

# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AT WORKPLACES: ISSUES IN IMPLEMENTATION

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**Abstract** *Employees with a low sense of psychological, cognitive, or mental safety would hold concerns, and risks may remain unaddressed. There is an extremely important need to deal with the importance of cognitive / mental / psychological safety and employee engagement in creating safe workplace cultures. Traditional health and safety approaches would generally focus on technical measures and obedience of legal rules. However, research done in the last few years shows that mental and social factors play very important role in developing organisational positive safety culture. Mental safety enables workers to report risks or possible risks without fear of sanctions, and employee engagement strengthens the safety culture by increasing their loyalty to safety policies and practices. In workplaces with high mental safety, workers can express risk elements earlier and more comfortably, encouraging more approaches to prevent workplace risks. In workplaces, where employee loyalty is strong, people make safety procedures and safe behaviour a natural way of work life. The success of reaching goals that help or increase mental safety, increase employee loyalty, and strengthen safety communication, must be developed. It is recommended that management adopt safety management goals that support social and mental approaches to secure safety culture at workplaces and in other places. This research is conducted in India includes data from 302 HSE professionals from diverse industry sectors. The findings revealed six themes: Introducing concept of psychologically safe environments, psychological safety and organisational positivity go together, psychological safety cultural intervention, inculcating psychologically safe environment, psychological safety implementation, and organisational restructuring by the corporates. The present study identified distinct characteristics of psychologically safe versus toxic environments, and ways to foster psychologically safe environment. Develop programmes to help people understand what is psychological safety and psychological injury. Holding psychological concerns of employees is risky and too costly for organisations, which needs immediate attention.*

**Keywords:** *Top Management, Psychological, Safety, Employees, Workplaces*

## INTRODUCTION

Broadly, psychological safety is at its lowest range in our workplaces, families and societies in Indian settings, which represents a major gap in building positive safety cultures. Reprimanding or psychological injury amounts to an offence. Physical injuries heal after some time whereas psychological injuries take much longer time and require sustained top management interventions. Top management's presence with engagement at shop-floors is the key for safety culture transformation. Senior management is the initiator of safety culture within organisations. How people think and

treat each other helps settle arguments on workplace risks between safety performance and safety culture. Empowering all workers in a company or country to speak up for safety of each other. With the higher mental safety levels, workers express risk elements earlier. Some companies respond more effectively while dealing with the mental safety issues such as fears, worries, depression, disappointment, and pressures. Mentally safe teams improve learning, ability to create interesting new things and performance within organisations. Creating mental safety is truly challenging and requires an unusual degree of commitment and skill.

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Psychological safety is the strong belief and assumption that it is safe to speak up in organisations. Psychological safety is needed in workplaces as well as in families, in schools, and everywhere. Psychological safety cannot be achieved by simply putting an organisational policy in place. There is an urgent need for leadership development programmes that prepare leaders with the necessary skills to help grow mentally safe work conditions, for making the most of organisational safety cultural inventions. But, importantly, very few leaders show behaviours that create a sense of mental safety. To stay competitive and gain an edge in a continuously energetic/changing surrounding conditions, organisations are looking to complete success plans or ways of reaching goals that will help them hold their manpower. Organisational hierarchical structures discourage employees to speak up. HSE department / heads in companies must report to CEO. It is a Cultural Issue - We don't speak against Malik" (owner/boss). Reducing Organisational Hierarchy is one good solution. Hierarchical structures often limit open communication in organisations. Psychological safety is a fundamental prerequisite for physical safety, in a sense that if an employee doesn't feel able to address risks or raise concerns, the risks remain unexplored. Holding psychological concerns is riskier and more costly for organisations, which needs an immediate attention.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In their 50-year review of literature, Edmondson and Bransby contributed a great deal of research in psychological safety, majorly conducted in organisational behaviour, business, and psychology (Taylor et al., 2025). The extent to which employees feel comfortable and frank to express about their company safety issues indicates the gaps on work culture? According to HSE professionals, 90% are not comfortable to express, 10% suffer because they expressed. "Boss is always right". Lesson given to the new joinee: the first thing he learns is not to speak in a meeting. Employees will speak up if they are welcomed. All depends on senior / top management. But the biggest issue is that the managements wish to remain unchallenged on the company's sensitive /critical safety culture issues. However, some organisations are working towards psychological safety by creating an atmosphere of fearlessly voicing the concerns by employees. These companies hold an open town-hall meeting every month once to meet employees in order to know their safety concerns.

Psychological safety is indeed the foundation of a strong safety culture. Some Indian organisations report - "we are continuously working to build an environment where every

employee feels confident and comfortable to speak openly about safety concerns without fear. Certainly, employees have been active in various Employees Participation Programmes, such as BBS observation. At present, our monthly count has crossed 12,000 observations. They are also actively participating in safety committees and tool box talks (TBT) covering department activities. Some active employees, not all, provide feedback and raise safety issues. We motivate other employees also. When companies don't encourage employees to discuss safety issues, they turn complicated and result into incidents and serious accidents". Broadly, psychological safety is at its lowest range in our workplaces, families and societies in India, which represents a major gap in building positive safety cultures.

Today's workforce, which comprises Generations X, Y and Z at various levels, has a shared requirement in terms of workplace safety and psychological safety and they consider it to be of most importance. Outcomes of a psychologically unsafe environment in terms of failing, relearning, questioning and sharing is explicitly indicated through burnout, depression and high attrition rates. It is imperative that a culture of safe environment must be developed at the top level and should be nurtured at the bottom most level of organisations. There is an urgent need to examine psychological safety at workplaces, the root causes for a psychologically unsafe environment, the strategies and measures which organisations can develop to abate the issue and foster a conducive environment for the overall development of individuals while creating a safe space to learn and grow. Such studies need to be conducted in various industries and can be tested for various industry specific factors as well as common factors affecting psychological safety at workplace (Harsha et al., 2024).

Psychological safety (PS) is a very significant factor supporting employees' well-being and performance, particularly in dynamic work domains. Despite its acknowledged significance, research on PS remains limited. The fast-paced nature and socio-technical complexities of industrial development pose challenges for cultivating PS. This research seeks to identify the events and results related to the presence of PS among workers as well as management in the industry. Factors of PS are identified at the individual, team, and organisational levels, including team independence, and leadership behaviours. PS helps develop invention of new things, learning, and team performance. However, significant gaps continue to exist understanding the factors influencing PS for its improvement. There is a need to address the practical applications of PS within diverse organisational contexts (Santana et al., 2025).

## STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH GAP

Psychological safety culture in our society as well as workplaces is at its lowest level due to the prevailing highly reactive work culture. There is an urgent need to study psychological safety in workplaces and the related myriad issues in implementation as there are its major gaps in work practices as well as in the research literature.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Introducing the conceptual frameworks of psychological safety at workplaces.
- To facilitate an implementation of psychological safety on the shop-floors.

## METHODOLOGY

This article is an extract from a national safety culture programme based on both primary as well as secondary data, and this research was conducted over a year during 2024–25 in India, including 302 Health, Safety and Environment professionals/experts from different kinds of industry and diverse locations in India.

Random sampling design was followed for selection of sample across Indian industry from many different plants / sites such as chemicals, construction, steel, gas, petroleum, energy, and from MNCs, public / private companies. A mixed methods approach was used and data were drawn from the open interviews, focused group discussions (FGD), official records, book-related reviews, meetings, site-based trainings, surveys, interviews, questionnaire, plant visits, lunch/dinner conversations with operational staffs, experts, national seminars, after-session meetings, informal conversations, emails, tele-meetings, videos, and recommendations. Thematic analysis was performed and themes were identified from the qualitative data.

Many companies participated in this research programme, namely, Oil India, Gharda chemicals, BESAFE, SEIL, ThyssenKrupp, DCM Shriram, Vardhman, IDEX, Thermax, Jindal, AFCONS, ONGC, NSCI, IIM, Hindalco, IOCL, KAPL, Tata Projects, L&T, GAIL, SAIL, and HPCL. Presentations and discussions focused on improving safety culture to meet the research objectives.

The sample (Table 1) also included the directors, managers, HoDs, and HR/EHS experts from industry and the contractors staff from the private and public sectors across

**Table 1: Sample Description (N=302)**

Industry / 12 Sites	Directors / HODs	Operations Managers	EHS Professionals & Others
Chemicals manufacturing (4)	25	26	30
Construction (4)	24	27	29
Oil and Gas (2)	25	25	24
Power and Steel (2)	25	19	23

This paper is an extract from a national research programme of the Forum of Behavioural Safety under Bharat Bane Surakshit (BBS) mission (Kaila, 2025). The study results and implications are reflected below from a rigorous review of safety culture literature and experiences / case studies shared by industry leaders majorly from the Indian organisations.

## SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study not only helps in understanding managements' mindsets toward corporate awareness of their safety cultural gaps in the psychologically safe environments but would also frame actions for its implementation.

Six themes were developed from the quantitative and qualitative data of this research, as presented below.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following themes emerged from this research findings:

- Introducing concept of psychologically safe environments (PSE).
- Psychological Safety and organisational Positivity go together.
- Psychological safety cultural intervention.
- Inculcating psychologically safe environment.
- Psychological Safety implementation.
- Organisational restructuring by corporates.

## INTRODUCING CONCEPT OF PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENTS (PSE)

People should not, get injured physically, but, they should also not get injured psychologically by their colleagues. “Reprimanding or psychological injury amounts to an offence”, Ex Director of Factories. Physical injuries heal after some time whereas psychological injuries take much longer and require sustained top management interventions (Personal Communications, 2025).

Employees need psychological care from each other at worksites. Prevent both physical as well as psychological injuries. People should not only speak up for safety, they should speak up otherwise as well, without the fear of being reprimanded or criticised.

How to develop psychological carers at worksites:

- Develop psychological mentors in each section.
- Develop positive listening skills among employees.
- Remove negative behaviours: do not react, blame, shout, or reprimand.
- Develop positive behaviours: appreciate, be a big brother and big sister.
- In the long term, aim at developing everyone as psychological carer.
- Define and help people understand what is psychological safety and psychological injury.
- How do we injure or harm others psychologically with our words and actions?
- Enquire colleagues daily about their well-being, simply asking, how are you?
- Connect with people emotionally.
- Be an unconditional support daily at least to one person without any expectation.

What is Psychological Safety at workplace and how to implement it: As per WHO, safe and healthy working conditions are not only a basic right but also improve staff’s work performance.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND ORGANISATIONAL POSITIVITY GO TOGETHER

The top management plays an important role in developing a safety culture in organisations by building and enabling guidelines, procedures and policies. Daily reporting and other available systems must address disobedience issues in order to develop a safety culture among workers. Government and regulatory bodies of organisations must emphasise the establishment of security and safety policies in organisations (Acquaye, 2021).

The presence of top leaders at shop-floors is encouraging. What is more significant is - how deeply employees sense their safety leadership. Then they begin to trust the relevance of the safety culture. The top management’s active role is desired, where it is done, excellent results are achieved (Fig. 1). Suresh Kumar Singh stated that the top management support is missing in most of industries. Now-a-days, upcoming challenges are different. Young generations are not getting moulded in company work culture. Young generations are not at all loyal to their company. May be, the selection process is wrong. Slowly all operations are getting under contract. Bottom line is to tackle human nature of workers. Perhaps top management is keeping distance from the safety culture. Almost 80% of industry professionals stated that there is a lack of management will to support the development of a safety culture, which amounts to a lag in business. Top managements need guidance about interventions leading to safety culture transformation (Kaila, 2024).



**Fig. 1: Boosting Psychological Safety Culture**

Top managements can significantly boost psychological safety among employees. HSE professionals: Pavan Rao, M. Bairagi and Dr Ramdas Jadhav stated that this is called leadership based safety. We have a programme around it. It is called visible felt-leadership. Visible presence of top leaders on shop floors not only boosts employee morale but also fosters a genuine sense of safety and trust in leadership, which are crucial for cultivating a strong psychological safety culture within the organisation. Top management's presence and engagement on shop-floors is the key for safety culture transformation.

Although the role of Top Management (TM) is extremely important to site safety, its clearly stated actions in a superior cognitive / mental safety culture are under-researched and need further examination. Towards this, main actions are identified such as adequate money for safety supplies, leadership and communication. The most extremely important action TM is showing or proving its loyalty and promise to safety through real and clear actions. The most important is to draw attention of TM for enabling the frontline supervisors as mental safety champions. Building a strong and healthy safety culture and climate is extremely important for securing and making sure of the well-being of workers and the successful completion of any project. This can be achieved with a clearly defined and desirable psychological safety actions, providing practical guidance for deep understanding of TM while effectively fostering a positive safety culture as well as assess their safety contributions (Al-Bayati & Chellappa, 2025). However, there are problems in receiving and giving psychological safety between work groups. Subordinates / workmen as peer groups can give better sense of psychological safety than the upper management.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY CULTURAL INTERVENTION**

Workplace psychosocial hazards mediate between safety performance and safety culture. Therefore, managers must ensure that employees and associates feel psychologically safe and positive. They must empower the workforce to speak up for safety of each other, but the deeper insight is that let them speak up otherwise as well, for building a psychologically safe culture. Workplace psychological safety has become increasingly important in today's business scenarios as it has led to improved performance, higher employee engagement and increased productivity. These benefits lead to a more profitable and successful organisation (Sewell, 2023).

Strategies must be developed that increase employee loyalty, promote psychological safety and strengthen safety

communication. Managements must adopt a holistic safety management strategy that supports social and psychological approaches to ensure workplace safety (Bilgin, 2025).

Psychological safety intervention is an important part of the total safety culture. Some companies respond and address the psychological safety issues such as fears, anxieties, depression, dissatisfaction, and pressure. However, these issues are often dealt with in an informal way by some sensitive and sensible managers, not as an integral part of an organisational system (Table 2). Hence, the effectiveness of psychological safety measures remains ineffective and not measurable. Therefore, it is necessary to understand it more clearly for better mental health and well-being of employees so that they feel psychologically safe at the workplace. Psychologically safe (PS) teams improve organisations' performance, support employee safety by enabling engagement and encouraging staff to speak up about errors. The low levels of psychological safety at workplaces necessitate interventions that can be used to improve PS. Organisational interventions improve speaking up behaviour of employees. To improve the understanding of the effectiveness of interventions on speaking up and voice behaviour, longitudinal interventions are needed, and more objective measures must be developed. It is recommended at the organisational levels to ensure visible leadership support across and within interdisciplinary teams (O'Donovan, et al., 2020).

The importance of psychological safety (PS) appears to be recognised across industries. Business leaders think that PS must be present in every healthy and safe work environment, to ensure harassment-free as well as an injury-free workers. In fact, psychologically safe work environments are rare. Developing a psychological safety workplace is a challenge that requires a strong commitment and training. Building a PS work environment starts with the interpersonal skills that the quality of conversation matters for results. Managers understand the importance of PS when they know its role in solving difficult issues. Both individuals and teams should be trained and incorporate visualisation and role plays. It gets easier over time in their practice of new behaviours. People generally experience some level of anxiety when they feel vulnerable. Practising acts of vulnerability reduces that anxiety. It helps to encourage employees to identify their difficulties at workplace issues on which they could not make progress, and facilitate them to develop skills to make progress in those aspects. It would help to focus on performance issues at the individual and team level, develop real-time skills on complex issues and change to the positive climate and capabilities. Building capabilities related to psychological safety perspective is increasingly a vital part of achieving excellence in challenging business contexts (Edmondson & Hugander, 2021).

Psychological safety, the belief that it is safe to speak up, is vital. Psychological safety improves the effectiveness of teams and is the key to high-performing teams. Psychological safety and feeling heard are both significantly associated with lower burnout (Kerrissey et al., 2022). Safety, according to Maslow's system, in which things or people are placed at different levels of importance, is a human need. Creating cognitively safe work conditions is critical. The term 'mental, cognitive, or psychological safety' was created by Amy Edmondson, who defined it as a shared belief that the teams are safe for risk-taking amongst the people. Beginning and building on a climate of PS allows space for people to voice and share their problems. For leaders, speaking out is less important than how they react to and respond to other team members (Jiménez, 2022).

Do you have a psychologically safe workplace? Assess and address the psychological health and safety of your workplace. Measure and improve psychological health and safety at work by asking all employees about the work situations that highlight the psychosocial factors, hazards and indicators of inclusion, stress and trauma. Take action on the results directed to the senior leadership and decision-making team to provide insight to the levels of stress and satisfaction at work.

What went wrong or what could have prevented this? People prepare answers for both questions. By asking what the teams learned, the manager is helping to build a cognitively safe environment. People understand that learning is a key factor for team's future performance. Psychological safety is a critical concept for teams and the people that lead them (Gallo, 2023).

## **INCULCATING PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT (PSE)**

Psychological safety is needed in the workplace and elsewhere as well, in families, in schools, everywhere. Today we are talking about it only for workplaces for all employees from top to bottom. Nobody wants to feel psychologically unsafe or at-risk. What are those psychological or psychosocial risks at work, when we feel threatened or harmed. People should not only get injured physically, but also they should not get psychologically injured. Employees need psychological care from each other. People should not only speak up for safety, they should speak otherwise also without the fear of getting reprimanded. Psychological safety intervention is an important part of the total safety culture. Major question is: Is psychological safe place possible? In fact, psychologically safe work environments are rare (Table 3). Are trust, interpersonal support and freedom from harassment the positive indicators of psychologically

safe environment (PSE), or is fear, pressure, burnout the negative indicator?

Maslow referred to psychological safety as a lower psychological need that motivates everyone to perform. How do organisations, managers, and leaders respond to these situations when employees experience the positive or negative aspects of PSE. The researchers examined the complex associations between employee performance and psychological safety in order to demonstrate the impact of psychological safety on organisational sustainability. It is understood that the cognitive or psychological safety is the belief that people would speak up their concerns without humiliation, which would actually influence the employee interactions on their jobs. It encourages taking chances, working together, and being open with one another, which enhances creativity and problem-solving abilities and ultimately increases productivity (Almahri & Abd, 2023).

Empower the workforce to speak up for safety of each other, but the deeper insight is that let them speak up otherwise as well, for building a psychologically safe culture. It is confirmed that safety leadership positively influences both employee morale and safety performance. Employees with high morale directly contribute to improved safety performance and act as a mediator between safety performance and safety leadership. A positive safety culture mediates between employee morale and safety performance, strengthening the link for workers with higher levels of passion. These insights offer practical implications for designing safety training, leadership development programmes, and policies aimed at improving safety outcomes (Slil et al., 2025).

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IMPLEMENTATION**

Psychological safety cannot be achieved by simply putting a policy in place. It is a dynamic quality that emerges from interactions and the overall climate of an organisation. Psychological or cognitive or mental safety would have lasting positive benefits for employees during their stress times, in order to buffer their turnover intentions as well as burnout experiences. Investments in building psychological safety can foster employee resilience and organisational commitment, even when resources are strained (Bahadurzada et al., 2024).

Publications and discussions about psychological safety highlight that it's not a feature that can be simply implemented through a policy or a circular, nor is it a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, researchers are still exploring how it develops organically from factors like team dynamics, organisational context, and leadership behaviours,

which require an ongoing measurement to understand its presence and impact. The areas like the role of psychological safety in hybrid work environments and its cultural variations, indicate a continued need to better understand and foster it. As internal and external environments become increasingly uncertain, psychological safety is regarded as a prerequisite for employees to implement innovative behaviours (Zhan et al., 2025).

## ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURING BY THE CORPORATES

There is an extremely important need to prepare leaders with the necessary skills to help develop mentally and cognitively safe working conditions, for making the most of organisational invention of new things. Organisations must use or take advantage of strong and healthy success plans or ways of reaching goals and show / develop flexible abilities to grow and do well. The effective use of these ways of reaching goals is central to workers, which operates best only within a supportive organisational condition, that is mostly the mental safety - the promise that team members can voice their ideas and start risk-taking without the fear of a terrible future of negative effects. Leadership is of great help in helping grow this mental safety, for development of an atmosphere, good for invention of new things, working together or team effort, and constant learning. The very important role of mental safety in the success plans putting into use, is that the leaders have a responsibility to create a helpful surrounding condition. Such initiatives value employee contributions, thereby driving organisational effectiveness through strategy implementation (Chinyuku & Qutieshat, 2025). These insights offer valuable guidance for both researchers and practitioners in the leadership and organisational development fields (Putra et al., 2025).

Higher levels of mental safety climate can actually adversely affect employee performance. The negative effect of high levels of mental safety on these tasks must be regulated/ controlled, however, by total responsibility for safe / ethical behaviours. While not the extreme/medium levels of cognitive climate are related to better performance, high levels are related to decreasing performance, collective accountability can buffer that decreasing performance. This can help identify the boundary conditions of PS climate with real-world consequences (Eldor et al., 2023). The higher levels of psychological safety positively impact job performance both directly and indirectly via organisation-based self-esteem contingent upon employees' levels of self-efficacy (Kızrak, 2025). However, very few leaders demonstrate behaviours that create a sense of psychological safety.

**Table 2: Characteristics of Psychologically Safe Environment (PSE) vs Toxic Environment**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Both genders may be involved in creating PSE or toxic environment.</li> <li>● Language can be positive to extremely negative.</li> <li>● Polished behaviours to nasty behaviours.</li> <li>● Prevalent from workplaces to anyplace.</li> <li>● Definition differs from culture to culture.</li> <li>● Psychological comfort to discomfort.</li> <li>● Optimum stress to extremely stressful.</li> <li>● Positive behaviour to negative behaviour.</li> <li>● Participative to reactive.</li> <li>● Caring and listening to being insensitive and not bothering at all.</li> </ul>
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**Table 3: Ways To Foster Psychologically Safe Environment**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Initiate 'Speak Up' culture in your company.</li> <li>● Arrange Skip level meetings every month.</li> <li>● Make the top management aware of BBS.</li> <li>● Increase "employee participation"</li> <li>● HSE head/department must report to CEO.</li> <li>● BBS training be given first to company Directors</li> <li>● HSE Professional be exposed to international standards.</li> <li>● Reduce Organisational Hierarchy.</li> <li>● Initiate policy on 'psychological safety at workplace'.</li> <li>● Conduct disciplined learning practices.</li> </ul>
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## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to gain a competitive edge in energetic and changing conditions, organisations seek to implement success plans of reaching goals that support their manpower. Businesses aim to provide their employees with a sense of supportive mental safety so that they can perform effectively. This affects the individual, teams and the entire company (Jindal et al., 2024). Organisational hierarchical structures discourage employees to speak up. The possible solutions and valuable inputs can make big changes in the organisations, as suggested by industry HSE professionals like Uday Pagedar, Indranil Chakrabarty, Guru Pratap, Sivaramkrishna Rao, Deba Mishra, Pavan Rao, K. K. Sharma, S. K. Pathak, Shankar Murthy, Sujata Sinha, Atul Garg (Personal Communications, 2025). One of the solutions can be to introduce "Speak Up" culture in your companies. Skip level meetings (free of hierarchies) can be an effective solution to this. Another solution to this issue is to make the top management aware of BBS. Enforcement plays some role in the Indian industry. So employee participation shall be reinforced to enhance safety culture.

HSE department / head must report to CEO. In Public sector companies, HSE (health, safety, environment) professionals must be posted from outside the organisation, not promoted from within the organisation. BBS (behaviour based safety) training must be given first to Directors and above level. HSE Professionals must also be exposed to international standards.

“It is a cultural Issue - We do not speak against Malik” (owner / boss). Reduce Organisational Hierarchy may be one Good solution, in some MNCs, it is implemented successfully. Top management performance / behavioural approach must be linked to payment and promotion. Management needs to listen more and speak often about safety expectations due to the basic understanding that employees know more facts than the Management. Best possible solution is to empower everyone to voice their concerns and taking CAPA (corrective and preventive action) to build a bridge of trust which goes a long way. It depends on the culture of organisation where employees are empowered to speak up to share their concerns. If such an ecosystem is not provided, then employees are not going to share their concerns. Sometimes even if hierarchical structure is not there, employees do not freely share their concerns. However, hierarchical structures commonly hinder a culture of open expression.

Researchers are developing ways to understand the development of psychological safety climate, its presence and impact within different settings. Studies are identifying gaps in hybrid and virtual environments. They emphasise the need to understand cultural variations and the interactions between different factors that influence psychological safety. The psychological safety is influenced by various factors at individual, team, and organisational levels, and its effectiveness depends on the interplay of these factors. When the psychological safety is not properly fostered, it leads to negative outcomes - stifled innovation, a lack of constructive feedback, reduced knowledge sharing.

Table 2 highlights the differential characteristics of psychological safe vs toxic environments. In psychological safe environment, people behave positive, are sensitive and more civilised. Whereas in harassment or toxic environment, people behave negative, insulting each other, not bothering etc.

To foster psychological safety (Table 3), organisations must focus on the key elements like trust, effective communication and respectful leadership. The rise of hybrid and virtual work demands that organisations adapt their practices to promote psychological comfort in a new environment. Leaders and employees need to understand that psychological safety isn't about avoiding conflict, but rather about creating an environment where candour and flexibility can thrive.

Hierarchical structures often limit open communication in organisations. Encouraging a speak-up culture, empathetic leadership, anonymous feedback, and recognition for honest suggestions can gradually transform the environment into one of openness and trust. Understanding and prioritising psychological safety is essential for organisations aiming to foster resilient, adaptive, and innovative teams. By embedding psychological safety into their culture, organisations can unlock the fullest potential of their workforce, achieve superior collaborative performance and drive sustained innovation (Harrington, 2025).

“Overcoming challenges requires a strong sense of psychological safety and disciplined learning practices,” said, Harvard Business School Professor Amy Edmondson. “As a leader, it's your job to unlock the potential of your teams and create breakthrough for best performance” (Cote, 2025). Paradoxes and equilibrium in safety culture need to be explored for companies that implement and experience the same that there is a need to innovate and rejuvenate the old culture into a new one so that it remains dynamic that can interest the managements as well as the manpower for better safety as well as business performances. This can happen when people at work feel psychologically safe. High or low psychological safety levels being experienced by the workforce would influence the organisations' efforts for employee engagement. The employee engagement is impacted by psychological states of employee's engagement and disengagement, which can result in differing degrees of physical, mental, and emotional dedication to their jobs (Adanlawo et al., 2025). Psychological safety is a fundamental prerequisite for physical safety, in a sense that if an employee does not feel able to address risks or raise concerns, the risks remain unexplored (Head, 2025). A negative correlation between psychological safety and all types of silence, suggest that psychologically safe work environments reduce employees' tendency to withhold concerns. Employees with a low sense of psychological safety would hold concerns and hazards remain unaddressed (Pacheco et al., 2025). Holding psychological concerns is riskier and costlier for organisations, this needs immediate attention.

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