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Introduction. “Each enterprise operates in a different way and has a different work system and culture. So, each enterprise has different requirements, action plans, and organizational systems. In order for an organization to have better functionality and to be innovative and effective, it is important to analyse the system of operation, the duties assigned to employees, and the organizational climate. This will help to examine what affects the functionality of the enterprise and the efficiency of the employees”. [29].

Evaluating workplace climate through social indicators (measuring the “what people feel and believe,” considering shared perceptions and norms (cultural norms, leadership practices, working atmosphere) that shape employee experience) and behavioral markers (measuring the “what people actually do,” considering collaboration patterns, communication styles, and (dis)engagement signals) provides a data-driven picture of organizational health and serves as early warning signs for workplace climate shifts. Cultivating empowering dynamics while actively dismantling disempowering norms and practices transforms standard workplaces into high-performing ecosystems.

Presenting the main content.

Core workplace climate social indicators (based on qualitative social dynamics, relevant quantitative HR-metrics (staff turnover, engagement rate,



statistics on absenteeism, performance indicators and quality of work, pulse survey participation rate, etc.), and positive and negative behavioral and emotional markers (that can be observed and measured in real time) which help to assess the actual workplace climate. This is what shapes the company's analytics and reflects the deeper processes inside the workplace climate. Typically, a range of methodological procedures is applied when diagnosing the workplace climate, scales measuring group relationships, scales of intra-group affinity, sociometric surveys, and so on.

1. Employee surveys with specially designed questionnaires and feedback mechanisms can be very useful for predicting behavior and staff turnover. Surveys help to gauge the organization's pulse and identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. This feedback helps to foster a healthy and transparent organizational culture. For example, the Work Climate Questionnaire (was first introduced by Deci, Connell, & Ryan in 1989), as the Work Climate Survey (WCS) and then later named the WCQ by Baard, Deci, & Ryan (in 2002), is a psychometric instrument designed to assess employees' perceptions of the degree of autonomy supportiveness provided by their immediate supervisors or managers and measures the extent to which managers offer choice, provide rationale, acknowledge subordinates' feelings, and foster a sense of psychological safety.

2. Individual interviews (in order to gain a detailed understanding of employees' views on leadership, collaboration, and the working environment) and focus groups (that bring employees together to discuss shared experiences of innovation, teamwork, and adaptability). This combined approach provides valuable qualitative data with a variety of insights contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the workplace climate and further guides strategic improvements to the workplace climate.



3. Behavioral observation and analysis. By observing employee behavior, organizations can gain insights into various aspects of their working environment. For example, behavioral analysts can use their understanding of learning and behavior to address issues such as improving teamwork, internal communication and overall organizational culture.

4. Benchmarking (that compares an organization's work environment with industry standards or best practices as a basis for improvement) or comparative analysis (that evaluates the organization's work environment in comparison with similar organizations, highlighting strengths and areas requiring attention).

The most effective and well-proven methods for investigating workplace climate include: Fiddler's methodology for assessing the psychological climate of an organisation, Leary's Questionnaire "Diagnosis of Interpersonal Relationships", Mehrabian's Questionnaire that measuring of affiliative tendency and sensitivity to rejection, and Seashore Group Cohesiveness Index Test, Express diagnostic tool for assessing workplace climate (developed by Lutoshkin, adapted by Mykhailiuk and Shepel), Group Cohesion Questionnaire (GCQ), Work Climate Questionnaire (WCQ) (developed by Deci, Connell, Ryan) so on.

Continuing exploring the unexplored dimension (via people-oriented climate, rule-oriented climate, result-oriented climate, and innovation-oriented climate [developed by Hussainy [35]] and further developing the idea of Priesemuth and Schminke [62] providing "Integrative Review and Development of a New Construct and Theoretical Framework Toxic Work Climates") we rationalize investigating characteristics of various types of workplace climates (using social indicators and observable manifestations of individual and group behavior).

1. Measuring workplace climate based on social indicators

When analyzed a neutral workplace climate through specific social lenses (cultural norms, leadership practices, and work atmosphere), we can reveal the following characteristics (table 1):



Table 1

Neutral workplace climate' social indicators

Key social indicators (cultural norms, leadership practices, working atmosphere)	
indicators	how social indicators influence
Objective Evaluations	Establish performance metrics based strictly on output and established KPIs rather than subjective biases
Clear Boundaries	Define expectations around working hours and communication to prevent burnout
Open Dialogue	Foster psychological safety where feedback and disagreements remain focused on tasks rather than personal attributes
Democratic & Inclusive Styles	Shift away from autocratic command-and-control toward participatory leadership, which empowers employees and reduces stress
Role Modeling	Leaders must visibly demonstrate equitable treatment and objective conflict resolution to build trust across the team
Conflict Resolution	Address grievances through impartial third parties or neutral HR evaluations. Employee relations cases are resolved objectively and promptly, with little evidence of recurring patterns (e.g., specific departments seeing higher complaint rates)
Unbiased Leadership and Resource Alignment	Rely on fair, equitable, and objective management practices to prevent favoritism and ensure equal opportunity. Ensure fair distribution of development opportunities and support systems
Cross-Departmental Collaboration	Departments engage transactionally to get work done, with open, polite, but strictly professional interactions
Turnover & Absenteeism Rates	Consistently stable or industry-average turnover. Absenteeism is usually tied to planned PTO rather than unscheduled "mental health" days
Employee Net Promoter Score	Scores typically sit in the neutral-to-positive range, indicating a personnel that is generally satisfied with the company

compiled by authors (based on [81, 34])

A neutral workplace climate measured through social indicators highlights functional detachment, transactional relationships, and a lack of strong emotional or behavioral extremes. It is neither highly restrictive (like a rule-oriented climate) nor deeply supportive (like a people-oriented climate), focusing instead on basic execution and standard operational equilibrium.

A people-oriented workplace climate "with the primary goal of appreciating and respecting people" (V.Skvarciany et al. [73]. prioritizes the well-being, growth, and psychological safety of employees over strict, task-driven metrics. It



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serves as a social norm that translates empathetic leadership into tangible, everyday organizational practices. “To develop this superior subordinate connection is critical and helps to develop feeling among employees that they are an important part of the team. Employees should be rewarded at the workplace for their contributions, which are essential to the growth of innovative ideas. Likewise, establishing a work-life balance culture will help to create a positive atmosphere at the workplace. Today's employees prefer a work schedule that is flexible. In order to build a people-oriented organizational atmosphere, it is also necessary to invest in employees' growth and success” (Hussainy [35]). A people-oriented workplace climate measured through social indicators (table 2)

Table 2

People-oriented workplace climate' social indicators

Key social indicators (cultural norms, leadership practices, atmosphere)	
Indicators	how social indicators influence
Psychological Safety	Employees feel safe to voice concerns, offer constructive criticism, and make mistakes without fear of retaliation or humiliation
Relational/Friendship Climate	The presence of supportive, collaborative social networks that promote trust and a deep sense of belonging to the company
Collaboration & Inclusivity	Teamwork is the default; diversity of thought is actively encouraged and integrated into decision-making
Work-Life Balance	The organization respects personal boundaries, measuring success by output and impact rather than face-time or hours logged
Continuous Learning	Development and upskilling are ingrained as standard practices, with failures viewed as opportunities for growth.
Empathetic Communication	Leaders actively listen, practice transparency, and provide constructive, growth-focused feedback
Servant Leadership	Management focuses on removing obstacles for their teams and supporting the professional and personal success of their direct reports
Recognition & Reward	Consistent, individualized acknowledgment of hard work and milestones keeps morale high
Autonomy & Empowerment	Leaders give employees ownership over their projects and the flexibility to determine how best to achieve their goals

compiled by authors (based on [73, 35])

highlights mutual trust, employee well-being, and a collaborative environment where individuals feel valued, supported, and psychologically safe.



A rule-oriented organizational climate (which based on “organization's defined rules, regulations, and processes” (D.Rudd & J.R.Mills [67]) prioritizes structure, strict policy adherence, and established norms to ensure predictability, safety, and operational order. “People will not be permitted to perform anything unless clear guidelines have been established. This attempts to ensure that all members of the organization are safe. The rule-oriented climate of an organization is based on tradition and a robust set of norms that cannot be readily modified, and employees are expected to follow procedures and follow rules and regulations. And pre-determined scenarios are frequently planned to use established processes and procedures” (Hussainy [35]).

Rule-oriented workplace climate’ measured through social indicators (cultural norms, leadership practices, and work atmosphere) (table 3)

Table 3

Rule-oriented workplace climate’ social indicators

Key social indicators (Environmental & Structural Cues)	
indicators	how social indicators influence
High Formalization	Ubiquitous use of standard operating procedures, manuals, and written guidelines
Vertical Hierarchy	Centralized, top-down decision-making where authority is clearly defined by title and rank, with communication flowing vertically rather than horizontally
Risk Aversion	An environment where policy deviation is discouraged, even if the outcome might be beneficial. Deviation from the standard is often viewed as a liability rather than an opportunity for innovation
Consistency	The primary goal is to ensure uniformity in product quality, safety, or service delivery
Predictability	A focus on standardized processes and consistent routines to minimize variability and error
Transactional Leadership	Leaders rely on formal reward and penalty systems to ensure compliance with company policies
Instructional and Directive	Managers spend significant time clarifying expectations, enforcing compliance, and auditing performance against rules
Process-Focused Oversight	Evaluation metrics are heavily tied to how tasks are executed (following the rules) rather than just the end results

compiled by authors (based on [67, 35])



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highlights strict adherence to organizational policies, standardized operating procedures, and a high priority on stability and behavioural predictability

A goal-oriented organizational climate (in which “it is expected from the employees to reach the specific organizational goals (that can be set on daily, weekly or monthly bases) in the specific time period in order to satisfy the organizational standards and rules” (P.Komenić, V.Bazdan, B.Agušaj [44]) prioritizes the pursuit of specific objectives, continuous improvement, and high performance. This requires a results-driven culture, performance-based norms, and catalytic leadership practices that transform broad objectives into actionable, day-to-day behaviors. “This approach is valuable because it provides insight into how to enhance individual-level performance: 1) leaders who prioritize employee development implement various management practices to convey their commitment to learning; 2) leaders who prioritize the demonstration of ability conform to a tournament model of career progression in which employees are encouraged to engage in ongoing implicit competitions with one another to “win” extrinsic rewards; 3) leaders who prioritize the avoidance of failure focus on events that challenge their appearance of competence, such as group member mistakes, errors, and subpar performance” (L.Dragoni [19]).

Goal-oriented workplace climate’ measured through social indicators (cultural norms, leadership practices, and work atmosphere) highlight whether the orientation leans toward learning (mastery) or proving (performance):

Table 4

Goal-oriented workplace climate’ key social indicators

Key social indicators (cultural norms, leadership practices, atmosphere)	
indicators	how social indicators influence
Knowledge Sharing vs. Knowledge Hoarding	Learning Orientation: Information is exchanged freely as a collective resource to solve problems and improve processes. Proving Orientation: Information may be utilized or closely guarded to manipulate value and highlight individual contributions



Key social indicators (cultural norms, leadership practices, atmosphere)	
indicators	how social indicators influence
Result over Process:	The focus rests on outcomes and impacts rather than strict adherence to legacy processes, allowing for agility
Data-Driven Accountability	Regular, transparent measurement of milestones is expected. Individuals hold themselves and their peers responsible for commitments
Constructive Competition	Teams are encouraged to push boundaries and exceed targets, fostering an environment where continuous improvement is the norm
Meritocracy	Recognition and rewards are directly correlated with performance and goal attainment rather than tenure
Transparent Goal-Setting	Utilizing KPIs, leaders ensure that top-level company goals cascade seamlessly into individual KPIs
Transformational Motivation	Instead of relying on rigid commands, leaders inspire commitment by connecting daily tasks to the broader organizational vision
Resource Alignment	Removing roadblocks and providing teams with the exact tools, budgets, and autonomy required to hit their marks
Empowering Autonomy	Giving employees the freedom to determine <i>how</i> they reach their targets, which fosters ownership and innovative problem-solving
High Energy & Focus	The atmosphere is dynamic and fast-paced, where individuals know precisely what matters most at any given time
Psychological Safety	The social climate ensures that team members feel comfortable pointing out flaws in current workflows or "voice behavior" without fear of retribution

compiled by authors (based on [44, 19, 35])

An innovation-oriented organizational climate is a safe, supportive environment with shared workplace atmosphere where policies, practices, and leadership actively encourage employees to generate, develop, promote, and implement new ideas (T.Kim, X.Wang, S.Schuh, Z.Liu [43]). It can be measured through key social indicators (cultural norms, leadership practices, and work atmosphere) including the following

Table 5

Innovation-oriented workplace climate' key social indicators

Key social indicators	how social indicators influence
Empowering (+) and disempowering (-) cultural norms	
"Fail Forward" Mentality (+)	Errors and failed hypotheses are treated as inevitable R&D costs and high-value learning data, never as grounds for career punishment



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Key social indicators	how social indicators influence
Strict Idea Meritocracy (+)	The strategic value of a proposal is judged solely on its data, logic, and potential impact, completely detached from the author's rank, tenure, or title
Constructive Dissatisfaction (+)	Continuous questioning of current internal processes ("if it's not broken, improve it anyway") is celebrated as a sign of high engagement rather than toxic rebellion
Radical and Fast Candor (+)	Direct, transparent, and immediate peer-to-peer feedback loops focused strictly on refining the product or strategy rapidly
Bias for Autonomous Action (+)	Autonomy is defaulted to the frontlines; employees are expected to make rapid decisions on the ground without waiting for multi-tiered executive sign-offs
Cross-Functional Boundarylessness (+)	Voluntarily looking into, learning from, and collaborating with other departments is seen as healthy organizational curiosity rather than political overstepping
Zero-Tolerance for Failure (-)	Any project miss or operational error is met with public blame or career stagnation, forcing teams to propose only ultra-safe, low-yield ideas
Tall Poppy Syndrome (-)	Individuals who show high initiative or present breakthrough ideas are socially marginalized by peers or viewed as compliance threats by insecure management
Status Quo Worship (-)	Blind reverence for legacy habits, historical processes, and past successes that aggressively rejects alternative, updated methodologies
Cover-Your-Ass (CYA) Bureaucracy (-)	Energy is directed toward generating massive paper trails, dodging accountability, and finding scapegoats rather than creating actual commercial value
The HiPPO Rule Dictatorship (-)	A dynamic where the Highest Paid Person's Opinion systematically overrides hard market data, creative alternatives, and front-line insights
Information and Resource Feudalism (-)	Treating technical data, consumer insights, and cross-functional budgets as private tools of political leverage rather than shared company assets
Empowering (+) and disempowering (-) leadership practices	
Sponsoring Strategic "Safe Spaces" (+)	Formally protecting budget, time, and talent for experimental, high-risk projects so teams can test hypotheses without fear of immediate budget cuts
Modeling Vulnerability (+)	Publicly sharing the leader's own past strategic missteps and what the organization learned from them, reducing the cultural stigma around failure
Framing Work as a Learning Horizon (+)	Shifting team goals from rigid operational outputs to learning objectives, treating early-stage failures as data acquisition rather than performance misses
Soliciting Targeted Blind-Spot Feedback (+)	Actively asking subordinates questions like, "What am I missing about this project?" or "What is the biggest risk we are ignoring?" to bypass the HiPPO effect

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Key social indicators	how social indicators influence
Decentralizing Decision Thresholds (+)	Establishing clear, high-dollar limits within which front-line employees can self-approve purchases or launch pilots without managerial sign-off
Celebrating Smart Failures Publicly (+)	Recognizing and rewarding teams who executed an innovative project with high discipline, even if the ultimate market or technical result failed
Results-Only Autonomy (-)	Telling employees they have "freedom to innovate" but punishing them instantly if their first experimental pilot does not yield immediate financial returns
Weaponizing Feedback Loops (-)	Using post-project reviews or performance evaluations to retroactively assign personal blame for systemic or unpredictable market failures
Micro-Managing Execution Pathways (-)	Dictating the exact, step-by-step methodology of a project rather than defining the desired strategic outcome and letting the team find the solution
Hoarding Strategic Context (-)	Restricting access to high-level market data, corporate strategy updates, or financial realities, forcing employees to innovate blindly in the dark
Inconsistent Reaction to Bad News (-)	Reacting with anger, defensiveness, or defensiveness when presented with negative test results, which trains employees to hide early warning signs
Favoring Safe, Incremental Predictability (-)	Consistently promoting, praising, and resourcing employees who deliver safe, predictable, incremental improvements while ignoring those pushing for breakthrough changes
Empowering (+) and disempowering (-) working atmosphere	
High Psychological Safety (+)	An ambient comfort where there is zero fear of looking foolish. Team members freely voice half-baked ideas, ask basic questions, and quickly flag errors
Vibrant "Creative Buzz" (+)	A palpable physical or digital energy characterized by spontaneous cross-functional debates, impromptu whiteboard sessions, and enthusiastic insight sharing
Hypothesis-Driven Optimism (+)	A default mindset where the phrase "Let's test it" consistently overrides "That will never work." Doubts are resolved through rapid piloting rather than abstract arguments
High Intrinsic Fuel (+)	A unifying passion centered around solving complex, meaningful puzzles. Work is approached as an exciting commercial challenge rather than a transactional 9-to-5 chore
Default-to-Trust Autonomy (+)	Micro-management is entirely absent. Employees are treated as competent experts from day one, receiving strategic support instead of constant oversight
Celebration of Early Pivots (+)	Collective validation is given not just to massive commercial successes, but to minor technical breakthroughs and even fast, resource-saving project closures
"Minefield" Paranoia (-)	A pervasive, low-grade dread regarding negative performance reviews. Employees are constantly tense, knowing any



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Key social indicators	how social indicators influence
	operational slip-up triggers public criticism or scapegoating
Artificial Harmony (Toxic Politeness) (-)	Meetings are defined by superficial consensus, passive nodding, and forced smiles. Real disagreements, constructive friction, and critical risks are pushed into toxic corridor gossip
Learned Helplessness Apathy (-)	A cynical resignation where teams stop proposing optimizations because they know good ideas will either be ignored or choked by administrative delays
Presenteeism & Surveillance Vibe (-)	Management focuses heavily on tracking screens, monitoring hours logged, and enforcing rigid schedules rather than evaluating tangible creative output and product milestones
"Behind-Closed-Doors" Secrecy (-)	Information regarding company direction and data metrics is heavily restricted. This transparency deficit breeds wild rumors, political positioning, and intense strategic confusion
Cold Transactional Formalism (-)	A completely clinical environment where communication is stripped of human connection. Employees strictly work to rule, entirely shutting down their imaginative capacities

compiled by authors (based on [1, 4, 10, 17, 49,69])

Empowering cultural norms (unspoken rules and shared beliefs give employees the psychological mandate to experiment, challenge assumptions, and push operational boundaries), and disempowering cultural norms (that covert cultural guardrail force employees into defensive survival mode, heavily penalizing original thought and protecting safe mediocrity). Leadership practices build psychological safety, provide strategic clarity, and give employees the structural autonomy needed to innovate. While cultural norms represent the unwritten rules, the working atmosphere is the immediate emotional, psychological, and sensory environment experienced by employees daily. It directly dictates whether talent feels inspired to create or forced to withdraw. This environment is intellectually stimulating, emotionally energizing, and psychologically protective, stripping away the invisible barriers that block creative risk-taking or forces employees to divert their cognitive energy away from innovation and toward personal emotional survival.



A positive, safe, supportive workplace culture can create an environment where employees feel valued, motivated, and committed to their work, leading to higher levels of engagement and performance.

In order for an organization to have better functionality and to be innovative and effective, it is important to analyse the system of operation, the duties assigned to employees, and the organizational climate”. [29]. Especially, taking into account how toxic workplace environment (in particular, disempowering cultural norms, poor leadership practices, and toxic working atmosphere, which lead to poor work performance, unsatisfactory discipline, tension in personal relationships, conflict, and a desire to change jobs [12; 64].

In order to “detox” negative workplace (according to Pfeffer [61] to Toxic Work Climates) Priesemuth and Schminke [62] provide holistic approach build on “Integrative Review and Development of a New Construct and Theoretical Framework Toxic Work Climates” (in particular for specific abusive supervision climate [40, 42, 50, 59, 83], bullying climate [22, 33, 36, 54, 74], harassment and discrimination climates [6, 22, 82], aggression and violence climates [13, 75, 80], ostracism climate [14, 23], social undermining climate [20, 25], incivility climate [7, 60, 76], interpersonal deviance climate [21, 28, 50, 57, 63, 77, 84], interactional justice climate [2, 47, 79, 88, 91]).

Abusive Supervision Climate has been related to a host of negative outcomes that impact individuals, their work relationships, and the functioning of the work unit overall. In particular, abusive supervision climates harm group processes and group productivity [50]. Another prominent trigger of abusive supervision climates is leader and executive behaviors that trickle down to the supervisory level and, in turn, to the employee level [50].



Table 6

Abusive supervision workplace climate' key social indicators

Key social indicators	how social indicators influence
Empowering (+) and disempowering (-) cultural norms	
Psychological Safety Dominance (+)	A foundational expectation that every single employee, regardless of rank, has an absolute, non-negotiable right to be treated with basic human dignity and psychological respect
Active Upward Feedback (+)	A culture where frontline employees feel completely safe and socially expected to critique, review, and evaluate their leaders' behavior without any fear of career retaliation
Collective Allyship & Bystander Intervention (+)	An unwritten rule that when a colleague is treated unfairly, peers will immediately step in, support the target, and report the abuse collectively rather than staying silent
Humanity-First Value Alignment (+)	A shared organizational belief that no amount of financial profit, technical genius, or market share is worth the psychological destruction of an employee
Radical Transparency and Documentation (+)	A standard team practice where all project critiques, performance reviews, and behavioral expectations must be explicitly written down, making covert gaslighting impossible
Zero Tolerance for Star Systems (+)	A cultural understanding that high-performing "toxic geniuses" or abusive top-earners will be fired just as fast as a low-performer if they violate human dignity standards
The "Results At All Costs" Myth (-)	A shared belief that extreme commercial success, high revenue, or brilliant technical output excuses a leader's verbal abuse, cruelty, or personal insults
The "Suck It Up" Resilience Trap (-)	A norm that rebrands enduring psychological hostility as a badge of honor, labeling targeted employees who complain as "weak," "too sensitive," or "not a culture fit."
Normalized Deficit Focus (-)	A collective expectation that team meetings and daily feedback should strictly focus on tearing down mistakes, public shaming, and identifying flaws, rather than constructive growth
Don't Rock the Boat (Omertà Culture) (-)	A powerful unwritten rule that speaking up against a powerful manager is a form of professional suicide, forcing peers to look away when a colleague is being publicly abused
Hierarchical Deference (The Divine Right of Managers) (-)	An ingrained cultural assumption that a person's corporate rank automatically gives them the right to treat subordinates as personal property or emotional punching bags
Learned Helplessness Acceptance (-)	A shared, cynical consensus among staff that <i>"things will never change here"</i> and <i>"that's just how [Manager's Name] is,"</i> killing any collective impulse to report bad behavior.
Empowering (-) and disempowering (+) leadership practices	
Instituting Skip-Level Safeguards (+)	Senior executives mandate regular, private "skip-level" feedback sessions, allowing frontline employees to report mid-level managerial behavior completely outside the abuser's line of sight

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Key social indicators	how social indicators influence
Enforcing 360-Degree Accountability (+)	Tying a manager's annual bonuses, promotions, and retention directly to anonymized peer and subordinate behavioral reviews rather than purely financial KPIs
Swift, Public Structural Intervention (+)	Immediately placing an abusive supervisor on formal performance improvement plans (PIPs) or terminating them when hostility is verified, sending an unambiguous message that bullying is a fireable offense
Mandating Transparent Communication Trails (+)	Forcing all project scope changes, critical feedback, and operational directives to be documented in writing on centralized systems, eliminating the abuser's ability to gaslight
Active Bystander Modeling (+)	Senior leaders visibly step in during cross-functional meetings to interrupt borderline hostile remarks, calmly but firmly saying, <i>"We focus on the data here, not personal attacks."</i>
Providing Protected Escape Hatches (+)	HR creates streamlined, no-penalty internal transfer protocols that allow targets of abuse to move to different teams immediately while an active investigation is underway
Weaponizing Performance Appraisals (-)	Abusive managers intentionally issue fabricated, highly subjective negative evaluations to destroy a target's professional credibility and prevent them from transferring out of the department
Calculated Public Humiliation (-)	Supervisors deliberately execute berating, sarcastic dressing-downs, or mocking behaviour during team meetings to visually assert dominance and terrify onlookers into submission
Gaslighting via Selective Amnesia (-)	Managers make erratic, shifting demands and later deny ever giving those instructions, shifting the blame entirely onto the subordinate to undermine their confidence
Executive Blind-Eye Endorsement (-)	Senior executives actively ignore formal complaints about a manager's cruelty because that manager "delivers the numbers," reinforcing the norm that financial profit overrides human dignity
Isolation and Ostracization Tactics (-)	Supervisors intentionally cut off targets from key email chains, critical project meetings, or team lunches to socially isolate them and signal to the team that the individual is toxic
Micro-monitoring and Fault-Finding Traps (-)	Setting impossible deadlines and micromanaging trivial tasks solely to document a minor operational slip-up, providing "justification" for further hostility
Atmosphere that disempowers (+) and empowers abuse (-)	
Psychological Safety Airbags (+)	An atmosphere where targets can immediately flag hostility to peers or upper management without fearing retaliation or professional blacklisting
Active Bystander Intervention (+)	A collective pact where team members calmly interrupt public berating during meetings, redirecting the conversation to objective data and diffusing the supervisor's emotional leverage
Radical Upward Accountability (+)	An environment where employee feedback loops (like 360 reviews or skip-level meetings) carry heavy structural weight, directly impacting a supervisor's promotion, bonus, or retention
Collective Solidaristic	A warm, empathetic peer network that immediately rallies around a



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Key social indicators	how social indicators influence
Support (+)	targeted colleague, validating their reality, documenting the abuse, and preventing psychological isolation
Objective Boundary Enforcements (+)	A highly professionalized environment where staff confidently decline late-night abusive texts or personal insults by calmly citing explicit company HR policies
De-escalation Centered Leadership (+)	An ambient calm where higher-level executives visibly model respectful dissent and immediately step in to coach or discipline mid-level managers who show flashes of hostility
Institutionalized Gaslighting (-)	An ambient gaslighting where targets who complain are told they are "too sensitive," "unable to handle pressure," or "misinterpreting jokes."
Fear-Driven Compliance (-)	A palpable tension where employees comply immediately with unreasonable demands out of a basic survival instinct, mistake-proofing their work solely to avoid becoming the next target
Public Humiliation Normalization (-)	A setting where yelling, sarcastic mocking, or personal insults during meetings are met with silence or nervous laughter from onlookers, signaling social acceptance
Performance-Shielded Impunity (-)	A culture where high revenue generation or technical expertise completely excuses a manager's cruelty, creating a "brilliant jerk" dynamic that HR refuses to touch
Siloed Vulnerability (-)	An atomized environment where employees are afraid to comfort targeted peers, driving individuals into deep emotional isolation out of fear of guilt-by-association
Unpredictable "Jekyll and Hyde" Volatility (-)	An erratic emotional baseline where teams constantly walk on eggshells, unable to predict whether a supervisor will react with praise or explosive anger to the same metric

compiled by authors (based on [40, 42, 50, 59, 83])

An "Empowering" atmosphere in this context does *not* mean healthy empowerment; rather, it refers to an environment that empowers the abuse to thrive, reinforcing the perpetrator's power and normalizing toxic behavior. Conversely, a Disempowering atmosphere refers to an environment that strips the abuser of their power, neutralizes the hostility, and protects the workforce. Empowering Leadership Practices refer to actions (by executive leadership or the abusers themselves) that validate, reward, and enable the abuse to continue unchecked. Disempowering Leadership Practices refer to systemic, behavioral interventions that strip the abuser of their leverage, protect targets, and actively dismantle the toxic power structure.



Bullying Climate has been associated with a variety of harmful consequences including member isolation, lower team success, and further incidences of bullying [33, 36, 74]. Several important antecedents of bullying climates have been identified, including social and group dynamics, social rules [54, 22] Finally, research demonstrates that collective stress experiences, such as role stressors, can create climates of bullying [74].

Table 7

Bullying workplace climate' key social indicators

Key social indicators	how social indicators influence
Empowering (-) and disempowering (+) cultural norms	
Active Bystander Responsibility (+)	A cultural expectation that any employee who witnesses relational aggression or bullying must immediately intervene, speak up, or formally report the incident
Total Psychological Safety Anchoring (+)	A baseline assumption that making mistakes, asking questions, or voicing dissenting opinions will never result in social exclusion or professional humiliation
Radical Inclusivity by Default (+)	A team-wide practice of actively looping in all relevant colleagues on communications, social circles, and projects, making relational ostracism structurally obvious and impossible
Dignity-First Performance Valuation (+)	The shared belief that <i>how</i> work gets done is just as important as the outcome, meaning toxic high-performers are viewed as liabilities, not assets
Transparent Vulnerability Optimization (+)	A culture where openly admitting blind spots, seeking peer assistance, and discussing failures are celebrated as signs of professional strength
Symmetric Accountability (+)	A deeply ingrained norm where workplace rules, behavioral standards, and ethical codes apply identically to entry-level interns and C-suite executives alike
"Thick Skin" Indoctrination (-)	A shared belief that harsh treatment, public dressing-downs, and aggressive sarcasm are merely "hazing rituals" or signs of a competitive, high-performance environment
Omertà (Code of Silence) (-)	A powerful peer-enforced norm where witnessing bullying behavior but staying completely silent is viewed as loyalty
Results at All Costs (The Output Excuse) (-)	The cultural consensus that extreme revenue generation, technical brilliance, or political status fully exempts an individual from basic human decency
The "Problem Child" Victim Narrative (-)	A collective assumption that employees who report bullying are simply "weak," "oversensitive," "difficult to manage," or lacking emotional resilience
Zero-Sum Survivalism	A cutthroat norm where peers actively avoid defending a targeted



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Key social indicators	how social indicators influence
	colleague out of relief that they themselves are not the current target of the bully
Informal Informant Networks (-)	A culture that rewards "court politics," where employees actively spy on, gossip about, and sabotage peers to curry favor with toxic, dominant leaders
Empowering (-) and disempowering (+) leadership practices	
Immediate, Direct Intervention (+)	Addressing micro-aggressions, subtle sabotage, and exclusionary behaviours the exact second they happen in meetings, making it clear that boundary-crossing has an instant social cost
Behavioural Performance Decoupling (+)	Scoring employees on <i>how</i> they achieve goals, not just <i>what</i> they achieve. A top-grossing employee with poor behavioural scores receives zero promotions or bonuses
Transparent "Skip-Level" Communication (+)	Conducting regular, private check-ins between frontline employees and senior executives, completely bypassing middle managers who might be hiding or practicing bullying
Structural Resource Accountability (+)	Designing clear, objective, and transparent workflows for project allocations, promotions, and bonuses so managers cannot weaponize resources to punish specific targets
Blameless Reporting Safeguards (+)	Establishing anonymous, third-party complaint channels that completely isolate the reporting employee from career retaliation by their immediate supervisor
Public Accountability Modeling (+)	Promptly removing or visibly disciplining toxic high-performers, demonstrating to the entire organization that human dignity is a non-negotiable operational boundary
Calculated Inaction (Bystander Leadership) (-)	Intentionally ignoring clear, documented signs of relational aggression, exclusion, or verbal hostility under the guise of wanting employees to " <i>sort it out among themselves.</i> "
Weaponizing Performance Management (-)	Using official performance improvement plans, arbitrary schedule changes, or sudden micro-management to systematically push out employees who speak up against favoured bullies
Triangulation and Favouritism (-)	Creating a "court culture" where the leader plays subordinates against each other, rewarding informants, and giving unchecked social power to a selected inner circle
Gaslighting Targeted Employees (-)	Minimizing reported abuse by telling the victim they are " <i>misinterpreting the tone,</i> " being " <i>too sensitive,</i> " or claiming that the bully " <i>just has a passionate communication style.</i> "
Rewarding Toxic Performance (-)	Promoting or publicly praising high-producing employees who consistently humiliate peers, send aggressive late-night demands, or steal credit for collaborative work
Ostracism by Proxy (-)	Informally signalling to a team that a specific colleague is "difficult to work with," effectively triggering collective mobbing and social isolation of that target by their peers
Empowering (+) and disempowering (-) working atmosphere	
Guaranteed Psychological Safety (+)	Employees operate with the certainty that they can take creative risks, voice dissenting opinions, or report misconduct without



Key social indicators	how social indicators influence
	facing career retaliation
Objective Accountability (+)	Behavior policies apply equally to everyone. A toxic manager or high-revenue executive faces the same disciplinary consequences as an entry-level worker
Constructive Disagreement (+)	Feedback focuses strictly on actions, data, and processes, completely eliminating personal insults, sarcasm, or character assassinations
Decentralized Power (+)	Autonomy is high, and clear boundaries prevent managers from abusing their authority or using access to information as a tool for control
Robust Support Systems (+)	Employees have access to neutral grievance pathways, mediation, and mental health support, ensuring they never feel isolated
Erosion of Agency (-)	Continuous micromanagement, gaslighting, or shifting goalposts make employees second-guess their skills, destroying professional self-worth
The Silence Trap (-)	Targets and witnesses withhold ideas, feedback, or innovation out of survival instinct, fearing that speaking up will make them the next target
Fractured Collaboration (-)	Bullies often use "divide and conquer" tactics, spreading rumors or social exclusion. This breaks trust and turns colleagues into competitors or passive bystanders
Weaponized Mistakes (-)	Errors are not treated as learning opportunities but are publicly exposed to humiliate the target, leading to a culture of blame and risk-aversion
Institutional Betrayal (-)	If leadership or HR protects a high-performing bully over the victim, the entire workforce internalizes that the system is unsafe, driving high turnover and chronic absenteeism

compiled by authors (based on [22, 33, 36, 54, 74])

Empowering Cultural Norms by enabling Bullying normalize hostility, protect toxic actors, and force targets into isolated, defensive survival modes. Within a Bullying Workplace Climate, leadership practices do not just influence productivity—they actively dictate whether bullying behaviours thrive or die out. When bullying is tolerated, ignored, or rewarded, it creates a systemic trap that dismantles employee confidence, autonomy, and psychological well-being. An empowering workspace does not mean a conflict-free workspace; rather, it is an environment designed to prevent healthy friction from degrading into systematic abuse.



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Researchers of **Interactional Justice Climate** [62] focus on “because it captures the interpersonal treatment people directly receive from authorities and other members in the organization [16; 79] showed that interactional justice climate has a direct effect on group harmony, which in turn relates to team task and helping behaviors, that justice climate can act as a mechanism by which social exchange processes influence group affective tone [2], influences on team effectiveness [79].

An Interactional Justice Climate refers to a shared perception among employees that they are treated with dignity, respect, and honesty by organizational authorities during the enactment of procedures and outcomes. It focuses heavily on interpersonal communication, transparency, and fairness in treatment (table 8).

Table 8

Interactional Justice workplace climate' key social indicators

Key social indicators	how social indicators reflect
Empowering (+) and disempowering (-) cultural norms	
Radical Explanation Default (+)	A shared expectation that any major organizational change, policy shift, or resource reallocation must be accompanied by an honest, thoroughly detailed rationale from leadership
Dignity Equivalence (+)	The collective belief that all individuals—regardless of their hierarchical status, tenure, or output—deserve identical, baseline interpersonal respect
Clean-Slate Constructive Feedback (+)	A shared value that performance evaluations and behavioral corrections should be delivered privately, objectively, and entirely free of personal insults or historical grudges
Bi-Directional Vulnerability (+)	A culture where leaders openly admit to mistakes, gaps in knowledge, or operational errors, proving that honesty is valued over an artificial facade of perfection
No-Spin Transparency (+)	A standard practice of delivering difficult news (such as budget cuts or restructuring) directly and truthfully, rejecting corporate euphemisms or deceptive spin
"Need-to-Know" Information Hoarding (-)	A cultural assumption that withholding data, strategic plans, or operational updates from the frontlines is a legitimate tool of managerial power and control
Transactional Dehumanization (-)	A collective normalization of treating employees strictly as corporate resources or metrics, stripping away personal empathy from professional interactions

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Key social indicators	how social indicators reflect
The "Gaslighting" Apology Avoidance (-)	A norm where leadership and dominant peers systematically avoid taking accountability for interpersonal slights, re-framing the target's negative reaction as "paranoia" or "hypersensitivity."
Public Performance Execution (-)	A culture that tolerates or celebrates public dressing-downs, aggressive call-outs, or open humiliation as acceptable forms of performance management
Clandestine Decision-Making (-)	A shared belief that critical decisions affecting the entire team should happen behind closed doors, leaving staff to rely on rumors and office gossip to find out what is happening
Selective Courtesy (Hierarchical Sycophancy) (-)	An unwritten rule that respect is only paid upward, where leaders treat executives with extreme politeness while remaining dismissive, rude, or abrupt with lower-level staff
Empowering (+) and disempowering (-) leadership practices	
Comprehensive Context Sharing (+)	Providing the full, unvarnished "why" behind difficult management decisions, resource cuts, or structural changes, rather than just issuing top-down directives
Private Performance Remediation (+)	Conducting all corrective feedback sessions, performance critiques, and behavioral interventions strictly behind closed doors to protect the employee's dignity
Active Listening Validation (+)	Demonstrating behavioral tracking during discussions (e.g., summarizing an employee's viewpoint accurately) before presenting a counterargument or final decision
Prompt, Public Error Ownership (+)	Modeling vulnerability by immediately and publicly apologizing when a managerial decision, projection, or interpersonal interaction falls short
Proactive Information Inflow (+)	Creating structured, reliable channels (such as weekly open-door office hours or skip-level check-ins) to ensure frontline staff are fully informed of high-level company trajectories
Informational Redlining (Mushroom Management) (-)	Keeping subordinates intentionally in the dark ("feeding them dirt and leaving them in the dark") regarding strategic pivots that directly affect their daily work
Public Accountability Humiliation (-)	Calling out individual errors, missed deadlines, or performance deficits in open team meetings or public digital channels (e.g., group Slack channels)
Dismissive Micro-Behaviors (-)	Checking phones, answering emails, or cutting off employees mid-sentence during one-on-one meetings, signaling that the employee's time and input are worthless
Passive-Aggressive Sarcasm (-)	Masking toxic criticisms, personal digs, or insults as "jokes," then shifting the blame to the employee for "not having a sense of humor."
Stonewalling and Ghosting (-)	Intentionally ignoring emails, delaying critical project approvals, or canceling one-on-one meetings without explanation to assert dominance or signal displeasure
Deceptive Corporate Spin (-)	Utilizing overly sanitized, evasive HR jargon or half-truths to obscure negative news, insults to intelligence, or impending layoffs



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Key social indicators	how social indicators reflect
Empowering (+) and disempowering (-) working atmosphere	
Psychologically Safe Openness (+)	A daily climate where employees voice dissenting opinions, raise red flags, or admit knowledge gaps without fear of social mockery
Default Informational Access (+)	A collaborative setup where project data, strategic goals, and cross-departmental insights are shared openly, eliminating gatekeeping
Universal Professional Civility (+)	A peer-to-peer baseline where active listening, polite language, and fundamental respect are maintained across all hierarchical levels
Constructive, Multi-Directional Feedback (+)	A culture where feedback flows smoothly up, down, and sideways, focused entirely on refining the work rather than tearing down the person
Empathetic Crisis Support (+)	A collective response where teams rally around colleagues facing personal or professional crises, providing logistical backup and genuine support
Transparent Decision Trail (+)	An environment where the reasoning, data, and human considerations behind organizational changes are clearly visible to everyone
Tense, Walk-on-Eggshells Paranoia (-)	A constant underlying stress where employees monitor every word, fearing that a minor misstep will trigger public humiliation or managerial wrath
Normalized Interpersonal Incivility (-)	A toxic daily baseline where passive-aggressive comments, public sarcasm, and dismissive eye-rolling are tolerated as "just part of the job."
Weaponized Gossip and Backchannels (-)	A political landscape dominated by whispering campaigns, targeted social exclusion, and strategic rumors designed to damage reputations
The "Scapegoat" Blame Game (-)	A defensive climate where teams immediately search for an individual to blame when a project slips, rather than fixing the broken process
Deceptive corporate Gaslighting (-)	An atmosphere where valid employee concerns about workload, burnout, or unfair treatment are dismissed by leadership as "lack of resilience."

compiled by authors (based on [2, 91, 47, 79, 88, 91])

Combining with other social metrics these social indicators can help evaluate quality of interpersonal treatment employees experience during the process.

2. Measuring workplace climate based on behavioural markers

Organizational climate is widely acknowledged as a key construct for examining how organizations shape employee behavior. Core workplace climate social indicators (based on qualitative social dynamics, relevant quantitative HR-metrics (staff turnover, engagement rate, statistics on absenteeism, performance



indicators and quality of work, pulse survey participation rate, etc.), and positive and negative behavioral and emotional markers (that can be observed and measured in real time) which help to assess the workplace climate. This is what shapes the company's analytics and reflects the deeper processes inside the workplace climate.

A neutral workplace climate occurs when an organization's atmosphere is perceived as neither strongly supportive nor explicitly hostile. Employees in this environment typically view management decisions as transactional, leading to compliance rather than deep engagement and commitment. While it lacks the energy of a highly positive culture, it also avoids the toxicity of a negative one.

Table 9

A neutral workplace climate' observable behavioral markers

Behavioral markers (observable employee actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Work/Business communication only	Conversations concern only work issues, there is no personal interest in colleagues' affairs.
Formality	Formal correspondence, strict adherence to the chain of command, even amongst colleagues at the same level
Emotional Restraint	Absence of strongly expressed positive or negative emotions. There is neither corporate euphoria nor open hostility
Indifference towards corporate culture	Little involvement in informal events (staff parties, joint celebrations) or a tendency to ignore them
Predictable Boundaries	Strict adherence to working hours, minimal after-hours emailing, and clear separation of work-life roles.
Objective & Task-Focused	Discussions center around projects, deadlines, and deliverables rather than personal drama, office gossip, or excessive social chatter
Low Conflict Escalation	Disagreements occur but are treated as problems to be solved with HR or management as a last resort
Procedural Adherence	Strict reliance on company policy, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and established hierarchies for decision-making
Minimal OCB or CWB or Stability without initiative	Employees rarely exhibit extreme Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB, such as going far above and beyond) or Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWB, such as intentional sabotage or bullying). Employees carry out their duties strictly in accordance with instructions, but do not show initiative or contribute new ideas The key motivator is salary, rather than job satisfaction or the company's mission



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Here are key productive (*are driven by duty, routine, and standard operating procedures rather than passion or high engagement*) and counterproductive (*stem from apathy, disengagement, and a lack of emotional investment in the company's success*) behavioral markers associated with a neutral workplace climate (table 10).

Table 10

Primary productive and counterproductive behavioral markers associated with a neutral workplace climate

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Punctuality (+)	Staff members generally adhere to official working hours and scheduled meeting times
Consistent task completion (+)	Employees complete assigned task lists, reliably meet deadlines and fulfill their basic job descriptions
Procedural compliance (+)	Workers strictly follow rules, guidelines, standard operating procedures and safety protocols
Predictable/expected performance (+)	Output remains steady without major fluctuations or unexpected drops. Work quality consistently meets the baseline metrics and KPIs required
Siloed execution (+)	People do their own work efficiently without volunteering to help others
Polite communication (+)	Interactions remain professional, courteous, and strictly limited to business matters
Low interpersonal conflict (+)	Formal boundaries keep overt arguments and dramatic workplace friction to a minimum
Presenteeism (-)	Employees physically or digitally present but do lack mental investment and drive or working slowly
Quiet quitting (-)	Staff members strictly refuse to volunteer for any tasks outside their strict job duties
Information hoarding (-)	Communication is strictly functional. People rarely share insights, shortcuts, or knowledge across teams or departments
Minimal collaboration (-)	Teams work in isolation and avoid cross-functional or voluntary joint projects
Lack of initiative (-)	Employees notice problems or inefficiencies but do not report or fix them. Employees do not offer new ideas because they perceive no reward for creativity
Work-to-rule (-)	Staff stop working the exact minute their official shift or contract ends
Resistance to change (-)	Teams respond to new initiatives with passive apathy or rigid, malicious compliance



Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Minimizing effort (-)	Individuals do just enough work to avoid disciplinary action or negative performance reviews
Zero feedback (-)	Employees remain silent during meetings and offer no new ideas or suggestions

compiled by authors (based on [81, 34])

A people-oriented workplace climate prioritizes employee well-being, growth, inclusivity, and open communication. In this environment, specific daily actions clearly signal whether the culture is thriving or breaking down.

Table 11

A people-oriented workplace climate' observable behavioral markers

Observable behavioral markers	
markers	what we can observe
Proactive "Voice" Behavior	Employees regularly share suggestions for improvement and express constructive opinions, confident their input is valued
Social Intelligence & Inclusion	Team members proactively recognize and adapt to diverse communication styles and perspectives, successfully navigating interpersonal dynamics
Organic Eco-Helping & Mentorship	Staff voluntarily support coworkers, share knowledge, and collaborate on shared goals rather than operating in siloes
High Employee Resilience	Individuals handle workplace stressors adaptively, often using errors as learning opportunities rather than occasions for blame
Constructive Conflict Resolution	Colleagues and leaders address disagreements transparently by asking open-ended questions and accepting feedback calmly, rather than ignoring social friction

compiled by authors (based on [73, 35])

Here are the observable productive and counterproductive behavioral markers of a people-oriented workplace climate (table 12).



Table 12

**Primary productive and counterproductive behavioral markers
 associated with a people-oriented workplace climate**

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Active collaboration (+)	Team members voluntarily share knowledge, help struggling colleagues, and work cross-functionally without friction
Frequent recognition (+)	Peers and managers regularly praise specific contributions, celebrating both minor wins and major milestones publicly
Empathetic listening (+)	Leaders give undivided attention during conversations, validate employee concerns, and ask open-ended questions
Proactive mentorship (+)	Experienced staff dedicate time to coach junior colleagues, guiding their professional development paths
Transparent communication (+)	Staff share information openly, explain the "why" behind decisions, and proactively update others on project shifts
Healthy boundaries (+)	Employees disconnect after hours, utilize their paid time off, and respect their colleagues' personal time
Siloed execution (-)	Individuals hoard information, refuse to assist other departments, and focus exclusively on personal metrics
Fear of Retaliation (-)	Staff stay silent during meetings, hide critical project errors, and agree passively with leadership
Credit stealing (-)	Workers claim ownership over joint successes, downplay peer contributions, and self-promote aggressively
Gossip and Cliques (-)	Subgroups form to exclude certain team members, spread rumors, and undermine peer credibility behind closed doors
Passive-aggressive feedback (-)	People use sarcastic remarks, cc-insult managers on emails, or give vague, unhelpful critiques
Presenteeism and Burnout (-)	Staff work long hours while sick, log in during vacations, and display chronic emotional exhaustion
Micro-management (-)	Leaders dictate exact task execution, demand constant status updates, and refuse to delegate decision-making authority

compiled by authors (based on [73, 35])

A goal-oriented workplace climate focuses heavily on performance, objectives, and metrics. It would be measured through observable behavioral markers (individual actions and team dynamics):



Table 13

Goal-oriented workplace climate' behavioral markers

Behavioral markers (observable employee actions) are the concrete, measurable actions of individuals that prove a goal-oriented climate is actively functioning	
markers	what we can observe
Goal Alignment & Congruence	Employees demonstrate a clear understanding of how their personal or departmental metrics tie into overarching organizational targets
Proactive Suggestion (Promotive Voice)	Employees regularly suggest new ideas, strategies, or workflow changes to improve current situations and address challenges
Adaptive Learning & Agility	Individuals bounce back from setbacks quickly, actively seeking new skills or strategies when current methods fail to meet targeted metrics
Strategic Risk-Taking	Employees engage in extra-role behaviors, such as taking on challenging tasks, to demonstrate competence or expand their capabilities
Social Comparison & Competition	Employees evaluate their capabilities against peers or external benchmarks to validate their performance and ensure strengths are recognized

compiled by authors (based on [,,,,,])

Investigating the goal-oriented workplace climate we can determine the two dimensions of a goal-oriented climate: the high-civility approach (when goals inspire collaboration, clear alignment, and shared accountability. Performance metrics are used as a roadmap for growth (with productive behavioral markers), and high-incivility approach: (because of goals weaponized to justify "winning at all costs." Metrics are used as compliance sticks, turning colleagues into threats (with counterproductive behavioral markers).

A **rule-oriented organizational climate** (which based on “organization's defined rules, regulations, and processes” (D.Rudd & J.R.Mills [67]) prioritizes structure, strict policy adherence, and established norms to ensure predictability, safety, and operational order.



Table 14

**Primary productive and counterproductive behavioral markers
associated with a rule-oriented workplace climate**

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Rigorous Protocol Adherence (+)	Executing technical checklists, safety measures, and operational guidelines precisely without taking unauthorized shortcuts
Meticulous Audit-Ready Documenting (+)	Maintaining flawless, highly detailed records and data logs that comply with external regulatory bodies
Systemic Precedent Referencing (+)	Analyzing historical organizational archives and legal rulings before drafting and implementing new processes
Proactive Quality Gatekeeping (+)	Correctly but firmly intervening when peers bypass mandatory compliance checkpoints or quality testing
Formal Process Optimization (+)	Submitting structured, data-backed change requests to update outdated regulations through official channels
Strict Chain-of-Command Communication (+)	Routing critical updates, operational risks, and cross-departmental requests exclusively through approved managerial lines
Malicious Compliance (Work-to-Rule) (-)	Deliberately executing flawed instructions verbatim to stall progress or embarrass leadership safely
Defensive Responsibility Shifting (-)	Refusing to make minor decisions without multi-layered, written approvals to avoid personal accountability
Dogmatic Process Worship (-)	Rejecting necessary, urgent operational pivots because the specific scenario lacks a pre-written handbook
Procedural Gatekeeping (-)	Weaponizing minor administrative technicalities to delay, sabotage, or veto innovative proposals from other teams
Punitive Error Hiding (-)	Concealing operational mistakes or system vulnerabilities out of intense fear of rule-enforcement sanctions
Strict Silo Insulation (-)	Refusing to assist struggling colleagues by strictly citing narrow, literal job descriptions

compiled by authors (based on [67, 35])

An innovation-oriented organizational climate is a safe, supportive environment with shared workplace atmosphere where policies, practices, and leadership actively encourage employees to generate, develop, promote, and implement new ideas (T.Kim, X.Wang, S.Schuh, Z.Liu [43]). It can be measured through social indicators (cultural norms and leadership practices) and observable



behavioral markers (individual actions and team dynamics) including the following:

Table 15

Innovation-oriented workplace climate' behavioral markers

markers	what we can observe
Behavioral markers (observable employee actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Idea Generation	Employees proactively identify workflow problems and frequently suggest alternative solutions
Championing Ideas	Employees actively seek out feedback and build coalitions of support for their new concepts across the company
Proactive Networking	Staff frequently engage in informal knowledge sharing and interdisciplinary brainstorming
Implementation & Adaptation	Teams successfully translate conceptual ideas into actionable processes, prototypes, or services
Challenge Seeking	Individuals readily volunteer for risky or ambiguous assignments instead of strictly sticking to known routines

compiled by authors (based on [1, 4, 10, 17, 49,69])

The primary productive and counterproductive behavioral markers that manifest within an innovation-focused environment are detailed below.

Table 16

Primary productive and counterproductive behavioral markers associated with Innovation-oriented workplace workplace climate

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Proactive Idea Championing (+)	Actively gathering feedback, building cross-functional alliances, and pitching unprompted concepts to leadership
Constructive Disagreement (+)	Engaging in professional, data-backed debates during meetings rather than defaulting to passive consensus
Rapid, Low-Cost Experimentation (+)	Launching quick prototypes, A/B tests, or pilot programs to validate ideas early before requesting heavy funding
Active Cross-Pollination (+)	Voluntarily sharing technical resources, research insights, and unique skills across siloed departments
Blameless Post-Mortems (+)	Publicly documenting project failures, isolating systemic causes, and openly sharing takeaways with the broader team
Autonomous Problem-Solving (+)	Identifying workflow bottlenecks and independently implementing alternative processes without waiting for a managerial mandate



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Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Idea Hoarding (-)	Intentionally concealing specialized project insights or data to maintain personal leverage or sole credit over an initiative
Performative Innovation (-)	Prioritizing flashy, trend-driven presentation decks over functional, revenue-generating implementation
Malicious Compliance (-)	Silently executing clearly flawed or outdated instructions without speaking up, ensuring the failure falls entirely on leadership
Sabotage of Peer Initiatives (-)	Micro-criticizing, withholding dependencies, or slow-walking requests to undermine a colleague's competing pilot program
Risk-Averse Cover-Ups (-)	Concealing early-stage test errors, minor defects, or missed milestones to escape perceived negative performance evaluations
Silo Defensiveness (-)	Aggressively rejecting external feedback, process audits, or optimization suggestions by claiming a project is too specialized for outsiders to comprehend

compiled by authors (based on [1, 4, 10, 17, 49,69])

An unfriendly or negative organizational climate is characterised by the exact opposite traits: members of these teams are indifferent towards one another and towards the team as a whole; they do not take an interest in the state of affairs; they simply work the required hours and show no interest in matters that do not directly concern them. In other words, it can be argued that in an unfriendly organizational climate, the team and each employee exist as if in isolation from one another; as if separated in time and space, which leads to poor work performance, unsatisfactory discipline, tension in personal relationships, conflict, and a desire to change jobs. In order to “detox” negative workplace climate (according to Pfeffer [61] to Toxic Work Climates) Priesemuth and Schminke [62] provide holistic approach build on “Integrative Review and Development of a New Construct and Theoretical Framework Toxic Work Climates” (in particluar for specific abusive supervision climate, bullying climate, harassment and discrimination climates, aggression and violence climates, ostracism climate, social undermining climate, interpersonal deviance climate, interactional justice climate).



An **abusive supervision climate** exists when employees collectively perceive that their supervisor engages in a sustained pattern of non-physical hostility, demeaning behavior, and public ridicule. In this toxic environment, employees develop specific behavioral tracks to survive the abuse, manage the leader's volatile moods, or protect their careers (table 17).

Table 17

Abusive supervision climate observable behavioral markers

Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Open Hostility	People yell, snap, or show harsh anger during daily tasks
Workplace Incivility	Coworkers use rude language, roll their eyes, or show a lack of basic respect
Ostracism and Isolation	Team members freeze out or avoid coworkers who get targeted by leaders to protect themselves
Low Cooperation	Workers stop helping one another, which hurts group teamwork and support
High Withdrawal	Employees pull back, show low effort, or talk about quitting their jobs
Unpunished Bad Conduct	Management ignores rude actions and fails to enforce fair rules

compiled by authors (based on [40, 42, 50, 59, 83])

The most reliable, observable behavioral markers are divided into **productive/prosocial markers** (strategic coping mechanisms used to sustain performance and protect the team) and **counterproductive markers** (destructive behaviors driven by fear, stress, and systemic retaliation) (table 18)

Table 18

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers (for Abusive Supervision Climate)

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Calculated Upward Ingratiation (+)	Employees engage in highly visible, strategic flattery and compliance ("yes-ing" the boss) specifically to manage the supervisor's mood and avoid becoming the next target



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Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Collective Underground Shielding (+)	Team members quietly look out for each other by absorbing blame, tipping off coworkers when the boss is in a "bad mood," or fixing a peer's mistake before the supervisor notices it
Hyper-Defensive Paper-Trailing (+)	A massive spike in written confirmations. Employees refuse to act on verbal commands, instead sending immediate summary emails (e.g., <i>"Just confirming your directive from 10:00 AM to proceed with..."</i>) to protect themselves from later flip-flopping
Over-Compliance with Volatile Demands (+)	Driving metrics and executing tasks with extreme urgency—even illogical ones—to prevent the supervisor from having a public outburst or throwing tantrums
Linguistic Moderation (Bunting) (+)	During meetings, employees carefully script their words, use overly formal language, and speak in short, neutral sentences to minimize any conversational hooks the supervisor could exploit to attack them
Allied Mistake-Pruning (+)	Coworkers meticulously cross-check each other's work logs and deliverables to ensure zero minor errors exist that could trigger a team-wide reprimand
Strategic Malicious Compliance (-)	Employees intentionally follow the supervisor's flawed or harmful instructions <i>exactly</i> as spoken, without correcting obvious errors, quietly waiting for the project to fail so the supervisor looks bad to upper management
Displaced Aggression (The Trickle-Down Effect) (-)	Mid-level managers or senior team members who are abused by the supervisor turn around and abuse newer, lower-status employees or interns to release their frustration
Workplace Cyberloafing and Presenteeism (-)	Employees spend significant portions of the workday visibly staring at screens but actively browsing social media, shopping, or job-hunting as a psychological escape from the immediate environment
Aggressive Retaliatory Venting (-)	The emergence of heavy, emotionally charged "gripe sessions" in breakrooms, private chat channels, or parking lots, which actively tank team morale and focus
Deliberate Slow-Walking (-)	Purposely dragging out timelines and slowing down production speeds on tasks the supervisor is highly anxious about, acting as a passive-aggressive form of resistance
Systemic Absenteeism and Ghosting (-)	A sudden, observable pattern of employees calling out sick, taking extended lunches, or completely ghosting mandatory but non-essential team-building events led by the supervisor
Defensive Knowledge Hoarding (-)	Employees stop sharing critical shortcuts, client insights, or cross-training knowledge with the team, keeping their expertise siloed as a form of individual leverage and job security against being suddenly fired

compiled by authors (based on [40, 42, 50, 59, 83])



A **bullying workplace climate** is an environment where toxic, hostile, or aggressive behaviors become normalized, systemic, and tolerated due to weak conflict resolution and poor leadership. Observable behavioral markers can be categorized into three distinct operational dimensions (that weaponize professional duties, metrics, and organizational structures to undermine a target's competence, standing, and economic security; focus on attacking an employee's personal dignity, social connections, and psychological safety within the team; demonstrate how systemic bias and a lack of psychological safety manifest dynamically in physical and digital spaces): (table 19.

Table 19

Bullying workplace climate observable behavioral markers

Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Work-Related Bullying Markers	
Information withholding	Intentional concealment of data, deadlines, or client updates to induce performance failure
Impossibility engineering	Allocating unmanageable workloads or moving deadlines without justification to ensure missed metrics
Task stripping	Removing key responsibilities or replacing them with menial, low-skill tasks without an organizational rationale
Persistent micro-management	Excessive, intrusive tracking of everyday tasks paired with relentless, hyper-critical reviews
Person-Related Bullying Markers	
Social isolation	Deliberate exclusion from team meetings, social channels, group lunches, or collaborative projects
Silent treatment	Coworkers or managers looking away, stopping conversation, or ignoring direct professional approaches
Public humiliation	Shouting, insults, or demeaning critiques delivered in front of colleagues or clients
Gossip networks	Spreading rumors, unverified allegations, or personal mockery behind a target's back
Organizational Injustice & Physical Climate Markers	
Physical intimidation	Aggressive posture, finger-pointing, blocking exits, or invading a person's immediate desk space
Digital harassment	Hostile or patronizing communication via email, Slack , or Teams , often copied to senior management to cause damage
Punitive enforcement	Inequitable application of HR metrics or disciplinary procedures toward specific individuals
Management silence	Leadership ignoring explicit reports of harassment, actively prioritizing corporate self-interest over staff welfare

compiled by authors (based on [22, 33, 36, 54, 74])



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The most reliable, observable productive (which demonstrate an active resistance to bullying, fostering a healthy, high-performing culture) and counterproductive (indicating that a bullying culture is actively tolerated, modeled, or left unchecked) behavioral markers of a bullying workplace workplace climate include (table 20)

Table 20

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers (for Bullying workplace climate)

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Psychological Safety and Openness	
Constructive disagreement (+)	Employees openly challenging ideas without fear of personal retaliation or ridicule
Vulnerability modeling (+)	Leaders publicly admitting their mistakes and asking for team input
Equal speaking time (+)	Meetings structured so that all team members have a voice, not just the loudest
Active Support and Upstander Behavior	
Immediate intervention (+)	Colleagues stepping in to stop disrespectful behavior the moment it happens
Peer amplification (+)	Team members explicitly crediting and validating a colleague's contribution during group discussions
Visible allyship (+)	Checking in privately with a coworker after a tense meeting to offer emotional or professional support
Aggressive and Hostile Communication	
Public humiliation (-)	Managers or peers shouting at, mocking, or belittling employees in front of others
Persistent criticism (-)	Focusing entirely on mistakes while ignoring achievements and progress
Sarcasm and insults (-)	Using condescending language disguised as "jokes" or "banter."
Silencing behaviors (-)	Interrupting, talking over, or aggressively shutting down specific individuals during meetings
Social Isolation and Exclusion	
The "silent treatment" (-)	Leaving a targeted employee out of relevant conversations, emails, or project updates
Physical segregation (-)	Moving an employee's desk away from the team without a operational reason
Social ostracization	Excluding specific team members from casual lunches, coffee breaks, or team-building events



Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Work Manipulation and Sabotage	
Moving the goalposts (-)	Changing project requirements or deadlines without notice to guarantee failure
Withholding resources (-)	Denying access to necessary information, tools, or training required to complete a task
Overloading or underloading (-)	Assigning impossible workloads to induce burnout, or stripping away all meaningful duties to humiliate
Credit theft (-)	Superiors or peers taking credit for a targeted employee's ideas or hard work
Systemic and Organizational Symptoms	
High turnover (-)	A revolving door of employees, particularly within specific departments or under certain managers
Spike in absenteeism (-)	Frequent call-outs, late arrivals, and increased use of mental health or sick days
"Huddling" and whispering (-)	Employees constantly gathering in closed-door sessions or side-channels to vent or gossip
Defensive documentation (-)	Staff spending excessive time logging every interaction and email to protect themselves

compiled by authors (based on [62, 22, 33, 36, 54, 74])

Harassment and Discrimination Climates [62] have gained increased attention due to harassment at work that includes any negative interactions that affect the terms, conditions, or employment decisions related to a person's job, with the potential to create a hostile environment overall. Although studies at the collective (climate) level remain sparse, some research reveals that climates of harassment or discrimination are costly for groups and their members. With respect to antecedents, research points to external influences as fostering levels of harassment in and between groups. A harassment and discrimination workplace climate is defined by a culture where hostile, demeaning, or unfair treatment based on protected characteristics (such as race, gender, age, or disability) is permitted, ignored, or systemic. The core observable behavioral markers of a toxic workplace harassment and discrimination climate include can be categorized with four primary dimensions: increased interpersonal hostility, visible demographic silos, spiking absenteeism, and systemic communication breakdowns (table 21).



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Table 21

Harassment and Discrimination Climates observable behavioral markers

Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
Markers	what we can observe
Interpersonal and Communication Markers	
Targeted microaggressions, microaggressions disguised as humor	Frequent backhanded compliments, subtle insults, or exclusionary body language directed at specific demographic groups. Making derogatory or stereotypical jokes followed by defensive statements like "it was just a joke"
Aggressive policing of tone	Weaponizing professional standards against minority employees while ignoring similar behaviors in dominant groups
Sudden conversational silences	Conversations abruptly ending or changing topics when a specific individual or manager enters the room
Over-allocation of minor tasks	Consistently assigning administrative "office housework" (e.g., note-taking, scheduling) to women or minority staff
Interruption and credit theft	Repeatedly cutting off specific employees during meetings or re-voicing their ideas without attribution
Operational and Task-Assignment Markers	
Spiking selective absenteeism	Sudden increases in sick leave, mental health days, or missed meetings specifically tied to certain team interactions
Opportunity hoarding	Disproportionately assigning high-visibility projects, promotions, or mentorship to a favored group
The "Quiet Quitting" shift	A sudden drop in discretionary effort, voluntary participation, and innovation from previously highly engaged employees
"Glass cliff" positioning	Assigning minorities or targeted individuals to high-stakes, poorly supported projects with a high probability of failure
Inconsistent performance evaluation	Criticizing one employee for a behaviour (e.g., being "too aggressive") while praising another for the same trait (e.g., being "assertive")
Exclusionary networking	Holding critical business discussions or strategy sessions during informal gatherings where specific individuals are excluded
Malicious compliance	Employees strictly following rules to the letter to avoid interaction or blame, signalling a lack of psychological safety
High turnover in specific pockets	Elevated resignation rates concentrated under specific managers or within distinct demographic segments
Structural and Team Dynamics	
Demographic siloing	Staff self-segregating by race, gender, or age during lunches, breaks, or voluntary social events
In-group favoritism	Managers visibly offering mentorship, high-profile projects, and informal networking opportunities only to employees who share their background
Inequitable performance scrutiny	Applying hyper-critical metrics to minority employees while evaluating majority peers on vague concepts like "potential"/"culture fit."



Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
Markers	what we can observe
Fear of feedback	Employees displaying visible anxiety, defensiveness, or sycophancy during routine performance evaluations
Reporting and Accountability Indicators	
The "Missing Letter" effect	A complete absence of formal complaints in a high-turnover department, indicating a deep distrust in the HR process
Retaliation bypass	Employees actively avoiding reporting channels and instead requesting immediate department transfers or external exits
Social media leaking	An influx of anonymous negative reviews on platforms like Glassdoor focusing on discrimination, fairness, or management bias.

compiled by authors (based on [62, 6, 22, 82])

When harassment and discrimination climates take root, employees exhibit two distinct behavioral paths: productive/prosocial markers (where targeted employees or allies try to safely navigate the hostile environment, protect themselves legally, or maintain performance standards despite the pressure) and counterproductive markers (destructive behaviors driven by systemic unfairness, trauma, or the adoption of toxic norms) (table 22)

Table 22

**Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers
(for Harassment and Discrimination Climates)**

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Hyper-Rigid Process Documentation (+)	Employees meticulously document every interaction, instruction, and feedback session in writing (e.g., sending "As per our conversation" emails immediately after verbal chats) to create a protective paper trail
Under-the-Radar Ally Networks (+)	The formation of quiet, cross-departmental support systems where marginalized employees safely share survival strategies, vet managers, and validate each other's experiences
Performative Over-Preparation (+)	Targets of discrimination over-prepare for presentations and metrics reviews to a visible extreme, ensuring their work is mathematically undeniable so it cannot be dismissed due to bias
Strategic Code-Switching (+)	Targeted individuals noticeably shift their speech patterns, dress, mannerisms, or expressions between shared spaces



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	and private circles to blend in and minimize becoming a target for harassment
Formalized Boundary Setting (+)	Employees strictly enforcing professional boundaries, such as refusing to attend informal, off-the-clock work events where harassing behaviors are known to escalate
Visible Bystander Interventions (+)	Allies using micro-interventions during meetings, such as repeating and attributing a dismissed idea back to a marginalized colleague (e.g., <i>"I want to circle back to what Maria said, because that solves our budget issue"</i>)
Discriminatory Mimicry (-)	Coworkers and mid-level managers adopt the biased language, inappropriate jokes, or exclusionary behaviors of senior leaders to secure their own positions within the dominant clique
Retaliatory Information Withholding (-)	Targets or witnesses of harassment intentionally stop sharing critical knowledge, client insights, or shortcuts with perpetrators, quietly allowing them or their projects to fail
Chronic, Protective Absenteeism (-)	A sharp increase in employees taking sudden sick leave, mental health days, or arriving late specifically on days when known harassers are in the office or leading meetings
Vocal Disengagement and Cynicism (-)	Targeted employees openly criticizing company diversity initiatives or HR policies during team settings, viewing them as hypocritical or performative facades
Aggressive Defensiveness (-)	Individuals in a discriminatory climate quickly becoming hostile, combative, or overly defensive during routine performance reviews, anticipating that feedback is rooted in bias rather than objective data
Siloed Performance Sabotage (-)	Dominant group members actively undermining the work of marginalized colleagues by "forgetting" to loop them into client calls, stripping them of high-profile accounts, or reassigning their victories to others
Mass Silent Resignation (Turnover Spikes) (-)	High-performing, diverse talent suddenly exiting the company with minimal notice, refusing to provide constructive feedback during exit interviews out of fear of retaliation

compiled by authors (based on [62, 6, 22, 82])

Aggression and Violence Climates Workplace aggression has been broadly defined as behavior intended to harm others at work or the organization itself [62] via three types of aggression: hostility (e.g., verbal aggression), overt aggression (e.g., assault), and obstructionism (e.g., actions designed to impede individuals from performing a job). Beyond safety assertions, violence research suggests



social–environmental processes including leadership, social learning, and aggressive norms as triggers for the emergence and effects of workplace violence.

An Aggression and Violence Climates refers to a shared perception among employees that negative, harmful, or disrespectful behaviors are tolerated or normalized within the work environment (table 23).

Table 23

Aggression and Violence climate observable behavioral markers

Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Public belittling (aggressive teasing)	Managers or peers mocking colleagues during meetings (by (Mocking an individual's personal traits, habits, or appearance)
Persistent incivility	Frequent eye-rolling, heavy sighing, or interrupting
Credit theft	Routinely taking ownership of a subordinate's or peer's ideas
Social exclusion	Deliberately leaving specific team members out of lunches, emails, or projects
Blame shifting	Routinely scapegoating peers for collective project failures
Aggressive communication	Shouting, using profanity, or slamming doors during disagreements
Cruel humor	Sarcastic jokes targeted at individuals disguised as "harmless banter."
Low psychological safety	Team members keeping silent during meetings out of fear of ridicule
Hoarding resources	Hiding data, tools, or information to make peers fail
Defensive language	Frequent use of phrases like "it's not my job" or "that's your problem."
Unequal enforcement	Rules or punishments applied strictly to some but ignored for "star performers."

Compiled by authors (based on [62, 13, 75, 80])

The most reliable, observable productive (healthy climate signs) and counterproductive behavioral markers (signs indicate a climate that normalizes, tolerates, or fosters aggression and violence) of a Aggression and Violence workplace Climates include (table 24)



Table 24

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers
(for Aggression and Violence workplace Climates)

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Active listening (+)	Giving full attention and validating others' perspectives
Constructive dissent (+)	Disagreeing openly and respectfully without personal attacks
Collaborative problem-solving (+)	Seeking win-win solutions during intense disagreements
Empathetic validation (+)	Acknowledging colleagues' frustrations before addressing the issue
Boundary setting (+)	Calmly and clearly communicating personal and professional limits
Bystander intervention (+)	Stepping in safely to diffuse tense or inappropriate interactions
Accountability seeking (+)	Owning mistakes immediately and offering genuine apologies
Reporting transparency (+)	Utilizing formal channels to report early warning signs
Microaggressions (-)	Subtle, frequent verbal or nonverbal insults
Social exclusion (-)	Deliberately ostracizing or ignoring specific team members
Targeted incivility (-)	Sarcasm, eye-rolling, and public belittling during meetings
Bullying behavior (-)	Persistent intimidation, gaslighting, or malicious rumors
Territorial defense (-)	Hostile reactions to constructive feedback or collaboration
Verbal hostility (-)	Shouting, cursing, or using highly aggressive language
Physical intimidation (-)	Towering over others, slamming doors, or invading personal space
Property damage (-)	Throwing objects, punching walls, or damaging equipment

compiled by authors (based on [62, 13, 75, 80])

Ostracism Workplace Climate [62] describes the extent to which individuals believe they are ignored or excluded by others at work [23]. Ostracism has been explored at the group level, demonstrating that employees can collectively perceive a climate of exclusion [14]. An ostracism workplace climate occurs when an individual or group is systematically ignored, excluded, or rejected by others in the organization. Unlike active harassment or social undermining—which involve negative actions—ostracism is defined by the omission of social and professional interaction, making it a form of passive psychological mistreatment that is highly damaging to employee well-being.



Observable behavioral markers of a ostracism climate can be categorized into four primary dimensions: physical and spatial isolation (when perpetrators use physical distance and spatial cues to signal that the target does not belong); communication deletion and silence (involve the systematic removal of the target from the daily flow of information and basic workplace pleasantries); professional and social exclusion (involve cutting the target out of collaborative networks, career opportunities, and informal culture), and systemic and climate-level shifts (when ostracism becomes embedded in a team's culture) (table 25).

Table 25

Ostracism climate observable behavioral markers

Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Physical and Spatial Isolation	
The "Room Clears" Effect	Coworkers abruptly stopping conversations, changing topics, or scattering when the target enters a breakroom, cafeteria, or office space
Spatial Distancing	Peers choosing seats furthest away from the target during team meetings or workshops, leaving an empty buffer zone around them
Averting Eye Contact	Intentionally looking away, staring at phones, or gazing past the target when passing them in hallways to avoid acknowledging their presence
Non-Verbal Closed Posture	Turning shoulders or bodies away from the target during casual group standings, effectively creating a physical wall that blocks entry
Communication Deletion and Silence	
The Unanswered Greeting	Ignoring the target's basic social check-ins (e.g., saying "Good morning" or "Have a good weekend") with complete silence or blank stares
Digital Ghosting	Chronic failure to reply to direct emails, Slack/Teams messages, or project comments, even when the target requests time-sensitive work input
Idea Overlooking	Treating the target's verbal contributions in meetings as if they were never spoken—failing to validate, critique, or build upon their ideas, followed by immediate transition to another speaker
Monosyllabic Responses	Restricting all necessary professional dialogue with the target to cold, one-word answers ("Yes," "No," "Fine") devoid of standard workplace warmth
Professional and Social Exclusion	
Meeting Left-Outs	"Forgetting" to add the target to calendar invites for relevant project updates, brainstorming sessions, or cross-functional alignments
Informal Gatekeeping	Organizing team lunches, coffee runs, or after-work happy hours right in front of the target without extending an invitation
Withholding Collaboration	Team members consistently partnering with anyone else but the target for joint assignments, leaving the target to work in complete silos



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Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Information Blackouts	Systematically omitting the target from informal, grapevine communication where critical organizational updates or structural changes are previewed
Systemic and Climate-Level Shifts	
Bystander Mimicry	Neutral employees beginning to ignore the target simply to align with the dominant group and avoid becoming targets of isolation themselves
Hyper-Vigilant Posturing	The targeted individual displaying visible anxiety, such as checking their phone excessively, over-preparing for minimal interactions, or hesitating before entering shared spaces
Performative Inclusion	Coworkers interacting with the target <i>only</i> when a formal authority figure (like a supervisor or HR representative) is actively watching
Silent Disengagement	The target transitioning into a state of learned helplessness, characterized by complete withdrawal from voluntary participation, lack of initiative, and minimal physical presence

compiled by authors (based on [62, 14, 23])

These, the most reliable, observable behavioral markers are split into **productive reactions** (prosocial coping mechanisms aimed at re-establishing belonging) and **counterproductive reactions** (destructive behaviors driven by psychological distress) (table 26)

Table 26

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers (for Ostracism Climate)

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Hyper-Compliance and Compliance Swings (+)	The target over-adheres to company policies, never breaks rules, and immediately agrees with group decisions to minimize points of friction
Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB) (+)	The target volunteers for undesirable tasks, stays late to help others, or brings snacks for the team in a direct, visible attempt to buy back social favor
Over-Performance and "Indispensability" Driving (+)	Working at an intense, hyper-focused pace to produce flawless metrics, attempting to force the team to interact with them based on sheer professional merit. Focused, efficient, and high-quality job performance declines due to emotional exhaustion and lack of motivation
Exaggerated Social Agreeableness (+)	Displays of intense active listening, excessive nodding, and frequent smiling during the rare moments they are spoken to, signaling zero threat to the group



Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Proactive Process Documentation (+)	The target over-documents their workflow and copies managers on basic tasks to create an undeniable paper trail of productivity, compensating for the lack of verbal validation
Proactive Communication (+)	Open dialogue, active sharing of ideas, and team collaboration are replaced by self-protective silence or psychological withdrawal
Cynical Social Withdrawal (Presenteeism) (-)	The target physically sits at their desk but completely disconnects from the workplace fabric—doing the bare minimum to avoid being fired while ignoring corporate initiatives
Quiet Knowledge Sabotage and Information Withholding (-)	In retaliation for being ignored, the target purposely stops sharing helpful insights, shortcuts, or client context that could save their coworkers time or trouble. Intentionally withholding vital information, delaying handoffs, or failing to share expertise with peers
Withdrawal Behaviors (-)	Coming late, leaving early, taking frequent unauthorized breaks, or increasing absenteeism to physically and mentally distance from the role
Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWBs) (-)	Direct or indirect actions harmful to the organization, driven by frustration or a desire for retaliation
Micro-Aggressive Outbursts (-)	Sudden, unpredictable spikes of irritability or sarcastic remarks from the target during meetings, triggered by the cumulative pressure of chronic exclusion
Silos and Alternative Sub-Cliques (-)	The target actively searches for other marginalized employees across departments to form a counter-network, hostile to the primary team
Targeted Absenteeism and "Clock-Watching" (-)	A visible rise in the target taking last-minute sick leave, arriving exactly on the minute, and leaving the building the second their shift ends to minimize exposure to the hostile environment.
Bystander Aggression (Defensive Alignment) (-)	Peers who notice the ostracism actively join in on the exclusion or mistreatment of the target to signal loyalty to the dominant clique and protect their own status
Turnover Intentions (-)	Active job-searching, expressing a desire to quit, or sudden resignation

compiled by authors (based on [62, 14, 23])

Social Undermining Climate [62] (at the group level) can be understood as a collective perception that a person (e.g., a supervisor) aims to hinder group members' ability to be successful [25]. Accordingly [20], climate of undermining



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triggers sabotaging responses from the group. Alternatively, when the entire team was undermined, the effects on members' depression, job satisfaction, turnover, and deviant actions were mitigated. Authors [25] showed that group perceptions of supervisor undermining curtail group voice (i.e., voice climate). Because employee voice is critical for improving work processes and outcomes, a climate of supervisor undermining has been indirectly linked to reduced team performance.

When investigating this toxic(social undermining) workplace climate, observable behavioral markers can be categorized into four primary dimensions: reputation and status degradation (because perpetrators engage in strategic actions to shift the organization's or team's perception of the target's competence and standing), communication obstruction and gatekeeping (involve deliberate operational bottlenecks designed to trigger professional failure or isolate the individual), work sabotage and execution drag (directly impact the workflow, shifting pressure and artificial delays onto the target), and climate-level "second-wave" systemic markers (observable team-wide behavioral shifts begin to emerge) (table 27):

Table 27

Social undermining climate observable behavioral markers

Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Reputation and Status Degradation	
Selective "Double-Edged" Praise	Offering backhanded compliments in public forums (e.g., <i>"Great job fixing that obvious mistake you made earlier"</i>)
Strategic Rumor Trailing	Whispering unverified personal or professional critiques to key stakeholders right before high-stakes evaluations or promotion
Credit Diversion	Publicly over-emphasizing tiny errors while systematically omitting or downplaying the target's core contributions in team meetings
Competence Mockery	Making subtle, sarcastic jabs or rolling eyes when the target proposes ideas or asks questions
Communication Obstruction and Gatekeeping	
Information Hoarding	Delaying or fully withholding critical project updates, brief documents, or meeting schedule changes under the guise of



Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
	"forgetfulness"
The Silent Treatment	Ignoring digital queries (emails, Slack messages) while actively responding to other peers in the same threads
Strategic Exclusion	Scheduling spontaneous work discussions or social gatherings without inviting the target, then leveraging those conversations to dictate project directions
Gaslighting Feedback	Providing contradictory, vague, or constantly moving performance benchmarks to make the target feel chronically incompetent
Work Sabotage and Execution Drag	
Deliberate Slow-Walking	Co-workers or dependencies purposely dragging out their portions of deliverables to make the target miss downstream deadlines
Dumping and Burdening	Overloading the target with low-visibility administrative tasks to pull their focus away from highly valued strategic goals
Under-the-Radar Deflection	Quietly shifting the blame for structural, team-wide failures entirely onto the target's specific component of the work
Climate-Level "Second-Wave" Systemic Markers	
The Emergence of Employee Silence	Team members visibly withholding feedback, creative concepts, or solutions out of fear that they will become the next target
Defensive Interpersonal Rumination	Employees spending a noticeable amount of time huddling in closed-door sidebar chats to emotionally process ongoing peer dynamics
The "Pass-It-Down" Cycle	Victims of undermining slowly turning into perpetrators themselves, utilizing identical covert behaviors against newer or lower-status team members to protect their own standing
Disengagement Signs	Chronic spikes in passive withdrawal behaviours, such as extended breaks, uncharacteristic absenteeism, or sudden spikes in procrastination

compiled by authors (based on [62, 20, 25])

The most reliable, observable productive (healthy climate signs) and counterproductive (deviance signs) behavioral markers of a Interpersonal Deviance workplace climate include (table 28)



Table 28

**Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers
(for Social undermining climate)**

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Active allyship (+)	Teammates publicly calling out disrespectful comments or interrupting a toxic interaction immediately
Proactive support (+)	Coworkers offering practical help spontaneously to a teammate who is visibly overwhelmed
Inclusive communication (+)	Teams actively seeking input from quiet or remote members during decision-making processes
Restorative feedback (+)	Giving criticism privately, focusing entirely on work processes rather than personal traits
Transparent credit (+)	Team members consistently and publicly celebrating the specific contributions of their peers
High Psychological Safety (+)	Employees freely sharing mistakes or unconventional ideas without fear of ridicule or blame
Constructive disagreement (+)	Peers debating project ideas intensely while maintaining strict mutual respect for each other
Verbal hostility (-)	Coworkers trading insults, yelling, or using sarcastic put-downs during meetings
Social undermining (-)	Intentionally withholding vital information or "forgetting" to invite targets to key project discussions
Gossip networks (-)	Employees forming tight cliques to actively spread rumors and damage a peer's reputation
Passive-aggressive resistance (-)	Teammates missing deadlines on purpose to make a specific colleague look bad or fail
Public shaming (-)	Managers or peers correcting someone's mistakes loudly in front of the entire team
Exclusionary body language (-)	Rolling eyes, heavy sighing, or turning away physically when a specific person speaks
High turnover intentions (-)	Frequent, abrupt resignations within a specific team due to toxic peer dynamics

compiled by authors (based on [62, 20, 25])

Incivility Climate [62]. Compared to many other hostile constructs in this review, **Incivility** is described as low intensity deviant actions that are more ambiguous but still harm targets and violate workplace norms [7. Unlike overt bullying, incivility is often subtle, passive-aggressive, or masked as accidental



rudeness, making it a critical early warning sign of a toxic corporate culture. Left unaddressed, these behaviors act as a virus, spreading across teams and normalizing a disempowering work environment. The effects of incivility climate are vast and multilevel.

Observable behavioral markers of Workplace Incivility can be categorized across key workplace dynamics (table 29).

Table 29

Incivility workplace climate observable behavioral markers

Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Communication and Meeting Dynamics	
Active Disrespect	Rolling eyes, heavy sighing, or making condescending facial expressions while a colleague is speaking
Conversational Hijacking	Interrupting others mid-sentence, talking over peers, or abruptly changing the subject to dismiss someone's input
Digital Distraction	Checking smartphones, typing loudly, or answering non-urgent emails during a presentation or team meeting
Tone Weaponization	Using a sarcastic, patronizing, or overly harsh tone of voice during routine professional disagreements
Information Flow and Social Inclusion	
The Silent Treatment	Purposefully ignoring greetings, refusing to make eye contact, or giving brief, cold, one-word responses to collaborative requests
Information Gatekeeping	Intentionally leaving critical team members off email threads, meeting invites, or project updates to undermine their performance
Passive Ostracization	Moving conversations to private spaces when a specific team member approaches, or excluding certain individuals from casual team lunches
Subtle Rumor-Mongering	Shrugging, smirking, or making vague, undermining comments about a colleague's personal life or competence behind their back
Task Execution and Autonomy	
Micromanagement as Mistrust	Demanding excessive status updates for routine tasks or re-doing a subordinate's work without explaining why
Passive-Aggressive Compliance	Agreeing to a timeline during a meeting but deliberately stalling execution, missing deadlines, or delivering subpar work
Shifting Accountability	Deflecting blame for project failures onto junior colleagues or administrative staff while refusing to take personal ownership



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Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Boundary Intrusion	Sending non-emergency work messages late at night or during weekends with the implicit expectation of an immediate response
Feedback and Recognition	
Credit Theft	Taking total ownership of a team project's success while completely failing to acknowledge the contributions of peers
Public Correction	Highlighting an individual's minor mistake in front of a large group rather than addressing it constructively in a private setting
Damning with Faint Praise	Giving backhanded compliments (e.g., <i>"You actually did a surprisingly good job on this report"</i>)

compiled by authors (based on [62,7, 60, 76])

Workplace incivility acts as a baseline toxic catalyst, manifesting as low-intensity, discourteous behaviors with an ambiguous intent to harm. Left unaddressed, these subtle actions erode organizational health and escalate into explicit Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWBs). Conversely, an actively managed civil climate fosters psychological safety, translating routine interactions into Productive Work Behaviors (PWBs).

Interpersonal Deviance Climate

Workplace deviance is a broad conceptualization of norm violating behaviors that can be directed at the organization or individuals [62]. Research reveals that leader behaviors, norms of hostility, adverse human resources (HR) practices, and team processes foster group perceptions and actions of interpersonal deviance [8; 28; 50]. Additionally, (un)fairness and negative affect in teams have also been linked to deviant climates [57; 63; 77]. Although deviance climates are rarely treated as predictors, some studies show that these environments are capable of damaging team processes and team performance [21; 84]. An **interpersonal deviance climate** refers to a shared perception among employees that negative, harmful, or disrespectful behaviors are tolerated or normalized within the work environment (table 30).



Table 30

Interpersonal deviance climate observable behavioral markers

Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Public belittling (aggressive teasing)	Managers or peers mocking colleagues during meetings (by (Mocking an individual's personal traits, habits, or appearance)
Persistent incivility	Frequent eye-rolling, heavy sighing, or interrupting
Credit theft	Routinely taking ownership of a subordinate's or peer's ideas
Social exclusion	Deliberately leaving specific team members out of lunches, emails, or projects
Blame shifting	Routinely scapegoating peers for collective project failures
Aggressive communication	Shouting, using profanity, or slamming doors during disagreements
Cruel humor	Sarcastic jokes targeted at individuals disguised as "harmless banter."
Low psychological safety	Team members keeping silent during meetings out of fear of ridicule
Hoarding resources	Hiding data, tools, or information to make peers fail
Defensive language	Frequent use of phrases like "it's not my job" or "that's your problem."
Unequal enforcement	Rules or punishments applied strictly to some but ignored for "star performers."

compiled by authors (based on [62, 21, 28, 50, 57, 63, 77, 84])

The most reliable, observable productive (healthy climate signs) and counterproductive (deviance signs) behavioral markers of a Interpersonal Deviance workplace climate include (table 31)

Table 31

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers (for Interpersonal Deviance Climate)

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Active allyship (+)	Teammates publicly calling out disrespectful comments or interrupting a toxic interaction immediately
Proactive support (+)	Coworkers offering practical help spontaneously to a teammate who is visibly overwhelmed
Inclusive communication (+)	Teams actively seeking input from quiet or remote members during decision-making processes
Restorative feedback (+)	Giving criticism privately, focusing entirely on work processes rather than personal traits



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Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Transparent credit (+)	Team members consistently and publicly celebrating the specific contributions of their peers
High Psychological Safety (+)	Employees freely sharing mistakes or unconventional ideas without fear of ridicule or blame
Constructive disagreement (+)	Peers debating project ideas intensely while maintaining strict mutual respect for each other
Verbal hostility (-)	Coworkers trading insults, yelling, or using sarcastic put-downs during meetings
Social undermining (-)	Intentionally withholding vital information or "forgetting" to invite targets to key project discussions
Gossip networks (-)	Employees forming tight cliques to actively spread rumors and damage a peer's reputation
Passive-aggressive resistance (-)	Teammates missing deadlines on purpose to make a specific colleague look bad or fail
Public shaming (-)	Managers or peers correcting someone's mistakes loudly in front of the entire team
Exclusionary body language (-)	Rolling eyes, heavy sighing, or turning away physically when a specific person speaks
High turnover intentions (-)	Frequent, abrupt resignations within a specific team due to toxic peer dynamics

compiled by authors (based on [62, 21, 28, 50, 57, 63, 77, 84])

Investigating **Interactional Justice Climate** researchers [62] concentrate on interactional (interpersonal) justice reflected the degree to which people are not treated with politeness, dignity, and respect at work, resulting in a toxic experience for employees. Interactional justice climate has a direct effect on group harmony, which in turn relates to team task and helping behaviors [79]. Interactional justice climate refers to the shared perception among team members regarding how fairly they are treated by authorities, focusing specifically on interpersonal communication and informational transparency. Managers and team members demonstrate this climate through distinct, observable behavioral markers divided into two categories: interpersonal justice (respect and dignity) and informational justice (truthfulness and explanations). When an interactional justice climate is strong, employees replicate these behaviors with each other (team-level echo behaviors), not just with leadership: (table 32).



Table 32

Interactional justice climate observable Behavioral Markers

Observable behavioral markers (Employee Actions)	
markers	what we can observe
Interpersonal Justice Markers (Respect and Dignity)	
Active listening	Mirroring body language, maintaining eye contact, and summarizing employee points before responding
Polite communication	Consistently using "please," "thank you," and respectful phrasing, even during high-stress situations
Privacy preservation	Conducting performance critiques, disciplinary actions, or sensitive corrections strictly behind closed doors
Public recognition	Celebrating individual and team achievements openly during meetings or via shared communication channels
Zero insult tolerance	Shutting down derogatory remarks, interrupting behaviors, or dismissive eye-rolling immediately during discussions
Inclusive language	Using "we" and "our team" rather than "I" and "you" when addressing group goals or setbacks
Informational Justice Markers (Transparency and Truthfulness)	
Proactive updates	Sharing organizational changes, budget shifts, or timeline adjustments before rumors can circulate
Detailed reasoning	Explaining the why behind unpopular decisions, such as denied resource requests or strategy pivots
Timely feedback	Providing performance reviews or project evaluations promptly rather than delaying communication
Bi-directional Q&A	Hosting open-door sessions, town halls, or team huddles where questions are answered honestly without defensiveness
Accessible documentation	Making meeting minutes, project metrics, and decision-making criteria visible and easy to find
Admission of mistakes	Acknowledging leadership errors or miscalculations openly and outlining corrective steps
Peer-to-Peer Interactional Markers	
Constructive dissent	Team members challenging each other's ideas respectfully without attacking individuals personally
Knowledge sharing	Freely exchanging tips, tools, and documentation with teammates without hoarding information for personal gain
Emotional support	Offering verbal encouragement or assistance to peers showing signs of stress or heavy workloads
Team-Level Echo Behaviors	
Peer-to-peer defense	Team members advocate for absent colleagues if their character or work is unfairly criticized
Transparent collaboration	Files, meeting notes, and project updates are shared across the team by default
Constructive conflict	Disagreements focus entirely on ideas and data rather than personal traits or capabilities

compiled by authors (based on [62, 2, 47, 79, 88, 91])



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Here are the observable productive and counterproductive behavioral markers of a **interactional justice** workplace climate (table 33)

Table 33

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers (for Interactional justice climate)

Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Active Listening (+)	Managers pause tasks, maintain eye contact, and validate employee input during discussions
Transparent Explanations (+)	Leaders thoroughly explain the "why" behind tough organizational decisions and resource allocations
Respectful Tone (+)	Communication remains professional, polite, and free of condescension, even during heated disagreements
Dignified Feedback (+)	Performance critiques are delivered privately, focusing strictly on behavior rather than character
Frequent Praise (+)	Recognition for hard work is given publicly and distributed equitably across the team
Open-Door Access (+)	Leadership remains consistently approachable and responsive to employee concerns or questions
High Psychological Safety (+)	Team members openly share unconventional ideas or admit mistakes without fear of ridicule
Interpersonal Helping (+)	Employees voluntarily assist struggling coworkers, mirroring the care shown by their supervisors
Public Belittling (-)	Supervisors criticize, mock, or reprimand employees in front of their peers
Withholding Information (-)	Leaders leave teams in the dark about major changes, fueling the corporate rumor mill
Social Exclusion (-)	Specific employees are routinely left out of meetings, emails, or informal team gatherings
Dismissive Body Language (-)	Managers check phones, roll eyes, or interrupt while team members are speaking
Aggressive Communication (-)	Leadership relies on yelling, passive-aggressive emails, or threats to drive performance
Deceptive Explanations (-)	Management provides vague, shifting, or dishonest reasons for unpopular policy rollouts
Quiet Quitting (-)	Disrespected employees withdraw discretionary effort, doing only the bare minimum required
Social Loafing (-)	Team members intentionally slack off, hiding behind the collective output of the group
Targeted Retaliation (-)	Employees engage in subtle sabotage, gossiping, or hoarding knowledge to push back against bad treatment
Interpersonal aggression (-)	Individuals engage in bullying, public belittling, spreading rumors, or showing hostility toward peers or supervisors



Observable productive (+) / counterproductive (-) markers	What we can observe
Active deviance (-)	Employees intentionally sabotage equipment, steal supplies, or actively break internal rules out of perceived resentment
Passive withdrawal (-)	Staff members chronically arrive late, extend breaks, or mentally check out by reducing their daily effort
Informational withholding (-)	Workers hide crucial updates, miscommunicate project requirements, or refuse to assist team members
High turnover intentions (-)	Frustrated personnel frequently voice a desire to quit or actively look for employment elsewhere due to persistent disrespect

compiled by authors (based on [62, 2, 47, 79, 88, 91])

Monitoring these behavioral shifts allows organizations to identify and address a hostile climate before it escalates into legal liability.

Conclusions. To summarise the above, we can conclude that rationale for characteristics of various types of workplace climates (developing idea of Hussainy [5], and further developing the concept of toxic workplace climate by Priesemuth and Schminke [30]) by utilizing social indicators and observable manifestations of individual and group behavior can allows organizations to identify various types of workplace climates and apply relevant effective tools for establish workplace climate with ecological managerial practices.

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