that a leader's perfectionism may stimulate the creativity of their followers. For example, Xu et al. (2022) in a recent article found that leaders' perfectionism fosters employees' creativity by way of increasing their task engagement, provided that the leader's perfectionism is not excessive, and employees do not have high external locus of control. They argued that inherent in leaders' perfectionism is their dissatisfaction with the status quo and their desire to pursue superior performance. To meet their expectations, employees exhibit greater task engagement, which in turn leads to the production of more creative output. Thus, these findings suggest that perfectionist leaders can increase employee creativity because their high standards impose challenges that motivate learning.

Considering the foregoing arguments of Xu et al. (2022), research from Van Kleef et al. (2010) also indicates that a leader's anger expression can spark creativity when employees exhibit a desire to obtain an accurate understanding of their leaders' intentions. If we were to follow these lines of reasoning, then it can be assumed that the potential for leader perfectionism to enhance follower creativity could be augmented when such leaders are willing to express anger toward subpar creative output from followers. This is because when their leaders express anger, followers may be further motivated to raise their work effort and performance (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Van Knippenberg & Van Kleef, 2016). To illustrate, Walt Disney CEO Robert Iger described his former boss, Roone Arledge, as a relentless perfectionist. Iger recalled, "No detail was too small for Roone. Perfection was the result of getting all the little things right. He would rip up an entire program before it aired and demand the team rework the whole thing, even it meant working till dawn in an editing room…he didn't much care what sacrifice it required to fix it. His commitment to making things great was galvanizing. It was often exhausting, often frustrating…but it was inspiring, too, and the inspiration far outweighed the frustration" (2019; pp. 15–16).

While there is some validity to the claims presented in the previous paragraph, we assert that a perfectionist leader should not be confused and equated with a leader who simply establishes and maintains ambitious creative goals for their employees. Our stance echoes the views of perfectionism scholars who have cautioned that perfectionism is conceptually distinct from mere achievement striving or excellence seeking (for discussion, see Gaudreau, 2019; Goulet-Pelletier et al., 2022). For creativity goals to spur favorable outcomes, employees must internally commit to those goals for success to ensue (Klein et al., 1999; Litchfield, 2008) and the extent to which employees commit to assigned goals rests on a supportive work environment (Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987). Our reasoning is further grounded in a dominant theme in creativity literature, which is to embrace the idea that variation, including misfires, is integral to the creativity process (Campbell, 1960). Indeed, creativity is crucially contingent on trying new things, taking risks, and making mistakes along the way (Kark & Carmeli, 2008). Perfectionist leaders, given their insecurity, inflexibility, and intolerance for mistakes (Hewitt et al., 2017), might fail to foster a safe environment that nurtures creativity.

Consistent with this view, Amabile et al. (1996) assert that a supportive environment is one of the most important factors that facilitates the generation and implementation of creative ideas. Based on this perspective, creativity requires leaders to develop and nurture psychological safety in their workplace, where employees feel trusted, supported, and respected during interactions with them (Edmondson, 1999; Hunter et al., 2007). By contrast, we emphasize that an environment where employees become worried about mistakes and criticisms for their imperfections—while attempting to satisfy the demands of a perfectionist leader—might fail to support creativity (Lin et al., 2023).

Furthermore, leaders frequently display strong emotions in pursuit of their creative endeavors, often displaying anger to mobilize or admonish their employees' efforts (Miron-Spektor et al., 2011). Research on anger has produced more sophisticated and nuanced understandings, suggesting that employees may react both positively and negatively to a

leader's anger expression depending on a variety of factors (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007). Although employees may occasionally enhance their work motivation in response to their leader's anger, it is important to note that anger expressed by leaders can also produce negative feelings during leader-follower interactions, thereby diminishing the leader's ability to influence employees effectively (Wang et al., 2018). This raises questions about whether anger expressed by perfectionist leaders can motivate employees to seek creative solutions.

Against this background, our research combines perspectives on the interpersonal approach to perfectionism (Ocampo et al., 2020) and anger expression (Van Kleef et al., 2004) to examine how a leader's perfectionism and anger expression might interact to hinder employees' creativity. Advancing our argument, our key prediction is that a leader's perfectionism is likely to compromise employees' psychological safety. Employees may be discouraged from attempting new ideas and investing effort that are essential in facilitating creative performance. Further, we predict that this indirect effect will be especially salient when the leader simultaneously expresses anger towards employees (Figure 1), as anger expressed by a perfectionist leader is likely to be construed as unwarranted and threatening.

We make three main contributions to organizational research on perfectionism. First, our research provides evidence to substantiate claims that a leader's perfectionism influences their employees' effort and performance (Lin et al., 2023; Wigert et al., 2012). By incorporating insights from perfectionism scholarship (Curran & Hill, 2019) into a rich research tradition that examines the interpersonal consequences of leaders' traits on employees (Judge et al., 2009), we broaden our knowledge base on the workplace implications of leader perfectionism. Specifically, we highlight the nature and extent to which leader perfectionism encompasses its influence on employees' creativity. Considering the escalating prevalence of perfectionism in organizational settings (Harari et al., 2018; Ocampo et al., 2020), our research offers new and important evidence into the far-reaching ramifications of perfectionism. We therefore underscore the significant role that leader perfectionism plays on the quality of the interpersonal environment in organizations, which may indirectly influence other employees' attitudes, cognition, and behaviors.

Second, our research rectifies emerging trends in management literature that construes perfectionism as excellence-seeking or setting of high goals (Gaudreau, 2019; Xu et al., 2022). While perfectionist leaders may appear to be driven by the goal of prioritizing and demanding task perfection from their employees, these behaviors are merely mirages that are manifestations of deeper pathologies (Flett & Hewitt, 2006). We emphasize that the essence of perfectionism lies not in the pursuit of high work standards, but in an individual's incessant need for social acceptance and inability to experience satisfaction even when success is achieved (Sherry et al., 2016). Perfectionists set high standards to overcome and conceal feelings of inadequacies and self-doubts (Adler, 1956; Flett et al., 2014). As a result, this pathological trait in leaders is likely to create a work environment that detrimentally affects the psychological safety of followers, ultimately hindering their creativity. Indeed, our research demonstrates that when leaders rigidly demand perfection, employees tend to perceive a decrease in psychological safety.

Third, our research resolves criticisms that organizational research on perfectionism has overlooked the social functions of leader emotional displays (Ocampo et al., 2020). To do so, we examine the joint influence of leader perfectionism and anger expression in predicting employees' psychological safety and creativity. Building on emotion as social information framework (EASI; Van Kleef, 2009), we integrate research on perfectionism and leader anger expression to demonstrate that a leader's perfectionism influences the way employees interpret and react to their leader's anger expression. Although leaders' anger expression can sometimes serve as a catalyst for employees to undertake constructive changes in their work (Van Kleef et al., 2011), we show that when a leader exhibits strong perfectionistic tendencies, employees are more likely to experience adverse consequences in response to the leader's anger. Thus, we demonstrate the detrimental effects that can arise from the combination of leader perfectionism and
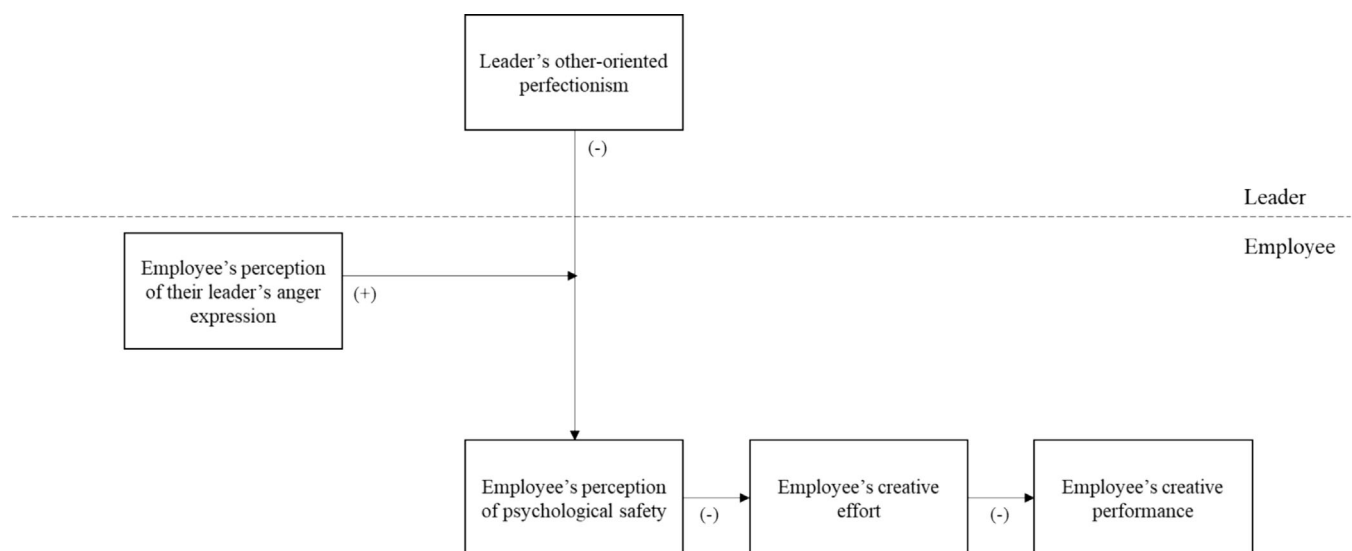

FIGURE 1 Conceptual cross-level model.

expressions of anger. This amalgamation compromises psychological safety and impedes creative effort and subsequent performance.

2 | THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 | Leader perfectionism, psychological safety, and employee creativity

According to Hewitt and Flett (1991), perfectionism as a personality trait can be directed toward the self and others. Within this view, when excessive striving for perfection is directed toward the self, leaders tend to impose exacting standards for themselves and to show punitive self-evaluations (*self-oriented perfectionism*). When perfectionistic standards are perceived to be prescribed by others, leaders tend to exert pressure on themselves to appear perfect (*socially prescribed perfectionism*). Moreover, when perfectionistic standards are imposed on others, leaders tend to place high importance on others' ability to attain perfection and to evaluate them stringently (*other-oriented perfectionism*).

Building on recent organizational research on perfectionism (Rice & Liu, 2020; Shoss et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2022), we investigate the interpersonal impact of leaders' other-oriented perfectionism (hereafter OOP) on employees' creativity. The literature on perfectionism suggests that high-OOP leaders (who, by definition, are characterized by their propensity to demand flawless work from others in an entitled manner) can be expected to display a conversational tone that is akin to interrogation when employees commit a mistake, no matter how minor it may be (Kleszewski & Otto, 2020). High-OOP leaders exhibit behavior indicative of intolerance of errors, making employees infer that it is unsafe to provide honest feedback, to collaborate, or to report mistakes (i.e., because imperfections may result in negative responses from their leaders, see Carmeli et al., 2010). Such leaders may also blame, chastise, or penalize those whose work is perceived to be flawed or imperfect (Robinson, 2000).

In general, perfectionists demand flawless performance not to impose harm on others but to obtain social approval and acceptance (Hewitt et al., 2017). Ironically, perfectionists often exhibit rebarbative interpersonal characteristics and behaviors that prompt others to perceive them as unreasonable and inconsiderate (Stoeber et al., 2017). OOP is associated with elevated social dominance tendency to exercise power over others by forcing them to comply to their wishes and by instilling fear in them (Shim & Fletcher, 2012). Additional findings indicate that relative to other dimensions of perfectionism, OOP is positively linked with aggressive humor, uncaring traits, and individualistic orientation, and is also negatively associated with prosocial orientation (Stoeber, 2015). It is therefore not surprising that high-OOP individuals are less inclined to promote adaptive social behaviors (i.e., those that involve social development, nurturance, and intimacy), explaining their reduced likelihood to get along with others (Stoeber, 2014). Based on this view, we posit that the leader's perfectionism-related tendencies can have an impact on the employees' interpersonal environment. Specifically, high-OOP leaders may foster an atmosphere at work where employees exhibit reluctance toward exploring new ideas, taking risks, trying different solutions, or experimenting with novel ways of doing things.

Employees' perceptions of the interpersonal environment in their workplace are influenced by what their leaders think and prioritize (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Judge et al., 2002). Applying this logic to our research, employees who perceive their leader to be intolerant of even the most minute mistakes may have jeopardized their experience of psychological safety. Edmondson (1999) describes psychological safety as an individual's perception of the consequences of taking risks when engaging in activities that promote creativity (e.g., experimenting, obtaining unexpected outcomes of actions, and seeking feedback on mistakes). Individuals who view their work environments as psychologically safe believe that they will not be rejected or punished for taking risks or making mistakes and that their efforts in trying new things will be respected and supported. Thus, we propose that perfectionist leaders' rigid performance expectations are likely to facilitate a psychologically unsafe work environment, whereby employees are hesitant to exert effort in exploring creative solutions. Employees who are situated in psychologically unsafe environments tend to be fixated with producing flawless work, which ultimately deters their creative pursuit (Kark & Carmeli, 2008).

To examine the indirect influence of leaders' OOP on employees' creativity, we follow the recommendations of Hirst et al. (2009) by analyzing the impact of psychological safety on employees' creativity in two ways: (1) creative effort, defined by Zhang and Bartol (2010) as the proactive pursuit and learning of new ideas, and then (2) creative performance, defined by Amabile et al. (1996) as "the production of novel and useful ideas" (p. 1155). This approach allows us to provide a comprehensive assessment of creativity both subjectively (i.e., self-rated creative effort and performance) and objectively (i.e., expert-rated and leader-rated creative performance of the employee).

As Brammer et al. (2015) note, while creative effort is the input of the creative process, creative performance is the output of the process. Hirst et al. (2009) suggest further that creative effort serves as a basis of creative performance as individuals engaging in higher creative effort are especially motivated to search for new information and approaches. They show increased persistence and resilience to obtain relevant knowledge and ideas when faced with difficulties (Chen et al., 2015), such as working with an exacting leader who expects perfection. Eventually, those who exert effort to be creative and insist on generating numerous ideas are likely to deliver creative outcomes (Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

> **Hypothesis 1.** Leader OOP relates negatively to employees' creative performance through the serial mediating influence of employees' perceptions of lessened psychological safety and lowered creative effort, respectively.

2.2 | Interactive effects of leader OOP and anger expression

To this end, we have proposed that a leader's OOP can negatively affect how employees experience their interpersonal environment in the workplace. Specifically, a leader's OOP is likely to be related with the extent to which employees feel psychologically unsafe. Building on recent research on leader emotions (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Van Knippenberg & Van Kleef, 2016; Wang et al., 2018), we further suggest that this relationship will be stronger to the extent that perfectionist leaders frequently express anger to their followers. That is, we argue that the likelihood of anger expression by leaders will exacerbate the prediction of Hypothesis 1.

Leaders' nonverbal communications are critical social signals that impact the way employees experience the work environment (Ashkanasy, 2003; Judge et al., 2002). Anger is a powerful emotion that, when expressed by leaders, can become a highly salient and disruptive affective event in employees' work life (Gaddis et al., 2004; Geddes et al., 2020; Gibson & Callister, 2010). Traditionally, a leader's anger expression in the workplace has been regarded as an inappropriate form of aggression, consistently resulting in destructive outcomes in the workplace (Allred, 1999; Wang et al., 2012). However, the EASI model (Van Kleef, 2009) offers a more nuanced and comprehensive perspective on the interpersonal influence of a leader's anger expression. This model rejects the narrow and oversimplified view that anger expression is the same as aggression, which consequently always results in detrimental outcomes. On the contrary, it asserts that employees may react positively or negatively to a leader's anger, offering a theoretical rationale for the mechanisms underlying these contradictory responses.

Based on EASI theory, the interpersonal influence of leaders' anger expression on employees occurs through two distinct pathways: (1) inferential and (2) affective. The inferential pathway proposes that a leader's emotion expression may convey diagnostic task-relevant information that helps employees accurately assess whether their present work effort and performance satisfies their leaders' expectations (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Thus, insofar as a leader's expression of anger elicits inferential processing in their employees, a leader's anger can provide employees with valuable insights that enhance their task effort and performance. As an illustration, employees may come to the realization through their leaders' anger display that their prior task performance lacks creativity and, if perpetuated, could render their earlier efforts futile, jeopardizing a significant possibility for success.

Conversely, the affective pathway captures visceral and emotional reactions to leaders' anger that often leads to dysfunctional outcomes. Via the affective pathway, followers are not motivated to process and understand their leaders' anger and how it relates to their own task effort and performance. Rather, leaders' anger expression has an affective impact on the followers. Specifically, leaders' anger elicits negative emotional responses from employees primarily in the form of distress and anxiety (e.g., Gaddis et al., 2004; Johnson, 2009), with few positive outcomes.

Research derived from EASI theory further articulated the various factors that can influence the probability of employees' response to a leader's expression of anger. One facet of the research has been on the characteristics of leaders in shaping observers' interpretations of their anger expression, such as leaders' gender (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Lewis, 2000), occupational status (Lindebaum et al., 2016), and perceived integrity (Shao, 2019). Specifically, previous studies have indicated that an abusive supervisory style can influence how subordinates react to a leader's expression of anger (Wang et al., 2018). If leaders are viewed as being abusive, employees are less likely to engage in diagnostic task-relevant inferential processing of their leader's anger and subsequently use this information to inform their own task motivation. This work emphasizes that within the workplace, employees consider the leaders' styles and characteristics when formulating their reaction to leaders' expression of anger.

In accordance with this reasoning, we propose that employees' response to their leader's perfectionism would depend on their interpretation of their leader's anger expression. High-OOP leaders' anger expression is likely to be attributed by employees to the leaders' unreasonable and impossible perfectionistic standards, rather than to their own task effort or performance. This will effectively prevent employees from using the inferential pathway to interpret their leaders' anger constructively. Instead, employees are more likely to respond to their leaders' anger in an affective manner, resulting in feelings of anxiety and fear regarding potential mistakes (however minor or inconsequential the mistake might be). This response would further solidify employees' conviction that their interpersonal environment lacks the psychological safety necessary to experiment with new approaches, question existing ways of doing things, or undertake risks to try new solutions (as all these activities could be fraught with mistakes).

Integrating this evidence with our reasoning behind Hypothesis 1, we posit that a leader's OOP, in conjunction with the leader's anger expression, reduce employees' psychological safety that will, in turn, reduce their creative effort for generating new ideas, and eventually impede their creative performance (Amabile et al., 2005). This logic is supported in studies by Van Kleef and his associates (2010) where, while not focusing specifically on psychological safety, the authors found that employees with low epistemic motivation (i.e., the desire to develop an accurate understanding of the situation) are likely to disengage in creative pursuits when confronted with angry feedback from their leaders. To summarize, we propose that leader perfectionism and anger expression can increase the strength of the negative link between perfectionism and employees' perceptions of psychological safety. In turn, this combination further amplifies withdrawal of their creative effort (since they are more focused on appeasing the perfectionist leaders to avoid being the target of their outburst), thereby reducing creative performance.

> **Hypothesis 2.** Employees' perception of their leader's anger expression exacerbates the indirect negative effect of leader OOP on their creative performance by, in turn, diminishing their perceptions of psychological safety and their creative effort.

3 | OVERVIEW OF THE THREE STUDIES

To test our hypotheses, we conducted three studies using different methodological approaches. All the studies we report in this research received ethics clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee of The Australian National University (Protocol Number: 2017/506). We also preregistered the design and analyses of Studies 1 and 2. All analysis code and research materials are available on the Open Science Framework (OSF; https://osf.io/nyb6c). In Study 1, we asked participants to recall an interaction with a leader who exhibited OOP and expressed anger. In Study 2, via a laboratory experiment, we manipulated leader OOP as well as leader anger expression and examined its causal and serial effects on psychological safety and the two indices of creativity: creative effort and creative performance. Finally, to test our hypotheses in a real-world setting, we employed in Study 3 a multi-wave and multi-source field study to examine correlations between leader OOP, leader anger expression, psychological safety, and creative effort and performance.

4 | STUDY 1: MEMORY RECONSTRUCTION STUDY

In this first study, we aimed to test our theorizing by examining the indirect causal effect of leader OOP on employee creative performance via employee psychological safety and creative effort and by investigating whether leader expressed anger moderates the first stage of this sequential causal mediation effect (i.e., from leader perfectionism and employee psychological safety). The technique involves asking participants to recall and to reconstruct a specific and recent incident. It aligns with our theory as it captures the participants' actual experience working with a high (low) OOP leader who expressed (did not express) anger. We instructed the participants to recall and reconstruct an actual incident that they had experienced in real life, eliminating the potential to rely on their imagination of working with a hypothetical perfectionist and/or angry leader. Recalling and visualizing a perfectionist and angry leader could trigger other experiences and incidents associated with interacting with a perfectionist and angry leader. Thus, our methodology captures the consistent and stable aspect of the leader perfectionism construct.

4.1 | Participants and procedure

We sought to recruit a minimum of 200 participants following the effect size estimates on workplace perfectionism research reported in Harari et al. (2018) and to account for participant inattentiveness and dropout rates (Hauser & Schwarz, 2016). In the end, a total of 229 working adults (48.03% female; $M_{age} = 39.10$; $SD_{age} = 12.34$), who reside in the United States and reported English as their native language, received US$12/h via Cloud Research for their participation (Litman et al., 2017). The participants have completed more than 100 studies and have provided legitimate answers in at least 95% of the completed studies. The participants worked in a variety of job roles including education, general management, customer service, and information technology ($M_{tenure} = 18.72$; $SD_{tenure} = 11.57$). A sensitivity power analysis (G*Power; Faul et al., 2009) using a two-tailed t-test with a sample of 229 participants and power of 80% revealed a small effect size of $d = 0.18$ (at $\alpha = .05$).

We combined the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) with a 2 (high vs. low leader OOP) × 2 (anger expression vs. neutral expression) factorial design. Participants first recalled a current or previous supervisor who could be characterized as either high or low in OOP (randomly assigned). Participants then recalled a specific and recent interaction with a leader (who judged their work to be "imperfect") who expressed angry or neutral emotions (randomly assigned) during the interaction. To maximize the realism of the recall experience and to increase ecological validity, we followed the principles set out in the daily reconstruction method guidelines endorsed by Kahneman et al. (2004). We asked participants to recall, visualize, and describe all the details about the interaction (e.g., exactly what happened, the task details) and to provide additional vivid daily life details from the day when the interaction occurred (e.g., other activities or tasks the participants did on that day). Immediately after the reconstruction task, participants provided ratings of their psychological safety, creative effort, and creative performance. Finally, participants completed manipulation checks and reported demographics.

4.2 | Leader OOP manipulation

Consistent with the OOP measures by Hewitt and Flett (1991) and Goldberg (1999), we randomly assigned participants to recall either a high or low leader OOP (see Appendix A).

4.3 | Leader anger expression manipulation

We also randomly assigned participants to recall an interaction in which their supervisor either expressed anger or remained emotionally neutral when they did not meet their supervisors' performance expectation (Schaubroeck & Shao, 2012; Wang et al., 2018) (see Appendix A).

5 | MEASURES

We used 7-point Likert-style response scales (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) presented in counterbalanced order. We measured psychological safety with Edmondson and Mogelof's (2005) four-item measure (e.g., "When working with this leader, I can raise challenging ideas in a constructive way."; $\alpha = .93$), creative effort using four items from Baer and Oldham (2006; e.g., "Suggesting many creative ideas that might improve working conditions with this supervisor."; $\alpha = .97$), and creative performance using four items with the highest factor

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Leader OOP	0.49	0.50					
2. Leader anger expression	0.49	0.50	−.01				
3. Psychological safety	4.62	1.55	−.25***	−.33***	(.93)		
4. Creative effort	4.57	1.80	−.27***	−.24***	.58***	(.97)	
5. Creative performance	4.33	1.36	−.28***	−.17**	.43***	.66***	(.90)

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics and correlation in Study 1.

Note: N = 229. The numbers in parentheses on the diagonal of the table are Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

Abbreviations: OOP, other-oriented perfectionism; SD, standard deviation.

**p < .01, and ***p < .001.

loadings from Tierney et al. (1999, 2011; "e.g., Generating novel, but operable work-related ideas."; $\alpha = .90$).

6 | RESULTS

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for Study 1.

6.1 | Leader OOP manipulation check

On a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), participants rated the leader's OOP using the 7-item scale developed by Hewitt and Flett (1991) and Goldberg (1999). The items (e.g., "The supervisor/leader had very high standards for me.") showed good reliability ($\alpha = .85$) and were thus averaged to create a leader OOP score. Supporting the effectiveness of the leader OOP manipulation, compared to those in the low leader OOP condition, participants in the high leader OOP condition recalled that their leader exhibited significantly greater OOP ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.02$) compared to those in the low leader OOP condition ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.36$), $F(1, 227) = 118.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .34$.

6.2 | Leader anger expression manipulation check

Using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *a great deal*), participants reported the extent to which the leader expressed four anger-related emotions during the specific interaction they had just recalled, namely, anger, frustration, annoyance, and irritation. These four items showed good reliability ($\alpha = .97$) and were thus averaged to create a leader anger expression score.[1] The participants in the anger expression condition reported the leader displayed significantly higher anger ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.60$) compared to those in the neutral expression condition ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.58$), $F(1, 227) = 156.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .41$, supporting the effectiveness of the leader anger expression manipulation.

6.3 | Interaction between leader OOP and leader anger expression

Results also revealed a significant interaction between leader OOP and leader anger expression in predicting psychological safety, $F(3, 225) = 17.47$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$. As Figure 2 shows, in the high leader anger expression condition, participants reported significantly lower psychological safety for high-OOP leaders ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.59$) compared to low-OOP leaders ($M = 4.66$, SD = 1.28), $F(1, 111) = 18.18$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .14$. In contrast, in the leader neutral expression condition, participants reported non-significant differences in psychological safety between high-OOP leaders ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.43$) and low-OOP leaders ($M = 5.34$, $SD = 1.32$; $F[1, 115] = 3.02$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$).

6.4 | The moderated sequential mediation model

We used the Mplus 7.0 software (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) to test whether leader OOP (*low* = −1, *high* = +1) predicts employee creative performance via psychological safety and employee creative effort. Table 2 presents the path analysis results. Results revealed a significant indirect effect, *indirect effect* = −.17, $CI_{95\%} = [−.38, −.02]$, $p < .05$, supporting Hypothesis 1. Furthermore, we tested whether a leader's anger expression moderates the first stage of the above sequential mediation. Results show that, for the leader anger expression condition, the sequential mediation is significant, *indirect effect* = −.44, $CI_{95\%} = [−.72, −.17]$, $p < .05$. When the leader displayed neutral expression, however, we found the sequential mediation to be non-significant, *indirect effect* = −.17, $CI_{95\%} = [−.38, .04]$, $p > .05$. Moreover, the moderated serial mediation effect was also significant, *indirect effect* = −.27, $CI_{95\%} = [−.56, −.02]$, $p < .05$. These findings support Hypothesis 2.

7 | DISCUSSION

In Study 1, using a memory reconstruction paradigm, we found evidence to support both of our hypotheses. Regarding Hypothesis 1, we found that leader OOP reduces psychological safety, which in turn lowers participants' creative effort and finally influences their

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[1]While an alpha >.95 can be indicative of item redundancy (Boyle, 1991), in this instance, we were specifically expecting a highly correlated set of negative emotions.

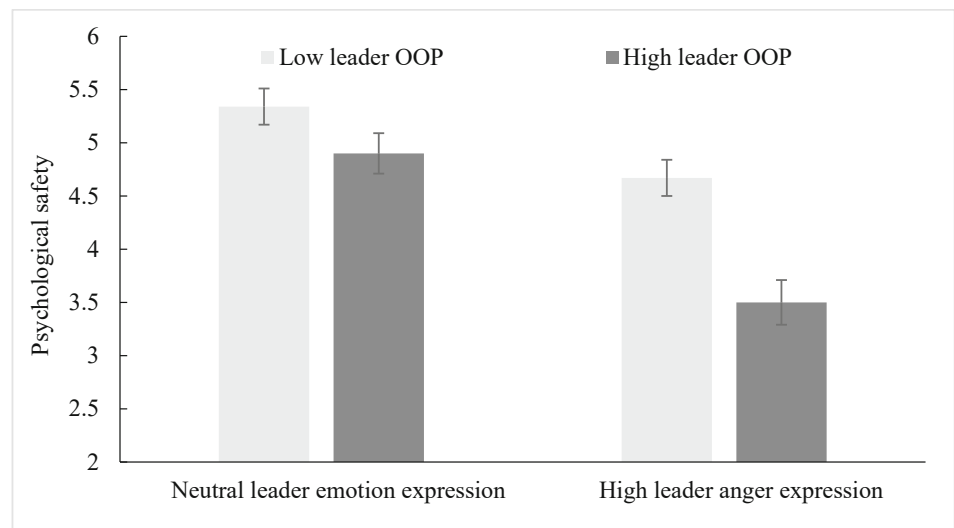**FIGURE 2** Interaction between leader other-oriented perfectionism (OOP) and leader anger expression (Study 1).

TABLE 2 Path analysis results in Study 1.

Variables	Psychological safety	Creative effort	Creative performance
Independent variable			
Leader OOP	−.44	−.31	−.29[*]
Mediators			
Psychological safety		.84[***]	.04
Creative effort			.46[***]
Moderator			
Leader anger expression (LAE)	−.69[**]		
Interaction term			
Leader OOP × LAE	−.71[*]		
R^2	.19	.33	.45

Note: N = 229.

Abbreviation: OOP, other-oriented perfectionism.

[*]$p < .05$, [**]$p < .01$, and [***]$p < .001$.

creative performance. Supporting Hypothesis 2, anger expressed by the leader moderates this process, such that the indirect negative relationship between leader OOP and employees' creativity (via employee perceptions of psychological safety and reduced creative effort) is significant only when the leader is seen by employees to be expressing anger towards them. Despite these findings, we acknowledge that memory limitations may have prevented our participants from providing accurate recollections of details of past events. Thus, we designed Study 2 to replicate the findings obtained in Study 1.

8 | STUDY 2: LABORATORY EXPERIMENT

Study 2 has two main objectives. First, we aimed to demonstrate the causal relationship of the study variables and to eliminate the effects of any potential third variables (Highhouse, 2007). Second, we aimed to consolidate our findings from Study 1 by confirming the conditional indirect effects of leader OOP on employee creativity. To do so, we

designed a pre-registered lab experiment where we manipulated leader OOP and anger expression and employed an objective assessment of creative performance.

8.1 | Participants and procedure

We recruited 119 business and psychology undergraduates (57.98% female; $M_{age} = 22.74$; $SD_{age} = 7.00$) at a private university in the Philippines to participate voluntarily in a lab experiment for course credit. A sensitivity power analysis revealed that with this sample size and with 80% power, we were able to detect a small-to-medium effect size of $d = .25$ (at $\alpha = .05$) using two-tailed t-tests. Consistent with Study 1, we adopted a 2 (high vs. low leader OOP) × 2 (leader anger expression vs. leader neutral expression) between-subject design where participants were randomly assigned to one of the experimental conditions. Participants were told that they were to be paired with another participant via the computer and that they would

be required to complete two different tasks that involve generating creative solutions to problems (e.g., Madjar & Oldham, 2006). We included two tasks because the first task gives us the opportunity to manipulate leader perfectionism and anger expression, whereas the second task allows us to have a "clean" measure to assess participants' creative effort and performance after being exposed to leader's OOP and anger expression (see Appendix B). We told participants that, between them and their partner, one will be randomly assigned to assume the role of the leader and the other the subordinate. In fact, all the participants were always assigned as the subordinate, and all communications from the "leader" were computer simulated and prescripted. We told the participants that their "leader" will select the task, provide feedback, and evaluate their performance.

Before working on the first task, participants received a message via computer from their "leader" that contained the leader OOP manipulation. The participants then completed the first task, which involved creating new names for a local band (Grant & Berry, 2011). Two minutes after the participants submitted the solutions to the first task, they received a message containing feedback from their "leader" that captured the leader's anger expression manipulation. After reading the feedback, participants reported their psychological safety and creative effort; they then proceeded to complete the second task, which involved generating ideas to improve the teaching quality of a local university (Deng et al., 2019). We used participants' effort and performance on this creative task as our dependent variable. Finally, participants completed manipulation checks and reported demographics.

8.2 | Leader OOP manipulation

To simulate the two levels of leader OOP, we used the technique developed by Xu and her collaborators (2022; see Appendix B).

8.3 | Leader anger expression manipulation

After the participants submitted the solutions to the first task, they received feedback from their "leader." The participants in the leader neutral expression condition received the following message: "Your ideas and solutions can still be improved." According to previous research (Choi & Aizawa, 2019), full capitalization of negative feedback statements in boldface followed by multiple punctuation marks can effectively convey anger (Henderson et al., 2004; Kruger et al., 2005). Thus, participants in the leader anger expression condition received the following message: "Your ideas and solutions can still be improved. I AM QUITE FRUSTRATED AND ANNOYED AT THE QUALITY OF YOUR IDEAS. **PLEASE TRY AGAIN**!!!!!!!!"

9 | MEASURES

As in Study 1, we used 7-point Likert-style response scales (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) presented in counterbalanced order to measure *psychological safety* (Edmondson & Mogelof, 2005; α = .89) and *creative effort* (Baer & Oldham, 2006; α = .95).

To assess *creative performance*, we used consensual assessment technique by asking expert judges to rate participants' creativity on the second task completed by the participants, which asked them to include teaching quality (Amabile et al., 1996; Deng et al., 2019). Two judges (who held advanced degrees in psychology and education) and were blind to the hypotheses and experimental conditions) independently rated participants' overall creativity on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; Madjar & Shalley, 2008; Perry-Smith, 2014).

To ensure between-judge reliability, we asked the judges to independently rate the creative performance of ten randomly selected participants (Zhou, 1998). The judges also convened to discuss and to resolve any discrepancies in their rating approach. The interrater reliabilities and agreements (median r_{wg} = .88 and mean r_{wg} = .89) were acceptable. We averaged the judges' ratings on all ideas for each participant to form a total creative score. Examples of teaching ideas rated most creative included providing icebreakers at the start of each lecture and integrating lessons with current events. The least creative ideas included using PowerPoint presentations in lectures and hiring competent teachers.

10 | RESULTS

Table 3 displays descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for Study 2.

10.1 | Leader OOP manipulation check

Using a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), participants rated the "leader" using the 7-item scale from Hewitt and Flett (1991) and Goldberg (1999). Sample items include the following: "Based on your experience in this study, how would you rate the leader you worked with?" and "My leader demanded perfection from me." (α = .92). Participants in the high-OOP conditions reported significantly higher leader OOP (M = 5.91, SD = 1.21) compared to those in the low leader OOP conditions (M = 5.03, SD = 1.53), F (1, 118) = 12.01, p < .01, η^2 = .09.

10.2 | Leader anger expression manipulation check

Using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *a great deal*), participants reported the extent to which the leader expressed anger, frustration, annoyance, and irritation (α = .97) when providing feedback to the participants' performance in the first task. Participants in the leader anger expression conditions reported that the leader expressed more anger (M = 5.84, SD = 1.10) compared to those in the leader neutral expression conditions (M = 2.50, SD = 1.60), F(1, 117) = 167.80, p < .001, η^2 = .59.

TABLE 3 Descriptive statistics and correlation in Study 2.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Leader perfectionism concern	0.49	0.50					
2. Leader anger expression	0.45	0.50	−.01				
3. Psychological safety	3.84	1.44	−.24**	−.35***	(.89)		
4. Creative effort	4.59	1.49	−.19*	−.41***	.63***	(.95)	
5. Creative performance	5.02	1.03	−.00	−.12	.16	.31**	(.86)

Note: N = 119. The numbers in parentheses on the diagonal of the table are Cronbach's alpha coefficients.
*p < .05, **p < .01, and ***p < .001.

10.3 | Test of the interaction of leader OOP and anger expression

Results revealed a significant interaction between leader OOP and leader anger expression in predicting subordinate psychological safety, $F(3, 115) = 10.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$. Compared to low-OOP leader anger expression ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.52$), participants reported significantly lower psychological safety when high-OOP leaders expressed anger ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.23$), $F(1, 53) = 12.07$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .19$. In contrast, when the leader expressed neutral expression, participants reported non-significant differences in their level of psychological safety across high ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.15$) and low ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 1.23$) leader OOP, $F(1, 64) = 0.39$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$ (see Figure 3).

10.4 | Test of the moderated sequential mediation model

We used the Mplus 7.0 software (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) to test whether leader OOP ($low = -1$, $high = +1$) influences employee creative performance via psychological safety and creative effort. Table 4 presents the path analysis results. Findings revealed a significant sequential indirect effect, *indirect effect* $= -.08$, $CI_{95\%} = [-.25, -.02]$, $p < .05$), rendering support for Hypothesis 1. Furthermore, we tested whether a leader's anger expression would moderate the first stage of the sequential mediation. The results showed that, when the leader expressed anger, the sequential mediation is significant, *indirect effect* $= -.31$, $CI_{95\%} = [-.57, -.04]$, $p < .05$. In contrast, when the leader did not express anger, the sequential mediation is not significant, *indirect effect* $= -.08$, $CI_{95\%} = [-.27, .09]$, $p > .05$. Moreover, we found the moderated serial mediation effect also to be significant, *indirect effect* $= -.23$, $CI_{95\%} = [-.48, -.02]$, $p < .05$. Consistent with Study 1, these results support Hypothesis 2.

11 | DISCUSSION

The findings of Study 2 replicated the results of Study 1, showing support for our theoretical model. Specifically, and consistent with our hypotheses, we found that leader OOP influences employee creative performance sequentially via employee psychological safety and creative effort, and this negative sequential mediation effect is enhanced when employees perceive the leader to express high (vs. neutral) anger.

12 | STUDY 3: MULTI-WAVE AND MULTI-SOURCE FIELD STUDY

So far, via two studies that employed memory reconstruction and laboratory methods respectively, we established the causal effects of leader OOP and leader anger expression on employee psychological safety, creative effort, and creative performance. While we demonstrated consistent findings using such contrasting methods in Studies 1 and 2, it remains to be seen nonetheless if we could replicate these effects in a naturally occurring setting. We also acknowledge that leaders may display similar behavioral patterns toward a group of subordinates or they may display different behavioral patterns toward each subordinate (Schriesheim et al., 2006). Thus, in Study 3, we sought to demonstrate ecological validity and generalizability by testing our model in an organizational setting.

12.1 | Participants and procedure

We approached the Human Resources department of a large high-technology company located in Beijing, China, and gained approval to invite team leaders and their corresponding employees to participate voluntarily in a confidential survey study. This company focuses on developing online platforms, offering software maintenance, and providing customers for mobile telecommunication enterprises in China. Given its high-tech focus, we invited all the Research and Development teams of the company, which has a strong emphasis on creativity and innovation, thereby providing a suitable context to conduct our study. All participants were assured that participation would be completely voluntary, and their responses would remain confidential and anonymous.

To minimize methodological issues concerning common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012), we adopted a multi-wave cross-level design and administered all the questionnaires on-site. At Time 1, 68 team leaders who volunteered to participate completed
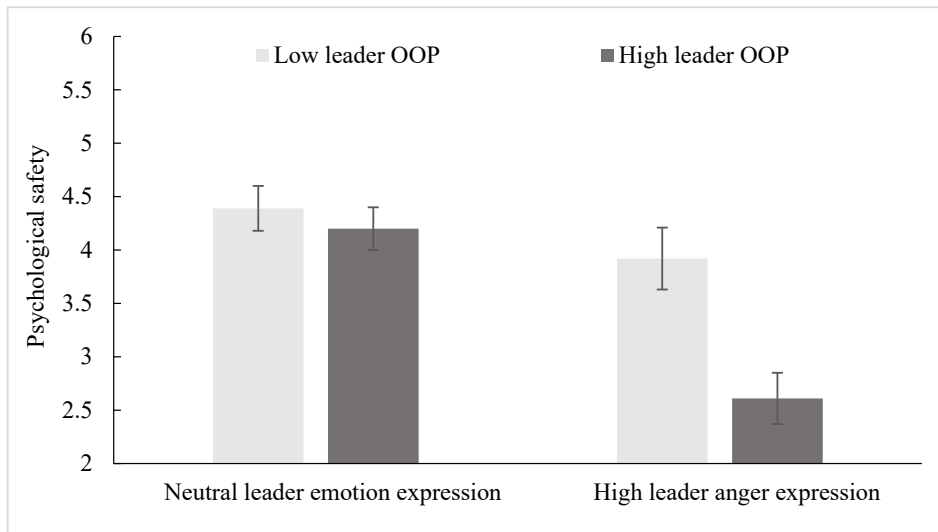
FIGURE 3 Interaction between leader OOP and leader anger expression (Study 2). OOP, other-oriented perfectionism. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

TABLE 4 Path analysis results in Study 2.

Variables	Psychological safety	Creative effort	Creative performance
Independent variable			
Leader OOP	−.30	.18	.11
Mediators			
Psychological safety		1.10***	−.03
Creative effort			.24**
Moderator			
Leader anger expression (LAE)	−.65*		
Interaction term			
Leader OOP × LAE	−.87*		
R^2	.19	.33	.45

Note: $N = 119$.
Abbreviation: OOP, other-oriented perfectionism.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, and ***$p < .001$.

questionnaires reporting their OOP and demographics, while 332 employees who volunteered to participate completed questionnaires assessing their team leader's OOP. At Time 2 (1 month after Time 1), 332 employees who participated in Time 1 rated their team leader's anger expression, psychological safety, creative effort, and demographics. At Time 3 (1 month after Time 2), 61 team leaders rated the creativity of each of their employees.

After matching the responses of the team leaders with their employees, the final sample constituted 61 teams (61 team leaders and 296 employees). Team sizes ranged from 4 to 10 members ($M_{team} = 4.85$; $SD_{team} = 2.32$). The team leaders' ($N_{leaders} = 61$; 28% female, $M_{age} = 40.05$, $SD_{age} = 6.03$, $M_{tenure} = 5.84$, $SD_{tenure} = 1.93$, 68.9% with bachelor's degree or higher) response rate was 89.71%, while the employees' ($N_{members} = 296$; 45% female, $M_{age} = 33.19$, $SD_{age} = 3.88$, $M_{tenure} = 4.07$, $SD_{tenure} = 1.11$, 94.9% with bachelor's degree or higher) was 89.16%.

13 | MEASURES

We prepared all survey items in English and then arranged for two Chinese/English bilingual academics to back-translate them to Chinese to ensure linguistic and contextual appropriateness of the translation (Brislin, 1986). Participants rated all items using 7-point Likert-style scales (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). All materials are found in OSF.

13.1 | Leader OOP

Both leaders and employees rated leader OOP using the 5-item scale developed by Hewitt and Flett (1991). We slightly modified the wording to align with the raters' perspective. Sample items rated by leaders include, "If I asked someone to do something, I expect it to be done

flawlessly" ($\alpha = .94$), while sample items rated by the employees include, "If my supervisor asked someone to do something, s/he expects it to be done flawlessly." ($\alpha = .91$). The results show that the leaders' and employees' ratings are highly correlated ($r = .51$, $p < .001$). Given that using employees' perception can better capture the perfectionistic tendency of leaders in leader-follower interpersonal interactions (Xu et al., 2022), we used employees' responses as the evaluation of leader OOP. [2]

13.2 | Perceived leader anger expression

Following previous research (see Schaubroeck & Shao, 2012), we asked the employees in our sample to complete a 3-item competence-based anger scale (Wang et al., 2018) to assess their leaders' anger expression. A sample item is, "My supervisor is likely to display anger if I lack the ability to perform my job." ($\alpha = .91$).

13.3 | Psychological safety and creativity

The employees in our sample completed the 7-item *psychological safety* measure developed by Edmondson (1999; example item: "If I make a mistake on this team, it will not be held against me."; $\alpha = .89$). Also consistent with the earlier studies, we measured subjective (i.e., creative effort) and objective (i.e., leader-rated creative performance) indicators of creativity. Thus, we asked the employees to complete the *creative effort* measure using the Baer and Oldham (2006) scale. Finally, we asked team leaders to rate their employees' *creative performance* using the Tierney et al. measure (1999, 2011; e.g., "This employee identifies opportunities for new products/process."; $\alpha = .91$) and the three-item creativity measure from Oldham and Cummings (1996; sample item: "How original and practical is this person's work?"; $\alpha = .92$).

13.4 | Control variables[3]

We included five controls to rule out alternative explanations. The first four were demographic variables: leader's age, gender, tenure, and educational level. We controlled for these factors because of past research theorizing that perfectionistic expectations tend to be greater among younger, highly educated females without security of tenure (Ocampo et al., 2020). The fifth was a control for the employees' perceived leader perfectionistic strivings (i.e., the tendency to set high personal standards; Stoeber, 2018). This was to

account for the effect reported by Kalish and Luria (2016), who found that leaders tend to project their own personal standards for high performance when evaluating subordinates. Stoeber (2014) also underscores the necessity to control for other forms of perfectionism when assessing the effects of perfectionism since OOP has shown to have positive correlations with self-oriented perfectionism and personal standards (which may potentially predict the functional outcomes of perfectionism). We therefore measured leader's perfectionistic strivings using 12 items containing personal standards and self-oriented perfectionism subscales ($\alpha = .83$) developed by Frost et al. (1990) and Hewitt and Flett (1991).

14 | RESULTS

Since the leaders and their employees who participated in our study were nested in teams and one leader rated multiple employee creative performance measures, we first calculated the intraclass correlation coefficient for creative performance. Results indicate that team membership (i.e., being rated by the same leader) accounted for 53% (ICC1 = .53) of the total variance of creative performance. Thus, we employed hierarchical linear modelling using STATA 15.0 to test our hypotheses. As for Hypothesis 1, we employed the 1-1-1 model proposed by Zhang et al. (2009). Specifically, we group-mean centered the predictors (i.e., leader OOP, psychological safety, and creative effort) and estimated the within-level mediating effect and simultaneously controlling for the between-level mediating effect to ensure precision of the overall model estimation. As for Hypothesis 2, following the suggestion of Aguinis et al. (2013), we group-mean centered predictors (i.e., leader OOP and leader anger expression) prior to creating the interaction term and applied the random intercept and random slope model to test then moderating effect of leader anger expression. Then, we applied a parametric bootstrapping procedure (Preacher et al., 2007; Preacher & Selig, 2012) to test the significance of the conditional indirect effect.

14.1 | Multilevel confirmatory factor analysis

Given the nested nature of our dataset, we first conducted a multilevel confirmatory factor analysis to assess the factor structure of both within- and between-levels. We specified factor loadings of leader OOP, leader anger expression, psychological safety, creative effort, and creative performance at both within- and between-level. We then compared the hypothesized five-factor measurement model (baseline model) with four alternative models. The statistical indices for the baseline model indicated an adequate model fit (χ^2 [578] = 959.15, χ^2/df = 1.66, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .05, SRMR for within = .04, SRMR for between = .10). In addition, as Table 5 shows, the baseline model demonstrates a better model fit than four alternative models, indicating that all variables are distinct.

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[2]Our results remained the same when team leader OOP rating was used as independent variable (see OSF for details).

[3]The pattern or significance of results remained the same when we removed the control variables from the analyses (Becker, 2005). This suggests that the interaction of leader OOP and employee-rated leader anger expression negatively relates to creative performance via psychological safety and creative effort above and beyond leader demographics and leader ratings of perfectionistic strivings.

TABLE 5 The multilevel confirmatory factor analysis results (Study 3).

Models	χ^2	df	$\chi^2/$df	$\triangle\chi^2$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR for within	SRMR for between
The baseline model: five factors separated	959.15	578	1.66		.95	.94	.05	.04	.10
Four-factor model 1: psychological safety and leader anger expression combined	1468.84	586	2.51	509.69[***]	.87	.86	.07	.10	.32
Four-factor model 2: psychological safety and creativity combined	1828.30	586	3.12	869.15[***]	.82	.80	.09	.11	.17
Four-factor model 3: psychological safety and creative effort combined	2346.10	586	4.00	1386.95[***]	.75	.72	.10	.17	.40
Four-factor model 4: leader other-oriented perfectionism and leader anger expression combined	1871.54	586	3.19	912.39[***]	.81	.79	.09	.13	.26

Note: N = 61 leaders and 296 employees.
[***]p < .001 (two-tailed).

TABLE 6 Means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and correlations (Study 3).

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Within level (N = 296)								
1. Employee perceived leader PS	5.15	0.89	(.83)					
2. Employee perceived leader OOP	5.17	1.18	.10	(.91)				
3. Psychological safety	5.54	1.44	.10	−.25[***]	(.89)			
4. Leader anger expression	4.90	1.29	−.09	.06	−.33[***]	(.91)		
5. Creative effort	5.69	1.29	.02	−.19[**]	.38[***]	−.11	(.91)	
6. Creativity	5.05	1.00	.09	−.16[**]	.30[***]	−.01	.44[***]	(.92)
Between level (N = 61)								
1. Leader gender	0.72	0.45						
2. Leader age	40.05	6.03	−.03					
3. Leader tenure	5.84	1.93	−.03	.10				
4. Leader education	1.84	0.66	.01	−.03	−.05			

Note: N = 61 leaders and 296 employees. Values in parenthesis along the diagonal are reliability estimates (Cronbach's alpha). Gender: 0 = female, 1 = male. Education level: 1 = associate college, 2 = bachelor, 3 = master and above.
Abbreviations: OOP, other-oriented perfectionism; PS, self-oriented striving.
[**]p < .01, and [***]p < .001 (two-tailed).

14.2 | Hypothesis testing

The descriptive statistics and correlation matrix are displayed on Table 6, and the results of a series of hierarchical regression analyses are presented on Table 7. As can be seen in Table 4, and consistent with our expectations, we found that psychological safety relates positively to both creative effort and performance and that creative effort relates positively to creative performance.

14.3 | Testing the sequential mediation model (Hypothesis 1)

Consistent with Study 1 and 2 findings, we found support for an indirect effect of leader OOP on leader-rated creative performance via employee perceptions of psychological safety and employee-rated

creative effort. The bootstrapping results showed that the effect size of the indirect effect to be −.01, $CI_{95\%}$ = [−.10, −.001]. Therefore, Study 3 confirms the support for Hypothesis 1 that we found in the earlier studies.

14.4 | Testing the moderating effect of perceived leader anger expression (Hypothesis 2)

As shown in Table 7 (Model 2), the cross-level interaction term of leader OOP and leader anger expression was negatively and significantly related to psychological safety ($\gamma = -.20$, p < .01). The moderating pattern is displayed in Figure 4. A simple slope test (Aiken & West, 1991) reveals further that leader OOP negatively and significantly relates to psychological safety when perceived leader anger expression is high ($b = -.55$, $t = -3.59$, p < .001), but this

**TABLE 7** Hierarchical linear modeling results (Study 3).

Variables	Psychological safety		Creative effort	Creativity
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Within level (N = 296)				
Leader perfectionistic striving	.13	.14	−.06	−.04
Leader OOP (group mean centered)	−.27**	−.29**	−.09	−.04
Psychological safety (group mean centered)			.18**	.06
Creative effort (group mean centered)				.24***
Leader anger expression (group mean centered)	−.34***	−.36***	−.02	−.01
Leader OOP (group mean centered) × Leader anger expression (group mean centered)		−.20**		
Between level (N = 61)				
Leader gender	−.21	−.29	−.03	.06
Leader age	−.01	−.01	−.01	−.04*
Leader tenure	−.01	−.00	.03	−.00
Leader education	−.12	−.12	.06	−.05
Leader OOP (group mean)	−.40***	−.34**	−.06	.01
Psychological safety (group mean)			.58***	.21
Creative effort (group mean)				.34**
R^2_{total}	.06	.11	.14	.22

Note: N = 61 leaders and 296 employees. $R^2_{within\text{-}group}$ and $R^2_{between\text{-}group}$ represent proportions of variance reduction relative to the null model (Liao & Rupp, 2005). $R^2_{total} = R^2_{within\text{-}group} \times [1 - ICC(1)] + R^2_{between\text{-}group} \times ICC(1)$.
Abbreviation: OOP, other-oriented perfectionism.
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 (two-tailed).

FIGURE 4 Psychological safety as a function of leader OOP and leader anger expression (Study 3). OOP, other-oriented perfectionism.
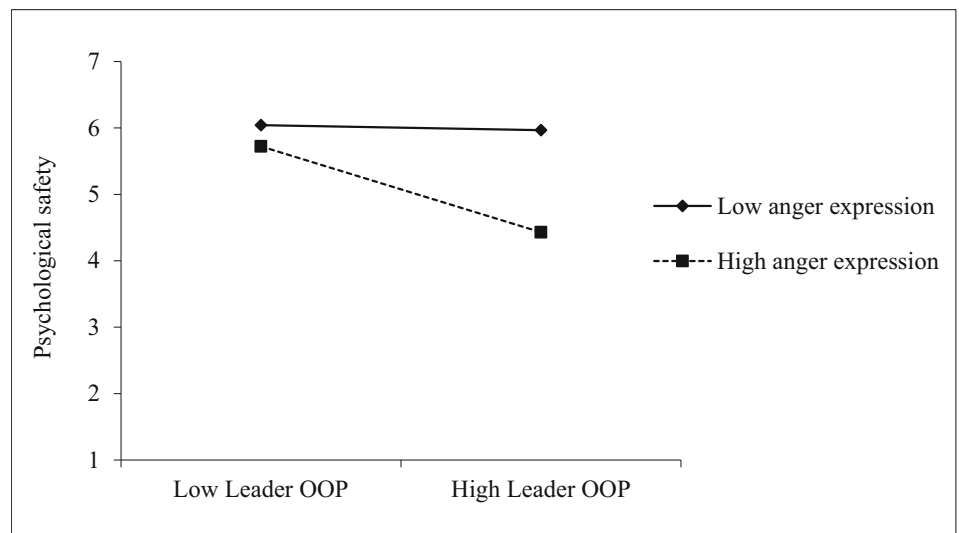
relationship is non-significant when perceived leader anger expression is low (b = −.03, t = −.21, p > .05). As in Studies 1 and 2, these findings are consistent with Hypothesis 2.[4]

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[4]Following Becker's (2005) recommendation, we tested alternative models to rule out alternative explanations for the relationships between and among the study variables. We measured error strains (i.e., fearing the occurrence of errors and intense negative reactions to errors), error risk taking (i.e., openness and flexibility towards potential errors), and workplace anxiety (i.e., tension and uneasiness related to job functioning). We were unable to find any conditional indirect effects of leader OOP on creativity via error strain, error risk taking, and/or workplace anxiety at high or low levels of leader anger expression (see OSF for details). Overall, these findings support the validity of our proposed model.

14.5 | Conditional indirect effects of leader OOP on employee creativity

We next tested the indirect effect of leader OOP on leader-rated employee creative performance via psychological safety (as the first mediator) and creative effort (as the second mediator) at both low and high levels of perceived leader anger expression. The results show that, when perceived leader anger expression is lower (one standard deviation below the mean), the indirect effect of leader OOP on creative performance is non-significant (*indirect effect* = −.001,

$CI_{95\%} = [-.11, .08]$, $p > .05$). When perceived leader anger expression is higher (one standard deviation above the mean) on the other hand, the indirect effect is significant (indirect effect $= -.02$, $CI_{95\%} = [-.20, -.003]$, $p < .05$). Moreover, parametric bootstrapping results show that the moderated serial mediation effect is significant, $-.02$ ($CI_{95\%} = [-.22, -.002]$, $p < .05$), once again providing support for Hypothesis 2, and reaffirming that the effect is significant only when the leader is seen to express anger.

15 | DISCUSSION

In Study 3, we confirmed the results of Studies 1 and 2 in a field setting. We found, as we hypothesized, that psychological safety and creative effort serially mediate the relationship between leader OOP and employees' creative performance. Corroborating the findings obtained in Studies 1 and 2, we found in Study 3 that leader anger expression moderates the negative indirect influence of leader OOP on employee creative performance via psychological safety and creative effort. Based on experimental and correlational evidence, we confirmed that the conditional indirect negative effects of leader OOP on creative performance via psychological safety and creative effort are exacerbated only when employees perceive their leader to be expressing anger.

Based on these results, Study 3 extends Studies 1 and 2 in three notable ways. First, in Study 3, we teased out the interaction between leader OOP and leader anger expression and tested its influence on two indicators of creativity: self-rated creative effort and leader-rated creative performance of the employee. Second, a multi-wave cross-level field study (using data from real-world team leaders and employees) enabled us to gain confidence that the findings of our research are not attributable to common method bias. Third, through Study 3, we demonstrated that the influence of the interaction between leader OOP and leader anger expression on creative performance via psychological safety and creative effort remains robust even after controlling for a wide variety of demographic and personality variables.

16 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

In the present research, we examined the interpersonal influence of leader OOP on employee creativity across three methodologically diverse studies consisting of participants from a range of cultures and occupations. The pattern of results provides consistent evidence that leader OOP and leader anger expression jointly compromise employees' creative performance through psychological safety and creative effort. Specifically, the cross-level moderating effect is significant only under conditions of high (vs. low) leader anger expression. These findings inform scholarly interest in leader perfectionism by providing evidence for the nature and extent of the downstream interpersonal consequences on employees.

16.1 | Theoretical implications

The primary theoretical contribution of this research is that we have shifted from the dominant focus on the intrapersonal consequences of perfectionism to provide evidence to an interpersonal influence of leader OOP in the workplace. Although Hewitt and colleagues (1991, 2017) discussed the social aspects of perfectionism, empirical work has largely ignored the role of perfectionism in predicting others' perceptions and behaviors. We believe that a true and complete understanding of perfectionism in organizations requires a systematic examination of how it impacts both the self and others. Accordingly, our research uncovers the process through which perfectionist leaders can create a social context that can subsequently influence employee creativity. We move the discourse on perfectionism forward by showing that while it is relevant to test the positive and negative implications of perfectionism in the workplace, it is also important to understand the mechanisms and boundary conditions that make perfectionism disadvantageous for others.

We further contribute to the literature by grounding our arguments on the EASI model to argue that employees assimilate cues from their leaders' OOP and anger expressions to form negative reactions. The limited research that examined perfectionism and anger (i.e., Dunkley & Blankstein, 2000; Hewitt et al., 2002; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Saboonchi & Lundh, 2003) generally centered on how self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism influence intrapersonal outcomes such as self-focused anger experiences and well-being. We show that since leaders hold formal authority to reward or to penalize employees, the social cues they emit are especially salient to employees' sense of psychological safety. Focusing only on intraindividual outcomes is insufficient since work in and of itself is a relational activity, whereby the characteristics of the organizational environment (i.e., leaders) influence employee functioning (Johns, 2006). For this reason, we believe that our investigation takes perfectionism research into a new direction as an explanatory construct to understand the leader-influence process (e.g., how leader OOP contributes to employee perceptions and functioning).

Our findings indicate that the interpersonal effects of leader perfectionism on employee behavior occur in a multiplicative, rather than an additive, manner. Indeed, Shoss and Witt (2013) propose that testing combinations of personality characteristics provides a more powerful approach to understanding the impact of traits and situations on behaviors. By testing the interactive effects of leader perfectionism and anger expression, we caution scholars who conceptualize perfectionism as a functional and valued disposition without adequate tests of its boundary conditions. Based on our results, leaders who display high OOP, in conjunction with high anger expression, create a social environment that undermines psychological safety and creativity. Leaders' anger expressions can motivate employees to conform to their leaders or colleagues to avoid further provocation and rejection (Van Kleef & Côté, 2022). It is therefore likely that employees interpret extreme perfectionistic demands from

angry leaders as unnecessary, unreasonable, and unfair, which hamper their creativity.

By embedding theory and evidence about the interpersonal effects of leader perfectionism, we also extend research that examines the role of leader characteristics on follower creativity (Hu et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2016; Koseoglu et al., 2017). Our findings suggest that leaders, without being abusive or authoritarian (cf. Guo et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2012), can still impede employee creativity simply by setting perfectionistic performance standards and simultaneously displaying anger. High-OOP leaders who express anger can impede employee creativity because they provide fewer opportunities to take risks and to make mistakes, and they tend to engage in sustained criticism and stringent evaluation (Hirst et al., 2009). Our results indicate that perfectionist leaders, who intensely express anger, might fail to recognize that the creative process is iterative. Joint displays of perfectionism and anger expression may undermine psychological safety, hindering employees from trying multiple alternatives before selecting a final solution, resulting in reduced levels of creativity (Koseoglu et al., 2017).

16.2 | Practical implications

An important practical implication of our findings is that perfectionistic performance standards may be counterproductive when leaders also expressed anger towards employees who fail to fulfill their prescribed standards of performance. We encourage organizations to support those with a tendency to expect perfectionistic performance while also expressing anger. A challenge for perfectionist leaders is to convey their high-performance standards in a manner that is empathic and compassionate (Ocampo et al., 2022). Organizations can offer managerial guidelines to help leaders express appropriate emotions when setting work standards or when employees are perceived to have failed to meet their performance expectations. Indeed, previous research indicates that cognitive-behavioral methods can be an effective strategy for helping perfectionists control their compulsive tendency to be overly critical and to reappraise situations that fall short of their standards (Egan et al., 2014).

16.3 | Methodological strengths, limitations, and future research directions

In addition to the theoretical contributions of our research, we also advance existing methodological approaches used in perfectionism research that contribute to the robustness and generalizability of our findings. By employing a multimethod approach, a randomized memory reconstruction study, a laboratory experiment, and a multi-wave cross-level field study, we not only demonstrated causality but also addressed two sources of potential bias: endogeneity (Antonakis et al., 2010) and common method (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Our research further presents evidence drawn from participants from

three countries (i.e., United States, Philippines, and China) who were working adults (Study 1), students (Study 2), and actual team leaders and employees (Study 3) that served to enhance external validity. We also used different measures and operationalizations of our key constructs across our studies, strengthening the internal validity of our findings. Specifically, we demonstrate that leader OOP (recalled, manipulated, and leader- and employee-reported) and leader anger expression (recalled, manipulated, and perceived) inhibit various indices of creativity (creative performance as rated by trained coders and leader-rated employees' creative performance) through psychological safety and creative effort, respectively.

Despite these strengths, like all research, our work is not without its limitations. First, while our research discussed and controlled various subdimensions of perfectionism, we only focused on leader OOP. Future research should further examine how other components of perfectionism may impact employees' creativity. For instance, it would be worth examining whether and to what extent would self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism operate at the interpersonal level of analysis. It is possible that leaders with high levels of self-oriented perfectionism may sabotage their team's creativity by failing to delegate work because of their distrust in others' capability. Similarly, leaders with high levels of socially prescribed perfectionism may be pressured to conform to others' expectations of them, which dissuades them from encouraging creativity in their employees.

Second, although our arguments were drawn from the theoretical underpinnings of the EASI model, we only examined participants' psychological safety in response to leader perfectionism and anger expression. Future researchers should delineate other psychological mechanisms arising from leaders' OOP and anger expression. Following our logic, scholars may uncover a range of employee affective and inferential reactions when working with a perfectionist leader who displays anger frequently (Van Kleef, 2009). It would be interesting to examine whether an affective or an inferential reaction would have a more substantive influence on employee creativity. For instance, it might be worth testing a dual pathway model to examine whether the interactive effects of leader perfectionism and anger expression would trigger affective reactions (e.g., fear, shame, anger) and/or inferential reactions (e.g., cognitive persistence and flexibility) in predicting creativity(see also Baas et al., 2013 for a discussion).

Third, although we examined the interactive role of leader perfectionism and anger expression, scholars should consider other employee traits, emotional expressions, and relationship quality in future research. Testing whether trait homogeneity between leaders and employees is predictive of creativity would be a fruitful endeavor to probe the role of perfectionism in the leader-influence process. Following Ashkanasy and Dorris (2017), scholars can examine whether positively valanced emotions such as excitement, happiness, and hope can moderate the interpersonal effects of leader perfectionism. Relatedly, in the present research, we only focused on consistent and extreme anger. In the future, researchers can test the intensity

and frequency of leaders' anger expressions as a boundary condition. Employees might interpret the message from their leaders differently if a perfectionist leader expressed anger all the time, versus sporadic expressions of anger on certain occasions, or with high versus low intensity (Van Kleef et al., 2009).

Fourth, and in relation to the point above, we note one methodological concern that relates to the cognitive or perceptual nature of leader anger manipulation and measurement across our studies. Relying on recollections and verbal manipulations of leader anger challenges our findings in settings where leaders express their anger nonverbally. Future research must examine how various modes of leader anger expression may interact with leader perfectionism to influence employee perceptions and behaviors (Shao & Guo, 2021).

Fifth, contrary to previous evidence suggesting the potentially positive consequences of leader perfectionism on creativity (see Lin et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2022), our results consistently demonstrated that leader OOP is negatively associated with employee creativity via psychological safety and creative effort. This is particularly the case at high (vs. neutral and low) levels of leader anger expression. We speculate that this discrepancy may be due to the distinctiveness of our research focus and diversity in our methodology. For instance, Lin et al. (2023) examined the impact of employees' own perfectionism on their own creativity. Further, the variables controlled in the analysis of Xu et al. (2022) differed from our study. We intentionally controlled for other relevant dimensions of perfectionism (i.e., employee and leader ratings of perfectionistic strivings) to ensure that these factors do not overlap or contaminate the effects of leader OOP. According to Stoeber (2014), the unique or mixed effects predicted by OOP may be due to the variance shared with other forms of perfectionism. We do not rule out the possibility that certain dimensions of perfectionism can render positive effects when combined with other traits or situations (Ocampo et al., 2020). Prior research has shown, however, that mixed or positive evidence emerges when dimensions of perfectionism were not controlled or partialled out (Stoeber & Otto, 2006). Future research may consider consolidating these theoretical and empirical approaches to clarify the nature, strength, and direction of association between perfectionism and creativity.

Finally, one fruitful direction for future research is to examine the nature of the relationship between leader perfectionism and other relevant traits or states, such as passion—defined as a "strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy" (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 757)—in predicting employee creativity. Frijda et al. (1991) described passions as those constituting high-priority objectives that yield emotionally important results. It would be interesting to see whether and how leader perfectionism can evoke harmonious (i.e., personal endorsement about pursuing a task) or obsessive (i.e., internal or external pressure to complete a task) passion from their employees. Doing so might explain why some employees who work with perfectionist leaders can manage to produce creative output despite the odds.

17 | CONCLUSIONS

In recognition of the ubiquity of perfectionism in the workplace, our findings advance research on leader OOP by (1) examining its interpersonal consequences on employees' creativity, (2) investigating the process through which this relationship may occur, and (3) identifying the moderators under which the nature and extent of this relationship may vary. Our findings reveal that a leader's OOP, while often anecdotally desirable in many situations, can stifle employee creativity. This situation arises when leaders combine their OOP with intense expressions of anger toward employees who they perceive as failing to meet their high standards. This, in turn, leads to lessened perceptions of psychological safety and reduces their creative effort.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT
The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
The data that support the findings of this study are available in the supplementary material of this article

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APPENDIX A

Study 1: Memory reconstruction study.
High OOP × High Anger Expression

We want you to think of your experience working with a perfectionist supervisor in the past. A perfectionist supervisor is someone who tends to:

-Want perfect work quality from their employees.
-Demand high-performance standards from employees.
-Expect employees to do things flawlessly. -Show hypercriticism of employees' work when they make mistakes.
-Ask employees to modify their work frequently just to reach perfection.

Specifically, please recall a recent and specific work-related interaction with this supervisor where your work was not perfect. In this interaction, while the supervisor demanded for perfection, he/she also:

-Displayed anger towards you.
-Became visibly irritated.
-Clearly showed annoyance.
-Expressed their negative emotions openly.

High OOP × Neutral Emotion Expression

We want you to think of your experience working with a perfectionist supervisor in the past. A perfectionist supervisor is someone who tends to:

-Want perfect work quality from their employees.
-Demand high-performance standards from employees.
-Expect employees to do things flawlessly.
-Show hypercriticism of employees' work when they make mistakes.
-Ask employees to modify their work frequently just to reach perfection.

Specifically, please recall a recent and specific work-related interaction with this supervisor where your work was not perfect. In this interaction, while the supervisor demanded for perfection, he/she:

-Remained calm during the meeting.
-Did not act in an overly emotional way.
-Did not express anger towards you.
-Controlled his/her negative emotions in the interaction.

Low OOP × High Anger Expression

We want you to think of your experience working with a non-perfectionist supervisor in the past. A non-perfectionist supervisor is someone who tends to:

-Expect reasonably good work from their employees rather than perfect work quality.
-Demand attainable performance standards rather than exceptionally high-performance standards from employees.
-Expect employees to do things well but not flawlessly.
-Does not show hypercriticism of employees' work when they make mistakes.
-Does not ask employees to modify their work frequently just to reach perfection.

Specifically, please recall a recent and specific work-related interaction with this supervisor where your work was not perfect. In this interaction, while the supervisor did not demand for perfection, he or she:

-Displayed anger towards you.
-Became visibly irritated.
-Clearly showed annoyance.
-Expressed their negative emotions openly.

Low OOP × Neutral Emotion Expression

We want you to think of your experience working with a non-perfectionist supervisor in the past. A non-perfectionist supervisor is someone who tends to:

-Expect reasonably good work from their employees rather than perfect work quality.
-Demand attainable performance standards rather than exceptionally high-performance standards from employees.
-Expect employees to do things well but not flawlessly.
-Does not show hypercriticism of employees' work when they make mistakes.
-Does not ask employees to modify their work frequently just to reach perfection.

Specifically, please recall a recent and specific work-related interaction with this supervisor where your work was not perfect. In this interaction, while the supervisor did not demand for perfection, he or she also:

-Remained calm during the meeting.
-Did not act in an overly emotional way.
-Did not express anger towards you.
-Controlled his/her negative emotions in the interaction.

APPENDIX B

Study 2: Laboratory experiment.
High leader other-oriented perfectionism (adapted from Xu et al., 2022)

Personally, I am a perfectionist and I always demand perfection from others. I tend to pursue perfectionism in all aspects. Hence, though I

encourage you to propose suggestions in your own way, I have very high expectations and will evaluate your proposal with the highest standards. Your suggestions should have supreme quality, and I expect you to avoid any mistakes in your proposal (e.g., wording, formatting). I will ask you to modify your work wherever further improvements can be made. I do have serious problems when others don't aim and achieve perfection in their work. Please try your best to prepare a perfect proposal. Thank you.

Low leader other-oriented perfectionism (adapted from Xu et al., 2022)

Personally, I am not a perfectionist and I do not demand perfection from others. I tend not to pursue perfectionism, but I have some standards. Hence, I encourage you to propose suggestions in your own way, and while I do not set very high expectations, I still expect you to meet the basic standards. Your suggestions should have acceptable quality. I know mistakes are inevitable, so I will not expect zero mistakes in your proposal (e.g., wording, formatting), but I hope you can try to avoid them. I will not ask for modifications if it is in good shape. I do not have problems when others do not aim and achieve perfection in their work. Please try to finish this work nicely. Thank you.

High leader anger expression

Your ideas and solutions can still be improved. I AM QUITE FRUSTRATED AND ANNOYED AT THE QUALITY OF YOUR IDEAS. **PLEASE TRY AGAIN!!!!!!!!** Task 2 **is up next.**

Neutral leader emotion expression

Your ideas and solutions can still be improved. Please try again. Task 2 is up next.

Study 2 experimental tasks

Task 1 (adapted from Grant & Berry, 2011):

A local band, the File Drawers, needs ideas for a new band name.

In the last 3 years, the File Drawers is rebranding their image. As Bryan Strickland, the lead singer, told us, "I really need your help in coming up with new ideas for a catchy band name to appeal to a wide audience."

Please suggest a new name for the band. To succeed in this task, you need to be as creative as possible.

Task 2 (adapted from Deng et al., 2019):

A private university in Metro Manila has been receiving some complaints from its students regarding a drop in the quality of teaching. The university officials would like some advice on how to improve teaching quality.

Please suggest ideas on how teaching quality can be improved.