

**It's Not a Secret, It's Just Not Your 'Business': Occupational Self-Efficacy, Negative  
Affect and Confidentiality Requirements at Work**

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### **Abstract**

Confidentiality requirements have become a pervasive element of modern organizational life, but it may also impose emotional demands on employees. Indeed, research shows that formal secrecy obligations can lead to adverse emotional outcomes, such as social isolation, burnout and work-related stress. Despite its prevalence, potential buffers against negative outcomes of confidentiality requirements remain largely understudied. In the current study, we investigate whether occupational self-efficacy moderates the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect. We employed a cross-sectional survey design with 118 participants recruited through convenience and snowball sampling techniques. A moderation analysis was conducted to examine the moderation effect. Results showed a non-significant effect of confidentiality requirements on negative affect. The effect of occupational self-efficacy on negative affect was significant. The moderation effect was also significant but should be interpreted with caution as the simple slopes were non-significant for all three levels of occupational self-efficacy. We conclude that in order to improve employees' affect, training programs and workshops can be implemented to enhance occupational self-efficacy. The effects of confidentiality requirements on employees need further research.

*Keywords:* confidentiality requirements, occupational self-efficacy, negative affect

## **It's Not a Secret, It's Just Not Your 'Business': Occupational Self-Efficacy, Negative Affect and Confidentiality Requirements at Work**

Confidentiality requirements have become a pervasive element of modern organizational life. In sectors such as health care, law enforcement, education and governmental institutions, employees are entrusted with sensitive information and are expected to comply with formal and informal secrecy obligations. While confidentiality is crucial to organizational functioning, it may also impose psychological demands on employees, which could manifest in psychological burden (e.g., Slepian et al., 2024). Despite the widespread presence of confidentiality demands in modern work environments, their psychological impact remains largely understudied.

Existing research demonstrates that secrecy in general is associated with adverse emotional outcomes, such as feelings of guilt, shame and inauthenticity, heightened stress and distraction in daily interactions (Bedrov & Gable, 2025; McDonald et al., 2019; Slepian et al., 2018; Slepian et al., 2019; Slepian, 2024). Slepian et al. (2024) further suggest that formal secrecy obligations in organizations can undermine short-term emotional well-being by increasing feelings of social isolation and work-related stress. Taken together, these findings indicate a consistent association between secret keeping and negative affect across organizational contexts and related fields.

Although prior research demonstrates that secrecy and confidentiality obligations are associated with negative affect (e.g., Slepian, 2024), employees vary in how strongly they experience these emotional consequences. One factor that may explain this variability is *occupational self-efficacy*, which refers to an employee's perceived ability to successfully complete the tasks involved in their jobs (Rigotti et al., 2008). Building on Bandura's (1977) framework about self-efficacy, individuals with higher occupational self-efficacy are expected to appraise demanding situations, such as confidentiality requirements, as more manageable

and less threatening, thereby experiencing lower negative affect. Accordingly, the present study investigates whether occupational self-efficacy moderates the relationship between confidentiality requirements at work and employees' negative affect. In addition, the study examines the direct associations between confidentiality requirements and negative affect, and between self-efficacy and negative affect, providing a comprehensive model of how organizational secrecy demands may influence employees' emotional experiences.

Despite the widespread presence of confidentiality requirements across organizational contexts, little is known about factors that may buffer against potential negative emotional outcomes. So, by examining occupational self-efficacy as both a direct predictor of negative affect and a moderator of the relationship between confidentiality and negative affect, this study addresses a critical gap in literature. In doing so, it contributes important insights, as the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect is otherwise understood too simplistically, assuming that employees respond similarly to these demands. By understanding this variation through self-efficacy as a moderator, a more nuanced understanding of this relationship is provided. Without this knowledge individuals may be treated in ways that do not adequately fit their specific needs. Besides scientific contribution, the study also has practical implications for organizations seeking to support employees who operate under confidentiality requirements, such as through targeted training. This could limit the negative affect employees experience. By examining the potential negative effects that confidentiality requirements may elicit, organizations can develop targeted interventions, such as trainings or workshops, to help employees cope more effectively with these demands.

### **Confidentiality Requirements**

Confidentiality requirements at work are a central aspect of many organizational roles, obligating employees to withhold sensitive information from family, friends, and sometimes even from coworkers, in contexts such as healthcare, law enforcement, education, and

government. From the perspective of conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), these requirements can be understood as a resource-draining demand, as they restrict access to important social and personal resources. Individuals are, according to this theory, primarily motivated to obtain, retain, protect, and foster these valued resources (Holmgren et al., 2017). Confidentiality requirements force employees to suppress work-related experiences in social interactions, limiting opportunities to seek emotional support, share concerns and receive advice from others. As a result, employees may experience an actual or anticipated depletion of important personal and social resources. This combination of resource loss and ongoing resource investment is likely to foster negative emotional responses (Hobfoll et al., 2017). In line with this idea, Løvseth (2016) suggests that it is likely that confidentiality is a hidden stressor that alters coping strategies needed for healthy adaptation to emotional work demands. Indeed, numerous studies show that client confidentiality is associated with increased stress, health problems and burnout among child welfare workers and physicians (Løvseth et al., 2013; Løvseth, 2016; Tevik & Håkon, 2011).

### **Negative affect**

The dependent variable in this study, *negative affect*, refers to the experience of unpleasant emotional states, including frustration, anger, shame and sadness. In organizational contexts such emotional consequences are particularly relevant, as sustained negative affect has been shown to impair employee well-being, reduce job satisfaction, and negatively affect performance (Demerouti et al., 2001; Grandey, 2000). Prior research also indicates that secrecy is associated with such negative outcomes: Slepian et al. (2019) demonstrated that secret keeping is emotionally costly, often eliciting negative emotions such as guilt and shame. Mind wandering toward personal or professional secrets can elicit negative emotions such as shame, isolation and inauthenticity (McDonald et al., 2019; Slepian et al., 2018; Slepian, 2024). More specifically, a greater number of secrets kept from interaction partners

was associated with heightened stress, feelings of inauthenticity, and distraction in daily interactions (Bedrov & Gable, 2025). Studies on related concepts show similar results; while confidentiality requirements involve externally imposed obligations to maintain secrecy, knowledge hiding reflects an individual's intentional and self-motivated decision to withhold or conceal knowledge that has been requested by another person (Connelly et al., 2012), and in organizational settings it has been shown to undermine psychological well-being and increase strain (Shen et al., 2024). Slepian et al. (2024) further suggest that formal secrecy obligations in organizations can undermine short-term emotional well-being by increasing feelings of social isolation and work-related stress. These studies indicate a consistent association between secret keeping and negative affect across organizational contexts and related fields. Taken together, these findings suggest that employees who face confidentiality requirements are likely to experience elevated negative affect. Therefore, the first hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis 1: Confidentiality requirements at work are positively associated with negative affect.*

### **Occupational Self-efficacy**

While the studies above suggest that confidentiality requirements can increase negative affect, employees vary in the degree to which they experience these emotional consequences. One factor that may explain this variability is occupational self-efficacy, defined as employees' beliefs in their ability to successfully perform the tasks required in their jobs (Rigotti et al., 2008). Occupational self-efficacy is grounded in Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy, which forms a central component of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory emphasizes that human behavior emerges from the reciprocal dynamic interplay between personal factors, environmental influences and behavior. Central to this perspective are cognitive processes, such as outcome expectations

(beliefs about the consequences of actions) and, as mentioned before, self-efficacy. Within this framework, individuals actively interpret and respond to environmental demands, with their beliefs about personal capabilities shaping how they appraise challenges and regulate emotions. Numerous studies have already found a relationship between self-efficacy and positive or negative affect (Lightsey et al., 2011; Schutte, 2013). These findings highlight the importance of self-efficacy for emotion regulation in supporting and sustaining well-being.

Empirical evidence supports the idea that self-efficacy promotes psychological well-being and reduces emotional strain in the workplace. A higher level of occupational self-efficacy is associated with higher work motivation, job performance, and job satisfaction (Çetin & Aşkun, 2018; Guarnaccia et al., 2016; Paggi & Jopp, 2015; Wallin et al., 2021). From a conservation of resources perspective (Hobfoll, 1989), self-efficacy is considered a personal resource (Hobfoll et al., 2017; Holmgren et al., 2017) that individuals draw upon to protect existing resources and prevent resource loss. Such personal resources provide employees with greater confidence in their ability to manage demanding working conditions, such as confidentiality requirements, thereby reducing the threat of emotional resource depletion and the likelihood of experiencing negative affect. Accordingly, occupational self-efficacy is expected to be directly and negatively related to negative affect. In addition, occupational self-efficacy is expected to moderate the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect, such that higher levels of self-efficacy buffer employees from the emotional impact of these obligations. Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*Hypothesis 2:* Occupational self-efficacy is negatively associated with employee's negative affect.

*Hypothesis 3: Occupational self-efficacy moderates the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect, such that the positive association is weaker among employees with higher occupational self-efficacy.*

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A total of 131 respondents participated in this study, but analyses included 118 after excluding 13 cases with incomplete data on key measures (39 males, 79 females, 0 identified otherwise;  $M_{age} = 43.42$ ;  $SD = 13.95$ ). Participants represented various nationalities, including Dutch (81.4%), German (16.1%), Italian (0.8%), Swiss (0.8%) and Indonesian (0.8%). Their work experience ranged from 0 to 50 years ( $M = 19.68$ ;  $SD = 13.46$ ). Their working hours ranged from 20 to 60 hours per week ( $M = 35.98$ ;  $SD = 7.82$ ), and the most common sectors were healthcare (42.4%) and corporate (34.7%).

### **Procedure and Design**

To take part in this study, participants were required to be at least 18 years old, work a minimum of 20 hours per week, and handle confidential information in their professional roles. Participation was voluntary, and no compensation was offered. For the data collection an online questionnaire administered via Qualtrics survey software (Qualtrics, 2025) was used. A cross-sectional survey design was used to examine associations between workplace factors, including confidentiality requirements, occupational self-efficacy, and negative affect, based on self-reported data at a single point in time. Snowball sampling and convenience sampling techniques were used, where the questionnaire was distributed via WhatsApp, LinkedIn and other social media in the network of the researchers. Participants were invited to take part and were provided with a description text stating the aim of the study, that participation was anonymous, and that the survey would take fifteen to twenty minutes to complete. Before starting, participants had to confirm their consent to participate and were

informed of their right to terminate participation at any time without having to specify a reason. Data were collected between 10 and 27 November 2025. This study was registered with the Ethics Committee of Psychology of the University of Groningen (PSY-2526-S-0063).

### **Measures**

A questionnaire was used that contained established and validated scales to measure demographic information such as age and gender, information regarding the participants' career (such as working hours and work experience in years), and the variables confidentiality requirements, negative affect, and occupational self-efficacy. Some items were adapted for this study.

#### ***Confidentiality Requirements***

The independent variable, confidentiality requirements at work, was measured using four items, of which two were adapted from Slepian et al. (2024) and two items were self-developed. Participants were asked to report if they have access to information that cannot be shared, either by contract requirements, law, or a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). Sample items include, "Does your job involve access to information that you cannot share with others outside of the organization?" and "Does your job involve access to information that is specifically required by law (or executive order) to be kept secret?". The questions could be answered by either 0 (No) or 1 (Yes). A composite index score was calculated for each participant by averaging the four items, and across participants, the mean index score was .74, ( $SD = .27$ ), indicating that participants reported, on average, a relatively high number of confidentiality requirements in their work. The internal consistency of the scale was  $\alpha = .513$ .

#### ***Negative Affect***

The dependent variable, negative affect, was measured by using five items of The International Positive and Negative Affect Schedule Short Form (I-PANAS-SF; Thompson,

2007). Solely the negative affect items were used (upset, hostile, ashamed, nervous, afraid). The participants had to indicate to what extent they normally feel these emotions, with each item being on a 5-point scale ranging from never (1) to always (5). A mean score across the five items was computed, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of negative affect. The internal consistency of these items was good  $\alpha = .815$ .

### ***Occupational Self-Efficacy***

Occupational self-efficacy was measured with the Shortened Occupational Self-efficacy Scale (Rigotti et al., 2008), consisting of six items assessing participant's confidence in their own ability to complete work-related tasks. The scale contained items such as "I can remain calm when facing difficulties in my job because I can rely on my abilities" and "My past experiences in my job have prepared me well for my occupational future". All items could be answered on a 5-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), and a mean score was calculated, with higher scores indicating higher occupational self-efficacy. The scale showed good internal consistency in the present sample  $\alpha = .806$ .

### **Data Analysis**

All analyses were conducted in JASP (0.18.3.0; JASP team, 2024). Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations were computed for the main study variables: confidentiality requirements, occupational self-efficacy, and negative affect, and internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) were calculated for the multi-item scales. Prior to conducting the analyses, all assumptions of linear regression were examined, including linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, independence of residuals and the presence of outliers.

To test the hypotheses, a moderation analysis was performed using a PROCESS model (Hayes, 2022), with confidentiality requirements as the predictor, occupational self-efficacy as the moderator, and negative affect as the outcome variable. All predictor variables were mean centered prior to computing the interaction term. Unstandardized regression coefficients

(b) were reported. The model included the main effects of confidentiality requirements and occupational self-efficacy and their interaction term, and effects were evaluated using a two-tailed significance level of  $\alpha = .05$ .

## Results

Before conducting the main analysis, the descriptive statistics were computed for confidentiality requirements ( $M = 0.74$ ,  $SD = 0.27$ ,  $\min = 0$ ,  $\max = 1$ ), negative affect ( $M = 2.24$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ,  $\min = 1$ ,  $\max = 4.4$ ), and occupational self-efficacy ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ,  $\min = 2.17$ ,  $\max = 5$ ). The correlations between the variables negative affect, occupational self-efficacy and confidentiality requirements, together with their means and standard deviations, are presented in Table 1, which can be found below.

**Table 1**  
*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study Variables*

	M	SD	1	2
1 Confidentiality Requirements	.74	.27		
2 Negative Affect	2.24	.70	-.05	
3 Occupational Self-efficacy	3.95	.52	.05	-.49***

*Note.*  $N = 118$ .

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Next, regression assumptions were evaluated in a mean-centered linear regression model. All assumptions, linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, independence of errors (Durbin Watson = 1.989), and absence of influential outliers (no cases where Cook's distance  $> 1$ ) were satisfied. Plots for the assumption checks can be found in the Appendix.

Multicollinearity was not a concern (all VIFs  $\approx 1$ ).

This study examined the moderation effect of occupational self-efficacy in the relationship between confidentiality requirements at work and negative affect. The following hypotheses were tested: (1) confidentiality requirements at work are positively associated with

negative affect (e.g., frustration, anger, sadness), (2) occupational self-efficacy is negatively associated with employee's negative affect, (3) occupational self-efficacy moderates the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect, such that the positive association is weaker among employees with higher occupational self-efficacy.

To test the hypotheses, a PROCESS model was implemented in JASP ( $N = 118$ ). The first hypothesis, that confidentiality requirements at work are positively associated with negative affect, was not supported by the data. No significant effect was found ( $b = -0.043$ ,  $SE = 0.202$ ,  $p = 0.831$ , 95%  $CI [-0.438, 0.352]$ ). This suggests that, in this sample, confidentiality requirements alone do not significantly predict negative affect when occupational self-efficacy is included in the model.

The second hypothesis, that occupational self-efficacy is negatively associated with employee's negative affect, was supported by the data. A significant effect was found from occupational self-efficacy on negative affect ( $b = -0.704$ ,  $SE = 0.108$ ,  $p = <.001$ , 95%  $CI [-0.915, -0.493]$ ). This suggests that for each one-unit increase in occupational self-efficacy, negative affect decreases by approximately 0.70, indicating that employees with greater occupational self-efficacy report considerably less negative affect.

The third hypothesis, that occupational self-efficacy moderates the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect, was significant. The interaction between confidentiality requirements and occupational self-efficacy was significant ( $b = 0.996$ ,  $SE = 0.455$ ,  $p = 0.029$ , 95%  $CI [0.104, 1.889]$ ). However, simple slope analyses showed that the association between confidentiality requirements and negative affect was not significant at low – 16<sup>th</sup> percentile ( $b = -0.326$ ,  $SE = 0.232$ ,  $p = .160$ , 95%  $CI [-0.781, 0.129]$ ), moderate - 50<sup>th</sup> percentile ( $b = 0.006$ ,  $SE = 0.204$ ,  $p = .976$ , 95%  $CI [-0.394, 0.407]$ ), and high - 84<sup>th</sup> percentile ( $b = 0.385$ ,  $SE = 0.290$ ,  $p = .184$ , 95%  $CI [-0.183, 0.953]$ ) levels of occupational self-efficacy. This indicates that the relationship between confidentiality

requirements and negative affect does not significantly differ from zero across different levels of self-efficacy. Thus, although the interaction term was statistically significant, the simple slopes were non-significant, which could reflect limited statistical power rather than a true absence of conditional effects, suggesting that the practical relevance of the moderation effect should be interpreted cautiously. Confidentiality requirements and occupational self-efficacy collectively explained 27.4% of the variance in negative affect ( $R^2 = .274$ ).

### **Discussion**

This study aimed to identify factors buffering employees' negative affect caused by confidentiality requirements at work, by examining the moderation effect of occupational self-efficacy on the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect. Numerous studies associated confidentiality requirements with stress, burnout and health problems, either as a stressor on its own or as an amplifier (Løvseth et al., 2010; Løvseth et al., 2013; Løvseth, 2016; Tevik & Håkon, 2011). Yet, protective factors against adverse effects of confidentiality requirements remain understudied. The goal of this study was to advance understanding of the potential buffering effects of occupational self-efficacy on negative affect caused by confidentiality requirements, in order to improve workplace interventions that strengthen self-efficacy to mitigate adverse mental health outcomes from occupational secrecy demands.

First, it was hypothesized that confidentiality requirements at work are positively associated with negative affect, but this was not consistent with the research findings. While numerous studies found an association between stress and confidentiality requirements (e.g., Løvseth, 2016) a substantial proportion of participants in this study (76.3%) reported in the designated survey item that they had breached their confidentiality requirements by disclosing confidential information to friends, family members, partners, or therapists. A possible explanation for the nonsignificant effect could be that by breaching, the burden of workplace

secrecy was lifted for these participants in such a way that it no longer had significant adverse outcomes such as frustration or anxiety. Additionally, it is possible that the participants still experienced negative or uncomfortable feelings as a result of the confidentiality requirements, but not strong or long enough to categorize them in the negative emotions as referred to in the questionnaire.

It was also hypothesized that individuals with higher levels of occupational self-efficacy experience less negative affect when working under confidentiality requirements than individuals with low levels of occupational self-efficacy who work under the same circumstances. While the research findings were consistent with this hypothesis, the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect did not significantly differ across low, medium and high levels of self-efficacy. The practical relevance of the moderation effect should therefore be interpreted with caution, as this may be limited. A potential explanation for this nonsignificant effect might be that partners' occupation masks the moderation of occupational self-efficacy. Tevik and Håkon (2011) found that same-occupation partners buffer confidentiality stress, because participants report being able to discuss both the clinical and emotional part of their work more openly in an ethically safe framework of confidentiality. In the current study, a substantial number of participants listed their partner as someone who they have breached the confidentiality requirements with (35.6%), suggesting that this form of social support could both weaken the moderation effect of occupational self-efficacy and act as a buffer against the adverse outcomes of confidentiality requirements. Future research should measure partners' occupation to test if the shared professions buffer confidentiality stress and negative affect beyond occupational self-efficacy.

Finally, it was hypothesized that occupational self-efficacy is negatively associated with employees' negative affect. The research findings were consistent with this hypothesis,

supporting existing literature that already found a relationship between self-efficacy and affect (Lightsey et al., 2011; Schutte, 2013). The findings are also in line with the theories upon which this study draws its concepts. For example, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) describes self-efficacy as a personal factor that helps individuals shape appraisals of challenges and regulate emotions. Higher levels of self-efficacy help individuals appraise challenges as less threatening and regulate emotions more adequately, resulting in lower levels of negative affect. This relationship between higher levels of (occupational) self-efficacy and lower levels of negative affect also emerged in the current study. This relationship further supports the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989). According to his theory, self-efficacy is considered a personal resource (Hobfoll et al., 2017; Holmgreen et al., 2017) that helps employees to appraise demanding working conditions, such as confidentiality requirements, as less threatening and cope with them more effectively, thereby reducing the likelihood of experiencing negative affect.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations to this study that must be noted. First, all data was collected using self-report measures. This method of assessing behaviors and attitudes is often criticized in literature for various reasons. For instance, responses might be influenced by the research instruments themselves (Schwarz, 1999), which might compromise the validity of the research since the instrument no longer measures what they are intended to measure. Second, the phenomenon of “social desirability” may have occurred, referring to the tendency of participants to provide favorable and socially desirable answers (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). This may be particularly relevant for the current study, as participants may have been reluctant to disclose breaches of the confidentiality requirements. Additionally, research suggests that age can influence how self-report measures are answered (Knäuper et al., 2016), which may further affect the validity of the findings. Future research could address these

limitations by complementing self-report data with alternative methods, such as ecological momentary assessments and peer-reports to provide a more objective and nuanced understanding of participants' experiences and behavior.

A second limitation might be the imprecise measurement of confidentiality requirements. In the current study, four items were used to assess this construct: two were adapted from Slepian et al. (2024) and two were newly developed for this study. This combination of established and self-developed items may have affected the precision and validity of the construct measurement. The internal consistency of the scale was relatively low ( $\alpha=.513$ ), however, since the items are not intended to be homogeneous, the low alpha is not particularly informative. Future research could improve the measurement of this construct by using fully validated scales or by conducting thorough pretesting and validation of newly developed items, ensuring more reliable and precise assessment of confidentiality requirements.

Finally, the lack of cultural diversity among the respondents may be a limiting factor. Of all 118 respondents, 97,5% lived either in The Netherlands or Germany. Of the three participants that reported living in other countries, only one lived outside of Europe (Indonesia). Working conditions and confidentiality demands may vary across cultures. Moreover, there are studies that suggest that negative affect is experienced differently across cultural contexts. For example, Koopmann-Holm and Tsai (2014) found cultural differences in the desire to avoid negative affect between German and American participants, despite these cultures being relatively similar. Eid and Diener (2001) found that people in individualistic cultures appraise guilt as more undesirable than those in collectivistic cultures. Therefore, the observed relationships between confidentiality requirements, occupational self-efficacy, and negative affect may differ in more culturally diverse or non-Western

populations. Thus, the cultural homogeneity of the sample limits the generalizability of the findings to non-Western cultures.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

A first practical implication of this study stems from the significant negative relationship between occupational self-efficacy and negative affect. While the aim of the study was to enhance knowledge of how to buffer employees from the negative affect caused by confidentiality requirements, reducing negative affect regardless of its source is also valuable. These findings suggest that interventions that target employees perceived competence in managing work-related tasks, such as training programs or workshops, may help reduce negative affect, including emotions such as shame, frustration, and anxiety.

A second practical implication is that loosening confidentiality requirements or exposing employees to less sensitive information, does not appear to be a direct solution for decreasing employees' negative affect. Instead, employers may benefit from examining other factors, such as social support, work environment or personal resources. These factors should also be considered in future research, as they may play a more influential role in the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect.

Future research could also examine potential contextual moderators. Although participants in the current study reported their occupation in the survey, it was not examined whether the moderating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect varies across occupational sectors, client exposure, or organizational culture. Accounting for these factors could provide a clearer understanding of the mechanisms underlying the adverse effects of confidentiality requirements in the workplace.

Finally, further research is encouraged to examine this relationship in more diverse samples. As men (33.1%) and individuals with lower levels of educations were

underrepresented in the current sample, future studies should aim to include these groups more adequately. Additionally, including non-Western participants could address the cultural homogeneity as noted earlier.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, although occupational self-efficacy does not appear to play a moderating role in the relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect, this study provided valuable insights when it comes to creating a pleasant work environment for employees. Enhancing their perceived level of occupational self-efficacy helps against reducing negative affect such as feelings of shame or anxiety. Furthermore, there appeared to be no direct relationship between confidentiality requirements and negative affect in this study. Altogether, this study advances us to a future where all workers can thrive.

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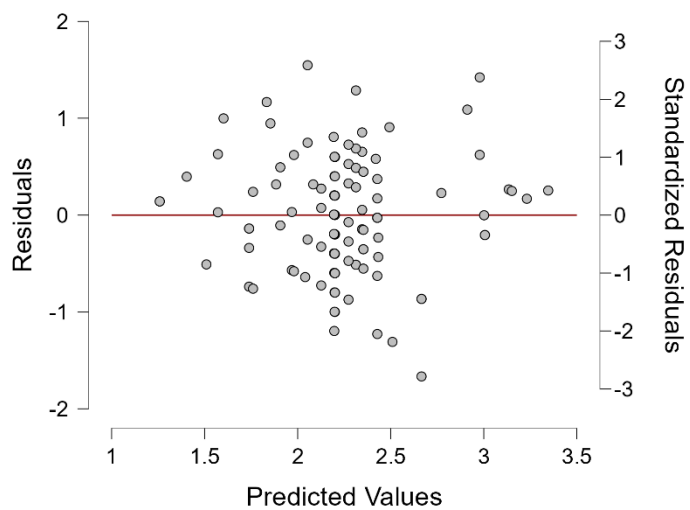
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## Appendix

### Assumption Check Plots

**Figure 1**

*Linearity and Homoscedasticity Plot, Residuals vs. Predicted*



**Figure 2**

*Normality Plot, Q-Q Plot Standardized Residuals*

