Stay or go away?: The Impact of Perceived Social Safety Climates on Employee Turnover Intentions and the Moderating Role of Leadership Styles

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Abstract

Transgressive behavior is prevalent in various organizations, underscoring the significance of fostering a social safety climate. To gain a better understanding of the factors contributing to the development of social safety climates and their consequences, we investigated whether employees' perceived climate for social safety negatively impacts their turnover intentions, with transformational and transactional leadership both acting individually as moderators of this relationship. To explore differences between perceived social safety climates and perceived social unsafety climates, we created a manipulation to put participants in the mindset of their respective conditions. As expected, we found that participants in the social safety condition experienced a greater psychological safety climate, whereas those in the social unsafety condition experienced a greater psychological unsafety climate. Additionally, we found that participants who perceive their work climate as highly socially safe report lower turnover intentions compared to those who perceive their work climate as less socially safe. However, we did not find that transformational or transactional leadership affect the link between perceived social safety climate and employees' turnover intentions. Future research should delve deeper into how social safety climates impact employees over time, considering personal variations and the broader organizational context. Organizations can leverage this knowledge by creating supportive and inclusive workplaces, encouraging open communication, and implementing robust policies that promote a sense of safety for their employees.

Keywords: Social safety climates, Psychological safety climates, Turnover intentions, Transactional leadership, Transformational leadership.

Introduction

On November 18, 2022, the Volkskrant published an article revealing that a presenter had engaged in transgressive behavior for years (NOS, 2022). According to those involved, the presenter exhibited outbursts of anger and displayed sexually inappropriate behavior, shouting, humiliating, and intimidating employees in close proximity to others. This resulted in stress, a sense of unsafety, burnouts and other severe mental health issues for dozens of people (Bormans et al., 2022). Unfortunately, this is not a singular incident. Research has shown that more than 80% of the employees working for Dutch broadcast companies experience a culture of fear due to social unsafety and inappropriate behavior in the workplace (van Rijn et al., 2024). Due to the increased attention on transgressive behavior in the workplace, more incidents have come to light in several organizations (NOS, 2024).

The case published in the Volkskrant is exemplary for the fact that transgressive behavior is prevalent in various organizations. Research by the FNV (2023) reveals that many workers experience forms of transgressive behavior. Additionally, 83% of the people who experience transgressive behavior do not feel supported by the organization, which can eventually erode social safety by creating an unsafe social climate for employees (Radboud University, 2023).

Allowing such behaviors may eventually lead to increased employee turnover intention. Turnover intention refers to the likelihood of an employee leaving their current job (Ngamkroeckjoti et al., 2012). According to Lin and colleagues (2022), turnover intentions are strongly influenced by psychological safety. This implies that individuals in psychologically safe situations are less likely to experience turnover intentions. Turnover intentions serve as important indicators of employees' perceptions of social safety climates and can provide valuable insights into retention strategies (Meijer, 2022).

Psychological safety refers to people' perception of the consequences of taking interpersonal risks in a particular context such as in an organization (Edmondson, 1999). While psychological safety focuses on individual perceptions within the workplace, social safety encompasses broader aspects of organizational culture and interpersonal relationships. Social safety refers to an environment in which people do not feel threatened by the behavior of others and can trust that they can share their opinions and views without the risk of being insulted, humiliated, or silenced (Ellemers et al., 2022). Psychological safety plays a pivotal role in shaping turnover intentions, but considering the broader context of social safety is equally important. Further research on social safety within organizations can provide valuable

insights into how to create a work environment that is both supportive and respectful.

Leadership is also an important factor in establishing a social safety climate. Many companies are trying to take action by providing managers with training in leadership and social skills. These training sessions examine both the managers' own relationship with the issue of transgressive behavior and what they can do preventively in their own organizations to handle such behavior properly. As Nauta, professor of organizational psychology at Leiden University, points out, it is important that leaders of organizations recognize that they are the ones who need training first, so they aspire not only to achieve good performance but also to create a humane organization (NOS, 2024). In line with this, research suggests that leadership styles can play a significant role in shaping social safety climates (Groeneveld & Tiggelaar, 2020). That is why we also look at how leadership styles can influence different outcomes in establishing a social safety climate.

A greater understanding of factors that influence employees' perceived social safety climates may enable employers and employees to intervene more effectively and exert better control over their work experiences. In the current research, we investigate how employees' perceived climate for social safety impacts their turnover intentions. Furthermore, we also examine how transactional and transformational leadership styles affect this relationship. We will answer the following research question:

"Does employees' perceived climate for social safety negatively predict their turnover intentions, and how do leadership styles qualify this relationship?"

Theoretical framework

Despite the lack of studies on social safety climates, research on related topics such as psychological safety and organizational culture provide important insights into the functioning of a socially safe climate (Edmondson, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1993). We posit that working in a social safety climate contributes to employees' turnover intentions in a negative way to a similar extent as these related concepts. In this research, we draw upon the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and the Voice-Exit theory (Freeman and Medoff, 1984) as fundamental frameworks, providing a solid theoretical perspective for this study.

The Job Demands-Resources Model

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model posits that the interaction between job demands (stressors) and job resources (supporting variables) affects organizational outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources can support employees, enhancing their resilience and enabling them to cope more effectively with job demands. A workplace that fosters an environment where employees feel safe expressing themselves, exchanging ideas, and seeking support from colleagues may thus serve as a protective factor against the adverse effects of job demands, such as high workload and time pressure (Peeters et al., 2014).

Studies grounded in the JD-R model have underscored the significance of job resources in cultivating positive work environments, consequently reducing turnover intentions (Kirk-Brown & Van Dijk, 2016). Beyond task-related resources, a strong social safety climate also plays a crucial role. When employees feel safe taking risks, voicing concerns, and seeking help, they experience less stress and dissatisfaction (Hebles et al., 2022). This fosters a more positive work environment, ultimately leading to a reduced desire to leave the organization (Sobaih et al., 2022). In essence, a positive social safety climate acts as a buffer against turnover intentions.

Transformational and transactional leadership can also function as job resources within the JD-R model. Effective leadership behaviors, like providing clear expectations (transactional) or inspiring a shared vision (transformational), equip employees with the psychological tools to navigate job demands. This supportive leadership environment fosters a sense of security and trust, ultimately contributing to a safer social climate and reduced turnover intentions (Schaufeli, 2015). Furthermore, these leadership styles can amplify the positive effects of existing job resources. When leaders actively support growth and development (transformational) or ensure fair rewards and recognition (transactional), employees are more likely to leverage existing resources effectively. This combined effect can further reduce turnover and enhance their perception of social safety.

The exit-voice theory

The exit-voice theory posits that employees can address their dissatisfaction with their workplace in two ways: they can either express their dissatisfaction to their supervisor/organization (i.e., voice), or they can choose to leave the organization (Freeman and Medoff, 1984).

A study by Wells and Peachey (2011) provides empirical evidence supporting the relationship between voice and turnover intentions. They found that employees who perceive

themselves as having a voice within the organization are less likely to turnover voluntarily. This suggests that providing avenues for employees to express their concerns and participate in decision-making processes can contribute to greater organizational retention. In contrast, cultures that suppress dissent or punish those who speak up may inadvertently drive employees to exit rather than voice their dissatisfaction (Burris & Sohn, 2021). When employees believe that their concerns will be heard and addressed by the organization, they are more likely to choose the voice option rather than exiting.

As leaders are usually the target for voice and their attitudes and behavior directly shape employees' willingness to speak up (Morrison, 2014), leadership has been identified as an important factor that largely determines employees' voice behavior. Transformational leadership, characterized by inspirational and motivating behaviors, encourages employees to feel valued and empowered to voice their concerns. By fostering a climate of trust and social safety, transformational leaders create an environment where employees feel comfortable expressing their ideas and suggestions for improvement (Ouyang et al., 2022). On the other hand, transactional leadership, which focuses on clear expectations, contingent rewards, and structured performance management, can also promote voice behaviors. By providing clear guidelines and recognizing employee contributions, transactional leaders can create a sense of fairness and predictability, encouraging employees to address issues openly rather than resorting to exit (Ouyang et al., 2022). Therefore, both transformational and transactional leadership styles, when effectively implemented, can play a crucial role in encouraging employees to utilize their voice and address issues within the organization, ultimately reducing turnover intentions.

Turnover intention

The perception that a company does not acknowledge or appreciate employees' efforts—efforts that involve time, energy, and commitment—can significantly contribute to an increased likelihood of employees wanting to leave. This may be especially true in the presence of an unpleasant climate, such as unsafety. Studies show that a high turnover rate negatively affects a company's performance by reducing productivity and occasionally increasing workloads among present employees, leading to dissatisfaction (Vidal Lopes, 2021). Lee and colleagues (2021) emphasize the importance of this relationship, suggesting that when employees feel undervalued or unsupported in a negative work environment, their motivation to stay with the company diminishes.

Social safety climate

In workplaces characterized by an unsafe environment, employees may feel inhibited and reluctant to express their viewpoints or tackle difficult subjects due to the fear of facing adverse consequences. Such environments can provoke stress, higher turnover intention, and diminished job satisfaction among employees (Groeneveld & Janssen, 2023). Consequently, performance may suffer, motivation decreases, and individuals become more susceptible to psychological issues (Meijer, 2022).

Conversely, in organizations that prioritize social safety, employees feel empowered to engage in open dialogue, discuss challenging topics, and confront undesirable behaviors without fear of reprisal. Such environments foster mutual respect, trust, and psychological well-being among employees (Groeneveld & Janssen, 2023). Thus, social safety is a crucial condition in order to offer employees an organization where they can learn and perform optimally, which can improve the work experience and reduce the tendency to leave (Groeneveld & Janssen, 2023).

Transformational leadership

The fundamental concept behind transformational leadership is that people are motivated by their innate potential to contribute to a shared goal (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The four dimensions of transformational leadership are: (1) Charisma, which involves expressing a vision for the future while fostering respect and trust; (2) Motivation, which entails expressing goals and expectations; (3) Promoting skills, judgment, and effective problem-solving; and (4) Tailored attention, where each employee receives individualized feedback and focused attention (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Research shows that there is a negative correlation between turnover intention and transformational leadership (Wells & Peachey, 2011). This means that when employees perceive their leaders as transformational, they are less likely to want to leave their jobs. Accordingly, employees are more inclined to stay with the company if they believe their managers are interested in them and care about them (Maaitah, 2018).

We propose that transformational leadership acts as a buffer against turnover intentions through a two-step process. First, transformational leadership promotes favorable employee actions by encouraging risk-taking, open communication, and seeking help. This fosters a social safety climate where employees feel comfortable contributing their full

potential. Second, by inspiring a clear vision, fostering intellectual stimulation, and providing individual support, transformational leaders cultivate positive employee attitudes and commitment. This increased sense of purpose, belonging, and emotional attachment to the organization reduces the desire to leave.

Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership refers to the exchange of interactions between leaders and followers who are motivated by self-interest. Within this leadership style, leaders compensate employees for their labor performed. They place a high emphasis on performance monitoring, clearly stating requirements that must be met and describing which actions are effective and ineffective (Hamstra et al., 2014). According to Asgari and colleagues (2020), transactional leadership consists of two components: (1) contingent compensation, which rewards employees for meeting predetermined performance goals, and (2) management-by-exception, which involves applying corrective measures either proactively or reactively when goals are not met. Research suggests a negative correlation between turnover intention and transactional leadership (Gul et al., 2012). Schaufeli (2015) states that transactional leadership can function as a resource by providing clarity on expectations and offering rewards for performance, potentially buffering the negative effects of job demands.

We propose that transactional leadership strengthens the negative relationship between employees' perceived social safety climate and their turnover intentions. This influence occurs through a two-step process. First, transactional leadership fosters a social safety climate by creating a predictable and structured work environment. This predictability can make employees feel more secure and comfortable taking risks within established boundaries, ultimately contributing to a stronger sense of safety. Second, this positive social safety climate, in turn, reduces turnover intentions. When employees feel safe voicing concerns, seeking help, and experimenting within clear guidelines, they are less likely to consider leaving the organization.

Hypotheses and Overview of Study

Building on the literature presented in the introduction and theoretical background, we propose three hypotheses.

H1: Participants who perceive to work in a high socially safe climate report lower turnover intentions compared to participants who perceive to work in a low socially safe climate.

H2: Transformational leadership style is a moderator of the relationship between perceived social safety climate and turnover intentions, such that the more employees perceive their leader to be transformational, the lower their turnover intentions are when they work in a socially safe work climate.

H3: Transactional leadership style is a moderator of the relationship between perceived social safety climate and turnover intentions, such that the more employees perceive their leader to be transactional, the lower their turnover intentions are when they work in a socially safe work climate.

In order to examine these hypotheses, we will manipulate the perceived social safety climate to assess how working in a social safety climate affects turnover intentions differently from a social unsafety climate, and to what extent transformational and transactional leadership styles qualify this relationship. The hypothesized relationships between the constructs are visualized in the research model in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Conceptual model of the research question.
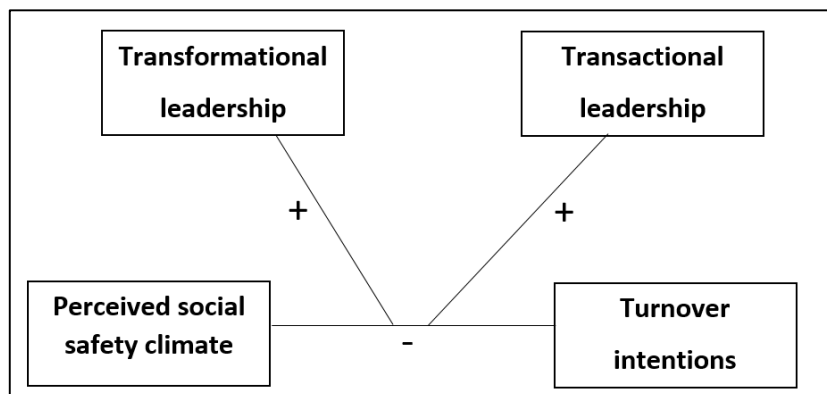
Method

Participants and Design

A power analysis was performed to determine the minimum number of participants needed for this study. A priori calculation of linear multiple regression with an R2 increase of 0.05 (small effect) with 3 predictors was done, aiming for a power of 0.80 at a significance level of 0.05, which resulted in a required sample size of 212.

In total, 226 participants started the survey. All unfinished questionnaires ($N = 101$)

were excluded. Eventually, 125 participants were included in the analyses, thus the sample size needed for a power of 80% was not met. Of the 125 participants, 70 were female (56%), 54 were male (43.2%), and one person preferred not to say (0.8%). The average age of the participants was 36 years ($SD = 12.83$). The majority of participants were of Dutch nationality (54.4%), followed by German (27.2%). On average, participants had worked for 6.6 years in their current organization ($SD = 100.15$), with a standard working week of 38 hours ($SD = 11.30$). Most participants held a Master's degree (50.4%) or a Bachelor's degree (28.8%). The primary industries represented were financial institutions (22.4%), followed by education (13.6%) and government (8.0%). Additionally, 92 participants did not have a supervisory position (73,6%), while 33 did (26,4%) (See Appendix A). An experimental research study was conducted to answer the research questions, utilizing a 2-between-subjects design where two independent groups of participants were exposed to different conditions, enabling a comparative analysis between the groups.

Procedure

The data collection process involved a team of four researchers who also examined the effects of social safety climates on different work-related outcomes (e.g. emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, work performance). To facilitate our research, we collaborated on creating an experimental survey that incorporated various variables for our individual studies. Participants were recruited through the researchers' social circles, leveraging platforms such as internship connections and LinkedIn. Additionally, we approached family and acquaintances via WhatsApp. The questionnaire was created and distributed using Qualtrics. Individuals were asked to complete the questionnaire if they met the inclusion criteria.

The inclusion criteria (i.e., 18 years or older; currently employed by a single organization for at least 4 months; working a minimum of 12 hours per week for this organization), along with a brief description of the study's aim (i.e., to advance scientific understanding of social and psychological safety in work climates and their consequences in organizations), were clearly stated in the informed consent form and had to be accepted before participants could start the questionnaire (see Appendix A). After accepting the informed consent, participants first answered questions about their demographics. Then, participants received a text describing either a socially safe or socially unsafe climate and were asked to identify three situations where they felt socially safe or socially unsafe within their workplace, depending on the condition they were assigned to. Following this, participants rated

statements on the following subjects: social safety, psychological safety, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and turnover intentions.

After completing the questionnaire, participants were debriefed and provided with additional explanation regarding the study's aim, including disclosure of the manipulation. We explained that participants were randomly assigned to read about either a safe or unsafe organizational climate to investigate its effect on positive work outcomes, noting the use of deception in the study for this purpose. Participants were then given the option to consent or decline participation after being informed about the deception.

The University of Utrecht adheres to the Code of Ethics for Psychologists (NIP, 2024). This study was conducted after receiving ethics approval from Utrecht University's Faculty Ethics Review Committee (FERB; 24-0433).

Manipulation Social Safety Climate

In order to manipulate social safety versus social unsafety climates, participants were presented with one of the two scenarios (See Appendix A). To illustrate the safe condition, we described that most organizations in the Netherlands and Germany prioritize creating psychological and social safety climates where employees feel valued, supported, and free to share their ideas and concerns without fear of negative repercussions. In contrast, in the unsafe condition, it was stated that many organizations in the Netherlands and Germany lack policies and practices to create psychological and social safety climates, resulting in employees feeling undervalued, unsupported, and afraid to share their ideas or concerns.

After reading the scenario corresponding to their assigned condition, participants were asked to identify three situations where they felt socially and psychologically safe or unsafe. The purpose of the manipulation was to induce participants to adopt the mindset of working in either a safe or unsafe climate themselves. A manipulation check was conducted to verify whether participants had indeed adopted these mindsets. 63 participants were in the unsafe condition (50.4%) and 62 participants were in the safe condition (49.6%).

Measures

All measures were rated on a 7-point Likert scale with response options ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*), unless otherwise mentioned.

Social safety climate

To assess the extent to which participants felt that their climate is socially safe, we created our own social safety scale. The measurement consisted of the following items:

"Generally, the organization encourages the reporting of socially undesirable behavior (such as being insulted, humiliated, or silenced)", "Within my organization, we discuss what socially desirable and undesirable behavior is", "I know where to go with a report or complaint about socially undesirable behavior", "I am confident that reports or complaints about socially undesirable behavior will be handled properly", "I do not feel threatened by the behavior of others in my organization", and "I feel confident to share my opinions and views without the risk of being insulted, humiliated, or silenced". The scale demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .80$).

Psychological safety

To assess the extent to which participants experienced psychological safety, the psychological safety scale by Baer & Frese (2003) was utilized. The psychological safety scale comprised seven items, examples are: 'No one in our organization would deliberately act in a way that undermines others' efforts' and 'As an employee in our organization, individuals are able to bring up problems and tough issues'. This scale demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .79$).

Transactional leadership

We measured transactional leadership by using the 5-item scale developed by Podsakoff and colleagues (1990). Two examples of the statements are: "My boss always gives me positive feedback when I perform well" and "My boss personally compliments me when I do outstanding work". Each item was rated on a five-point Likert-type scale with response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$).

Transformational leadership

We measured transformational leadership with five items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio et al., 1999). Three of the statements are: "My boss spends time teaching and coaching me", "My boss seeks differing perspectives from me when solving problems", and "My boss acts in ways that build my respect". Each item was rated on a five-point Likert-type scale with response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale was found to have good internal consistency ($\alpha = .81$).

Turnover intentions

We measured participants' turnover intentions by using the 'Turnover intention scale,' which consists of four items developed by Abrams and colleagues (1998). Two of these items include: "In the next few years I intend to leave this company" and "I think about leaving this company". Participants rated each item on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), where higher scores indicate greater turnover intention. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$).

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics v27. To ensure the validity of our regression analysis, we evaluated several assumptions. This included checking for outliers by examining standardized residuals, identifying influential data points with Mahalanobis distance and Cook's distance, and testing for multicollinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) among independent variables. Additionally, I confirmed homoscedasticity by visually inspecting a plot of residuals against fitted values to ensure consistent variance in the errors.

To test whether the manipulation worked as intended, we conducted an independent samples t-test analysis comparing the psychological and social safety condition with the psychological and social unsafety condition. To examine whether a social safety climate predicted turnover intentions, we performed a linear regression analysis. To investigate whether transactional leadership and transformational leadership moderated the relationship between perceived social safety climate, we conducted two moderation analyses. The moderation models were tested using Model 1 from the PROCESS macro in the SPSS package (Hayes, 2017).

A dummy variable was created for gender, with categories for male and female. Since only one person preferred not to disclose their gender, we treated this response as missing data. Furthermore, a dummy variable was created for sector, distinguishing financial institutions from others, as most participants worked in financial institutions.

Results

Preliminary analyses

First, we conducted a correlational analysis to investigate whether background variables (i.e., age, gender, nationality, sector, supervisory position, tenure, working hours per week, education) were associated with the variables relevant to our predictions (see Table 2). Some background variables showed moderate to strong associations with the predictor and

outcome variables (e.g., age, supervisory position, nationality, education, tenure, sector). Due to our low sample size, we chose not to include these variables as covariates in the analysis. Additionally, there was considerable variance when including these covariates (See supplementary materials). High variance indicates that the values of the covariates are widely dispersed, potentially affecting the validity of our analysis. Excluding the covariates helped avoid misleading results and ensured that the observed relationship between social safety and turnover intentions reflected a genuine effect, rather than a statistical artifact caused by the covariates.

Table 2

Correlation analysis of background, predictors and outcome variable.

	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Age	99														
2. Supervisory position	125	-.36**	-												
3. Average working hours per week	124	.11	-.09	-											
4. Tenure	125	.63**	-.20*	.11	-										
5. SectorD	121	.05	.14	.30**	-.02	-									
6. GenderD	125	.04	.13	-.30**	-.08	-.16	-								
7. NationD	124	.23**	.21*	.15	-.13	-.06	-.04	-							
8. Education	125	.22	-.09	.30*	.05	.09	.02	.04	-						
9. Condition	125	-.04	-.05	-.01	.05	.06	.02	-.19*	-.15	-					
10. Psych safety	125	-.09	-.09	-.12	-.13	-.00	-.13	-.10	-.23**	.21*	-				
11. Social safety	125	.25*	-.11	-.04	.08	.06	-.17	-.16	-.18	.24**	.69**	-			
12. Turnover intention	125	-.37**	.23**	-.01	-.40**	-.09	.10	.23**	.05	-.01	-.34**	-.38**	-		
13. Transactional leadership	125	.07	-.02	-.07	.01	.06	-.06	.19*	-.03	.19*	.40**	.44**	-.17	-	
14. Transformational leadership	125	-.09	-.11	-.00	-.07	.06	-.02	-.29**	-.11	.24**	.50**	.49**	-.28**	.61**	-

*Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.*

Assumption checks

Before interpreting the results, several assumptions were evaluated for the regression analysis. The standardized residuals ranged from -1.84 to 2.06, the Mahalanobis distance was 9.58, and Cook's distance was 0.05. The VIF was 1.000, indicating that the assumption of multicollinearity was met. Homoscedasticity was also confirmed, as there was no systematic pattern of clustering in the scores. No participants needed to be excluded.

Did the Manipulation Work as Intended?

As intended, participants in the psychological and social unsafety condition ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.14$) reported a significantly lower perceived social safety climate compared to those in the psychological and social safety condition ($M = 5.45$, $SD = 1.07$), $t(123) = -2.72$, $p = .004$.

Furthermore, the conditions also affected participants' perceived psychological safety in the organization, $t(123) = -2.39$, $p = .009$. Specifically, participants in the psychological and social safety condition ($M = 5.16$, $SD = 0.944$) experienced a higher level of

psychological safety, whereas those in the psychological and social unsafety condition ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.11$) experienced a lower level of psychological safety.

Do participants who perceive working in a social safety climate report lower turnover intentions compared to participants who perceive working in a social unsafety climate?

After failing to observe notable effects with the condition as an independent variable (See supplementary materials), our research shifted focus towards the social safety and psychological safety scales as independent variables. To delve deeper into our hypotheses concerning turnover intentions, transactional leadership style, and transformational leadership style, we chose to conduct cross-sectional testing. This method allowed us to examine the connections between social safety, psychological safety, and the aforementioned outcomes at a specific moment in time.

In line with hypothesis one, we found that participants who experienced high social safety reported fewer turnover intentions, $F(1, 123) = 20.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .28$. Specifically, participants who experienced low social safety were more likely to report higher turnover intentions than those who perceived their work climate as socially safe, $B = -0.43$, $\beta = -0.38$, $R^2 = 0.14$, *adjusted* $R^2 = 0.13$. This model accounted for 14.1% of the total variance, indicating that a perceived social safety climate negatively affects turnover intentions.

To ensure validity, we also performed a regression analysis for psychological safety. We found that participants who experienced high psychological safety reported fewer turnover intentions, $F(1,123) = 16.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .38$. Specifically, participants who experienced low psychological safety were more likely to report higher turnover intentions, $B = -0.42$, $\beta = -0.34$, $R^2 = 0.14$, *adjusted* $R^2 = 0.12$. This model accounted for 12% of the total variance, indicating that a perceived psychological safety climate negatively affects turnover intentions.

Does transactional leadership moderate the relation between a perceived social safety climate and turnover intention?
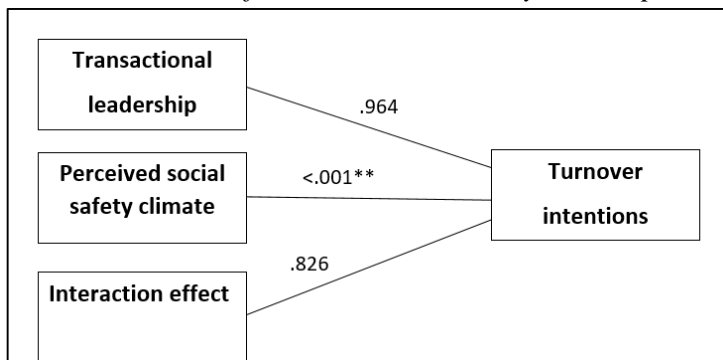
We did not find that transactional leadership moderates the relationship between perceived social safety and turnover intention. There was a significant main effect between perceived social safety and turnover intention, $b = -0.42$, $t(121) = -3.85$, $p = .002$. However, a non-significant effect was found for transactional leadership on turnover intentions, $b = -0.01$, $t(121) = -0.04$, $p = .96$. Additionally, the interaction between transactional leadership and perceived social safety on turnover intention was non-significant, $b = 0.02$, $t(121) = 0.22$, $p = .83$ (See Figure 2). These results indicate that the effect of social safety on turnover intention

is not moderated by transactional leadership. To ensure validity, we also tested the model with psychological safety, which was also not significant (see Figure 3).
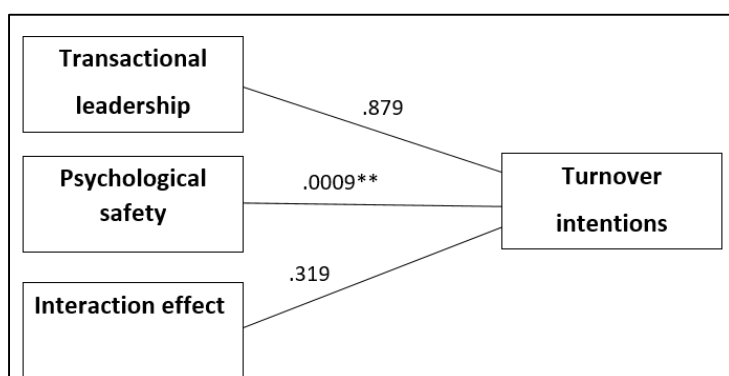
Figure 2

Statistical model of the moderation analysis with perceived social safety climate.

Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

Figure 3

Statistical model of the moderation analysis with psychological safety.

Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

Does transformational leadership moderate the relation between a perceived social safety climate and turnover intention?

We did not find that transformational leadership moderates the relationship between social safety and turnover intention. The analysis revealed a significant main effect of perceived social safety on turnover intention, $b = -0.34$, $t(121) = 3.03$, $p = .003$. However, transformational leadership did not significantly affect turnover intentions, $b = -0.19$, $t(121) = -1.31$, $p = .19$. Moreover, the interaction between transformational leadership and perceived social safety on turnover intentions was not significant, $b = 0.04$, $t(121) = 0.41$, $p = .67$ (see Figure 4). These results indicate that transformational leadership does not moderate the
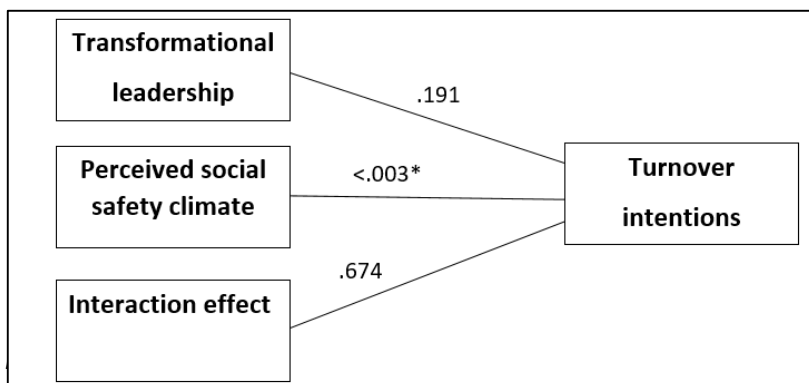
relationship between perceived social safety and turnover intention. To ensure validity, we also tested the model with psychological safety, which was also not significant (see Figure 5).
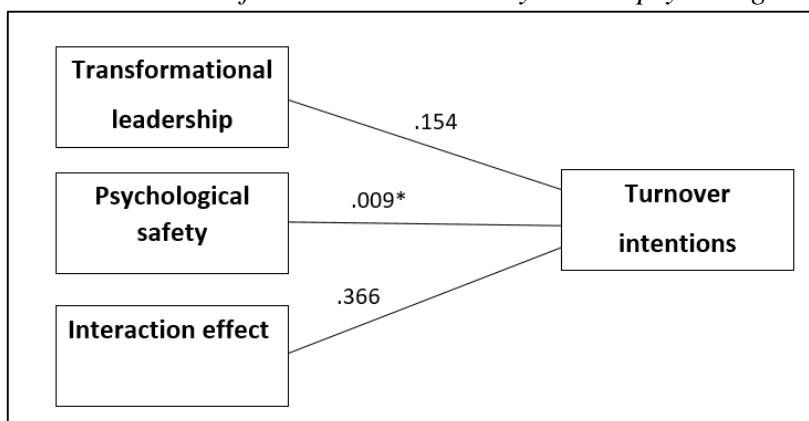
Figure 4

Statistical model of the moderation analysis with perceived social safety climate.

Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

Figure 5

Statistical model of the moderation analysis with psychological safety.

Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

Discussion

Our findings confirmed that participants in the social safety condition experienced a greater psychological and social safety climate, whereas those in the social unsafety condition experienced a greater psychological and social unsafety climate. Additionally, we found that participants who experience high social safety report lower turnover intentions compared to those who experience low social safety. However, we did not find that transformational or transactional leadership affects the link between social safety and employees' intentions to

leave their job. In other words, even in positive social climates created by good leadership, other factors besides leadership style might still influence an employee's decision to leave.

The manipulation of social safety climates

The results showed no significant effects when using condition in our analyses. One potential reason is that the manipulations designed to create feelings of social safety or social unsafety were not powerful enough. According to Aronson et al. (2013), effective manipulations in social psychology often require robust and vivid scenarios that immerse participants. When manipulations are weak, participants may not internalize the experimental conditions, leading to a failure to detect significant effects. This aligns with the current study, where the initial descriptions provided at the start of the survey may not have been sufficient to sustain participants' engagement with the manipulated variables throughout the experiment. The initial descriptions likely focused on introducing the general study topic, not necessarily the nuances of social safety or leadership styles. This would not directly impact how participants perceive the connection between a socially safe climate and their desire to leave.

Future research should embed manipulations more integrally within the experimental tasks, which might enhance their impact. For example, a participant assigned to the 'high social safety climate' condition might encounter a virtual work environment where colleagues readily offer help and feedback. If they make a mistake, they receive constructive criticism and support to improve, rather than punishment. This active engagement in a supportive environment strengthens the manipulation. Participants are more likely to internalize the feeling of high social safety, leading to a stronger influence on their responses and a clearer picture of how social safety interacts with leadership styles in affecting turnover intentions.

The effect of social safety climates on turnover intentions

Our research findings highlight the importance of establishing a socially safe work climate within organizations to reduce turnover intentions. Research suggests that turnover intention can create a negative work environment where remaining employees may experience increased workloads and stress, potentially leading to a vicious cycle of further turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). Furthermore, organizations with high turnover intention face increased costs related to recruiting, hiring, and training new employees, which can strain resources and disrupt business continuity (Hom et al., 2017). This can negatively impact employees, as they may experience increased workloads, higher levels of stress, and decreased morale due to the constant influx of new, less experienced colleagues and the resulting instability within the team.

To maintain a stable and socially safe workforce, it is important for organizations to identify the causes of turnover intention. By understanding the underlying factors, organizations can implement targeted interventions to address these issues. One effective solution is to enhance learning ability, which strongly contributes to preventing dissatisfaction. This can foster a culture of knowledge, learning, freedom to make mistakes, autonomy, and quality of service (Borst & Noordegraaf, 2022).

Transformational leadership as a moderator of the relationship between social safety climate and turnover intentions.

Our findings regarding the moderating effect of leadership style on the relationship between social safety and turnover intentions deserve further investigation. While Avolio and colleagues (1999) highlight the dynamic interplay between leadership and culture, our study might not have captured this effect for a few reasons. One possibility is that the manipulated social safety climate scenarios may not have been robust enough to create a significant difference in perceived fairness and support. Additionally, our study might have focused on a specific organizational context where leadership styles have a weaker influence on social safety climates compared to other factors. Future research could explore these possibilities by using more nuanced manipulations or examining leadership styles within different organizational cultures.

Additionally, employees' individual differences, such as personal resilience and external support systems, may act as a buffer against the relationship between social safety climates and turnover intentions, regardless of leadership style (Amoadu et al., 2023). This suggests that while transformational leadership has many beneficial characteristics, its impact on specific outcomes such as turnover intentions may be complex and influenced by a variety of organizational and individual circumstances.

Transactional leadership as a moderator of the relationship between social safety climate and turnover intentions.

The fundamental character of transactional leadership might explain why there was no significant moderating effect. While transactional leadership can be efficient at ensuring productivity and rule adherence, it may lack the motivating and inspiring elements required to foster a profound feeling of social safety and loyalty in employees (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). As a result, transactional leadership may lack the depth and personal connection essential to build a strong social safety climate, with little to no impact on turnover intentions. This

highlights the idea that while transactional leadership can be useful for accomplishing short-term goals and defining responsibilities, it may not be sufficient for establishing a climate that has a significant effect on long-term employee attitudes and retention (Spencer, 2021).

Limitations and future directions

A primary limitation of our study is the failure to achieve the desired statistical power due to an insufficient number of participants. This undermines the reliability and validity of our findings. Reliability suffers because a chance effect, unrelated to our variables, could explain the results. Validity is compromised because we are more likely to miss a true effect, making it difficult to determine if our findings accurately reflect reality. A possible contributing factor to the insufficient sample size could be the incomplete second consent form after the deception, further reducing the number of participants. Another factor could be the language barrier, as some respondents found the survey's English language level difficult. As a result, caution should be exercised when interpreting our study's results. Further research with larger, more representative groups is required to confirm and expand upon our findings.

Another limitation is the absence of covariates in our analyses due to the small sample size. Although we initially performed analyses with covariates (see supplementary materials), significant differences compared to analyses without covariates prompted us to exclude them. Covariates such as age, gender, nationality, and tenure can significantly influence social safety climates, turnover intentions, and leadership styles. Research indicates that younger workers may be more sensitive to negative social interactions, potentially perceiving a less safe climate (Yulita et al., 2016). Women, according to Blau and colleagues (2017), are often more attuned to subtle social cues, which can impact their perception of social safety. Additionally, nationality plays a role; cultures with higher power distance, as per Hofstede's (1980) framework, may foster a less egalitarian social safety climate, influencing how employees interact and report concerns. Tenure also matters; longer-tenured employees are typically more invested in the organization, advocating for improvements in social safety and less likely to leave (Chang et al., 2024). Neglecting these potential confounders may lead to less precise results due to spurious correlations. For example, a higher percentage of foreign-born employees might correlate with a lower perceived social safety climate due to cultural adjustment challenges rather than actual safety issues. This omission can also reduce generalizability, limiting the applicability of findings to broader populations. Future studies should prioritize larger sample sizes that allow for the inclusion of relevant variables, enabling a more comprehensive exploration of how contextual factors interact with leadership

styles to influence social safety climate and turnover intentions.

Another limitation is the potential short-term focus of the social safety climate manipulations, which may not fully capture longer-term effects in real-world organizational settings. Participants may habituate to the new climate over time, potentially reducing reporting or fostering a perception that sufficient actions have been taken, even if underlying safety issues persist (Neal & Griffin, 2006). Future research could enhance manipulations by employing more vivid and realistic scenarios, reinforcing manipulated conditions at regular intervals during surveys, and considering longer exposure durations. Following employees longitudinally within their organizations would also be beneficial. This approach allows researchers to observe participants' experiences over an extended period, capturing the dynamic interplay between leadership behaviors, perceptions of social climate, and turnover intentions within the natural context of their workplaces. Studying these factors longitudinally provides a deeper understanding of how leadership influences social climate and how these elements collectively impact employee retention in the long term.

Lastly, our objective was to determine if there exists a distinction between a climate of social safety and one of social unsafety. This investigation was conducted using our self-developed scale measuring social safety. However, it is important to note that the questions comprising the social safety variable primarily focus on individual experiences rather than exclusively capturing the broader organizational climate. This distinction is essential because while our scale provides insights into personal perceptions of safety, it may not fully encapsulate the overall social environment within the organization, which could include factors affecting collective perceptions and behaviors across the entire workplace. Therefore, when analyzing the results, it is important to consider the scale's limitations in reflecting the comprehensive organizational climate accurately. Future research should aim to develop a more comprehensive measure that encompasses both individual perceptions and broader organizational climates of social safety and unsafety. This could involve refining existing scales or developing new methodologies to capture the collective experiences and interactions within organizational settings.

Implications

This study adds to the existing literature by delving further into the dynamics of social safety climates. To our knowledge, this is one of the first studies to use manipulation techniques to test whether participants' mindsets could be influenced towards social safety climates or social unsafety climates, depending on different conditions. Given the limited

prior research on the subject, additional studies are required to confirm the existence of this relationship. This is important, as studies show that social safety climates significantly impact organizational outcomes (Groeneveld & Janssen, 2023), such as lower turnover (Borst & Noordegraaf, 2023). Limited research on social safety climates hinders our ability to fully address these critical aspects of the workplace. By addressing these limitations through further research, we can gain a deeper understanding of social safety climates and their role in influencing organizational outcomes such as turnover intentions. Researchers should undertake studies with larger and more varied samples to ensure that the findings are relevant in different settings. This knowledge empowers organizations to create safer, more supportive workplaces, ultimately leading to a more engaged workforce less likely to experience turnover intentions.

Ensuring equal treatment can contribute significantly to fostering a social safety climate. Greenberg (1993) introduced procedural justice, which emphasizes fair and consistent treatment of employees. When employees perceive fairness in decision-making and disciplinary processes, they feel more secure and respected, thereby reducing turnover intentions. Additionally, implementing policies that prioritize employee well-being and inclusivity can enhance a social safety climate. Shore and colleagues (2011) underscore the positive impact of diversity and inclusion on employee engagement and performance. By instituting rules that promote inclusivity and value diverse perspectives, organizations cultivate a sense of belonging and diminish feelings of exclusion. This approach ultimately lowers turnover intentions by creating a work environment where employees feel safe, respected, and supported. By prioritizing these principles, organizations can cultivate a stable and committed workforce, while fostering a socially safe work climate.

Surprisingly, the study indicated that both transformational and transactional leadership styles did not significantly influence the relationship between social safety climates and turnover intentions. This finding diverges from previous research, highlighting the necessity for a more comprehensive understanding of how leadership impacts perceptions of social safety. Organizations may need to reconsider their emphasis on rigid adherence to specific leadership styles. Hersey and Blanchard's (1969) Situational Contingency Theory proposes that the most effective leadership style depends on follower maturity, defined by their competence and commitment. Thus, a more versatile strategy incorporating multiple leadership styles that can adapt to various organizational and environmental demands may prove more effective. Organizations fostering a culture of adaptable leadership, where leaders

adeptly switch between styles based on situational needs, are likely to achieve greater effectiveness (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Leadership development programs play a crucial role in equipping leaders with the skills to diagnose situations and choose appropriate styles that align with both employees and organizational goals (Yukl, 2012). This approach acknowledges the complexity of leadership dynamics, enabling leaders to leverage a diverse range of skills to navigate challenges effectively.

Conclusion

This study underscores the vital role of social safety climates in organizations and their significant impact on employee turnover intentions. The manipulation of social safety climates effectively created distinct perceptions among participants, revealing that employees in the socially safe climate condition perceived their own work climate as safe, whereas those in the socially unsafe condition perceived it as less safe. Moreover, we found that participants who experience high social safety were less likely to report turnover intentions. However, the study did not demonstrate that transformational or transactional leadership styles influence this relationship, indicating a need for deeper exploration into how leadership affects perceptions of social safety. Future studies should explore the long-term effects of social safety climates, consider individual differences, and incorporate a broader range of contextual factors. Organizations can benefit from these findings by fostering supportive and inclusive environments, promoting open communication, and developing comprehensive policies that enhance social safety. By doing so, they can create more stable and committed workforces, ultimately improving employee retention and cultivating a socially safe work climate.

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PERCEIVED SOCIAL SAFETY CLIMATES, TURNOVER INTENTIONS, TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP, TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Appendix

Appendix A

Table

Demographics of the participants including: Gender, Age, Nationality, Supervisory position, Working hours per week, Tenure and Education.

Measures	N	%	M	SD
Gender			1.58	0.54
Male	54	43.2		
Female	70	56.0		
Prefer not to say	1	0.8		
Age	125		35.71	12.83
Sector	121		8.31	4.16
Financial Institutions	28	22.4		
Other	26	20.8		
Education	17	13.6		
Others	50	43.2		
Nationality	124		99.21	35.93
Netherlands	68	54.4		
Germany	34	27.2		
Other	23	18.4		
Supervisory Position	125		1.74	0.44
Yes	33	26.4		
No	92	73.6		
Working Hours per week	125		38.1	11.3
Tenure	125		79.2	100.2
Education			3.46	0.84
Less than secondary (high) school graduation or equivalent	1	0.8		
Secondary (high) school graduation or equivalent	18	14.4		

Bachelor's degree or equivalent	36	28.8
Master's degree or equivalent	63	50.4
Doctoral Degree or equivalent	7	5.6
Total N	125	

Appendix B

Informed consent and questionnaire: Organisational safety climates and their effects on employees and work outcomes

Information Letter online questionnaire

Title: Organisational safety climates and their effects on employees and work outcomes

Researchers' names: Mia Terborg, Felicia Gödde, Hanna Meijer, and Fabiënne van der Rijst

Introduction

In this letter we would like to ask you whether you are willing to participate in our scientific research. The research takes place completely online. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty Ethical Review Committee (FETC) of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Utrecht University and complies with the ethical guidelines.

Participation is voluntary and you can stop at any time without having to give a reason. Before you decide whether you want to participate in this study, we would like to inform you below about what exactly the study entails and what questions you can expect.

Please read this information carefully and feel free to contact us via the email address at the bottom of this screen if you have any questions.

Set-up/implementation of the study

You will be given a survey. To fill this takes about 10 to 15 minutes.

Background information

Though social safety is an important and timely topic, little scientific attention has been devoted to understanding the consequences of working in a safe vs. unsafe environment. Our study's objective is to advance the scientific understanding of social and psychological safety work environments and their consequences in organisations. Besides advancing the related stream of research, the findings of this research may also be of practical use by providing guidelines on how to create a socially safe work environment. This research is done for the master Social, Health and Organisational Psychology, it is thus a student research.

What is expected from the participant

In this questionnaire, you will be asked a series of questions covering various topics, such as demographics and your experiences at work. The questionnaire is expected to take ±15 minutes to complete. To participate, it is crucial that:

- you are 18 years or older
- you work in exactly one organisation
- you have been working at this organisation for at least 4 months
- you work at least 12 hours a week for this organisation.

The questionnaire contains two attention checks to ensure reliable results.

Possible advantages and disadvantages of the research

The research will take approximately 15 minutes. When creating the questionnaire, personal or confrontational questions were taken into account, which will not be included. If you find a question too personal or confrontational, you can stop at any time.

Confidentiality of data processing

Participation in this study is voluntary and all answers are stored anonymously and confidentially. By participating, you agree that the research data collected for the study may be published or made available without using your name or other identifying information. You further understand that the survey data may be shared with others without revealing any personal information that could identify you. The research data will be securely stored by the

PERCEIVED SOCIAL SAFETY CLIMATES, TURNOVER INTENTIONS, TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP, TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

relevant researchers from the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at Utrecht University and kept for scientific purposes for a minimum of 10 years in line with the guidelines of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at Utrecht University.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can stop the study at any time, without giving a reason and without any negative consequences for you. For our analysis, it is important that you answer all the questions. However, if any question makes you feel uncomfortable, feel free not to answer the question.

If you have any questions or feedback, you can always contact the researchers via mail: f.vanderrijst@students.uu.nl or m.m.terborg@students.uu.nl

If you would like to contact an independent researcher, you may contact Dr. Reine van der Wal (r.c.vanderwal@uu.nl). If you have any complaints about this research, please contact the ethical committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Utrecht University (klachtenfunctionaris-fetcsocwet@uu.nl).

Demographics

- What gender do you identify most with?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Other, namely ….

- What is your age in years?

- Open question to fill in numerical value

- What is your nationality?

- Pick from all nationalities

- What is your highest completed level of education?

- Less than secondary (high) school graduation or equivalent

- Secondary (high) school graduation or equivalent

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent

- Master's degree or equivalent

- Doctoral Degree or equivalent

- What sector do you work in?

- Health care & Social work

- Water supply, Energy supply & Waste management

- Education

- Government

- Wholesale & Retail trade

- Manufacturing

- Real estate

- Public Administration & Services

- Information & Communication

- Technology

- Financial institutions

- Scientific activities

- Other, namely…

- What is your current employment status?

- Employed for wages

- Other -> end survey

- Do you have a supervisory position within your organisation?

- Yes

- No

- What are your average working hours per week?

- Open question to fill in numerical value

- How many months have you worked for your current organisation already?

  - Open question to fill in numerical value

Manipulation text

(The participant will be randomly put in condition 1: "Psychologically and socially safe
climate" or condition 2: "Psychologically and socially unsafe climate").

*Now, we kindly ask you to carefully read the text on the next page in which current
developments in the labour market are described.*

Condition 1: Psychologically and socially safe climate

In today's interconnected and complex world, it is important to facilitate work environments
where everyone feels free to share their ideas, questions, and concerns and where mistakes
will be welcomed and valued. In such work environments, employees do not feel threatened
by the behavior of others. They can trust that they can share their opinions and views without
the risk of being insulted, humiliated, or silenced.

Most organizations in the Netherlands and Germany recognize the importance of creating and
enhancing such psychologically and socially safe environments and employ policies,
procedures, and practices to achieve this.

This is further supported by academic evidence, as recent studies show that a large majority of
organizations invest highly in the well-being of their employees. Over 80% of employees feel
valued and supported in their organization and feel safe to speak up and share opposing views
and ideas as they believe that potential conflicts will be handled constructively.

Almost all organizations spend resources on employee mental health programs and inclusive
policies. To illustrate, over 90% of Dutch and German organizations employ external
confidantes, and more than 70% of these organizations transparently communicate the
procedure that they have in place when employees experience issues related to being insulted,
humiliated, or silenced.

Furthermore, more than 80% of organizations proactively communicate the norms and behaviors valued within the organization and applaud the sharing of different perspectives. As a result, employees feel heard and supported in their well-being.

Employee statements from well-known organizations emphasize this feeling: "I feel heard and respected like my well-being truly matters and my manager appreciates my efforts." Or "Recently, my team leader calmly addressed concerns when one colleague faced challenges meeting a deadline. It fosters a supportive atmosphere, ensuring everyone feels comfortable and motivated at work. I am not being punished for mistakes."

Most employees appreciate the initiatives highlighting psychologically and socially safe environments: "I know that it can be challenging to foster an environment where everyone feels valued and safe. But I think that almost all organizations are currently doing a great job at making employees feel safe to express new ideas, to speak up, and to take risks."

Condition 2: Psychologically and socially unsafe climate

In today's interconnected and complex world, it is important to facilitate work environments where everyone feels free to share their ideas, questions, and concerns and where mistakes will be welcomed and valued. In such work environments, employees do not feel threatened by the behavior of others. They can trust that they can share their opinions and views without the risk of being insulted, humiliated, or silenced.

However, most organizations in the Netherlands and Germany are still not aware of the importance of creating and enhancing such psychologically and socially safe environments. Very few of these organizations employ policies, procedures, and practices to achieve this.

This is further supported by academic evidence, as recent studies show that a large majority of organizations barely invest in the well-being of their employees. Over 80% of employees don't feel valued or supported in their organization, and they do not feel safe enough to speak up and share opposing views and ideas as they believe that potential conflicts will not be handled constructively.

Almost no organizations spend resources on employee mental health programs or inclusive policies. To illustrate, only 10% of Dutch and German organizations employ external confidantes, and 5% of these organizations transparently communicate the procedure that they have in place when employees experience issues related to being insulted, humiliated, or silenced.

Furthermore, only 7% of organizations proactively communicate the norms and behaviors valued within the organization and applaud the sharing of different perspectives. As a result, employees don't feel heard or supported in their well-being.

Employee statements from well-known organizations emphasize this feeling: "I regularly work extra hours and take on big projects. I know I do my work well, but the management still presses for more effort and lets all the good results go by unnoticed." Or "Recently my team leader lost his temper because one colleague didn't manage to meet a deadline. It just makes you scared to go to work and demotivates me. We are being punished for mistakes."

Most employees wish for more initiatives highlighting psychologically and socially safe environments: "Organizations experience a challenge to foster an environment where everyone feels valued and safe. I think organizations are not doing a great job of making employees feel safe to express new ideas, speak up, or take risks.

% of employees perceiving a socially and psychologically unsafe climate

safe (23%)
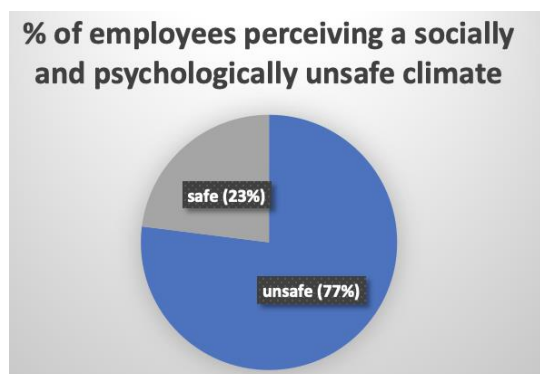
unsafe (77%)

Manipulation questions

Thank you for reading the provided information. Now, please name three situations where you felt socially and psychologically safe OR unsafe yourself. Do not take too long to think about this; there are no right or wrong answers. We are just interested in understanding cases where you felt safe/unsafe.

•   3 small open text fields that are required to be filled

Thank you for providing three personal situations. Now, please rate the following statements.

- Social safety (5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree)):

•   Generally, the organisation encourages the reporting of socially undesirable behaviour (such as being insulted, humiliated, or silenced).

•   Within my organisation, we discuss what is socially desirable and undesirable behaviour. I know where to go with a report or complaint about socially undesirable behaviour.

•   I am confident that reports or complaints about socially undesirable behaviour will be handled properly

•   I do not feel threatened by the behaviour of others in my organisation

•   I feel confident to share my opinions and views without the risk of being insulted, humiliated, or silenced.

- Psychological safety: scale-rated on 7 point Likert scale

• In our organisation some employees are rejected for being different.

• When someone in our organisation makes a mistake, it is often held against them.

• No one in our organisation would deliberately act in a way that undermines others' efforts.

• It is difficult to ask others for help in our organisation.

• In our organisation one is free to take risks.

• The people in our organisation value others' unique skills and talents.

- As an employee in our organisation, one is able to bring up problems and tough issues.

- Trait Emotional Intelligence on 7 point Likert scale.

- I am normally able to "get into someone's shoes" and experience their emotions
- I often pause and think about my feelings
- I often find it difficult to see things from another person's viewpoint
- Many times, I can't figure out what emotion I'm feeling
- I can deal effectively with people
- I am usually able to find ways to control my emotions when I want to
- I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions
- On the whole, I am able to deal with stress
- I usually find it difficult to keep myself motivated
- I believe that I'm full of personal strengths
- I generally believe that things will work out fine in my life
- I tend to "back down" even if I know I'm right.

- Transformational leadership (5-point likert scale)

- My boss spends time teaching and coaching me
- My boss seeks differing perspectives from me when solving problems
- My boss acts in ways that build my respect
- My boss talks to me about his or her most important values and beliefs
- My boss talks optimistically about the future to me

- Transactional leadership (5-point likert scale)

- My boss always gives me positive feedback when I perform well
- My boss gives me special recognition when my work is very good
- My boss commends me when I do a better-than-average job
- My boss personally compliments me when I do outstanding work
- My boss frequently does not acknowledge my good performance

- Job Satisfaction on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from Never (1) to Always (7)

- Generally, I am satisfied with my job.

- Work performance (1=rarely, 2= sometimes, 3=regularly, 4=often, 5=always)

In the past 3 months..

- I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time.
- My planning was optimal
- I kept in mind the results that I had to achieve in my work.
- I was able to separate main issues from side issues at work.
- I was able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort.

- Turnover intentions (five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree))

- In the next few years I intend to leave this organisation
- In the next few years I expect to leave this organisation
- I think about leaving this organisation
- I would like to work in this organisation until I reach retirement

Debriefing

You have come to the end of the survey. As a last step, please read the debriefing.

In this study, you have been randomly assigned to one of two manipulations. After answering the first set of questions, you have read about recent developments that emphasized either how organisations increasingly focus on fostering socially and psychologically safe environments, or how organisations fail to do so and instead foster a socially and psychologically unsafe environment. This served the purpose of putting you in the mindset of working in either a safe or unsafe climate.

Please note, that the manipulation was completely made up by the researchers and thus entails deception; in fact, relatively little is known yet about the percentages within Dutch and German organisations in this context.

PERCEIVED SOCIAL SAFETY CLIMATES, TURNOVER INTENTIONS, TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP,
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

We used this manipulation to investigate the effect of working in a socially and/or

psychologically safe environment on positive work outcomes. This has practical relevance for

organisations and their employees.

If you agree to participate in this study with the deception please click "Yes". If you do not

want to participate in this study and the deception please click "No". If you click "No" your

data will be deleted.

Supplementary analyses

Results with social safety as an independent variable and covariates

Do participants who perceive working in a high socially safe climate report lower turnover intentions compared to participants who perceive working in a low socially safe climate, with covariates?

We found that the condition that participants were in did significantly affect their reported turnover intentions, $(F(1, 91) = 6.01, p < .016$. Participants in the unsafe condition were more likely to report higher turnover intentions than those in the safe conditions, $B = -0.27, \beta = -0.24, R^2 = .23$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.18$ (See table 1). This model accounted for 23,2% % of total variance. This means that a perceived social safety climate negatively affects turnover intentions. To ensure validity, we also performed a regression analysis for psychological safety, which was also significant (see Table 2).

Table 1: Regression analysis summary for social safety predicting turnover intention with the covariates education, age, tenure, sectorD, and supervisory position.

Variable	B	95% CI	ß	t	p
(Constant)	4.90	[2.80, 7.01]		4.62	<.001**
Perceived social safety climate	-.27	[-.49, -.05]	-.24	-2.45	<.016*

Note. $R^2 = .23$. *p < .05, **p < .001. CI = Confidence Interval for B.

Table 2: Regression analysis summary for psychological safety predicting turnover intention with the covariates education, age, tenure, sectorD, and supervisory position.

Variable	B	95% CI	ß	t	p
(Constant)	6.05	[4.189, 6.294]		5.38	<.001**
Psychological safety	-.40	[-.632, -.215]	-.34	-3.53	<.001**

Note. $R^2 = .28$. *p < .05, **p < .001. CI = Confidence Interval for B.

Does transactional leadership moderate the relation between a perceived social safety climate and turnover intention with covariates?

There was not a significant main effect between perceived social safety climate and turnover intention, $b = -0.19, t(98) = -1.43, p = .157$. A non-significant effect was found for

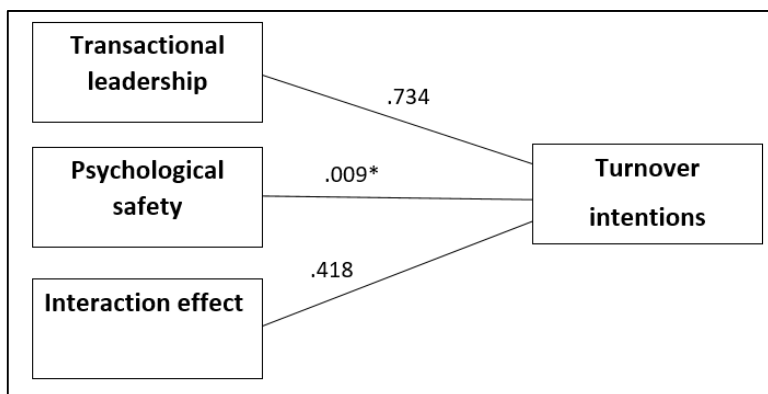transactional leadership on turnover intentions, $b = -0.13$, $t(98) = -0.91$, $p = .364$. Additionally, the interaction between transactional leadership and perceived social safety climate on turnover intention was non-significant, $b = 0.05$, $t(98) = 0.56$, $p = .574$ (See figure 1). These results indicate that the effect of perceived social safety climate on turnover intention is not moderated by transactional leadership. To ensure validity, we also tested the model with psychological safety, which was also not significant (see Figure 2).

Figure 1: Statistical model of the moderation analysis with perceived social safety climate.
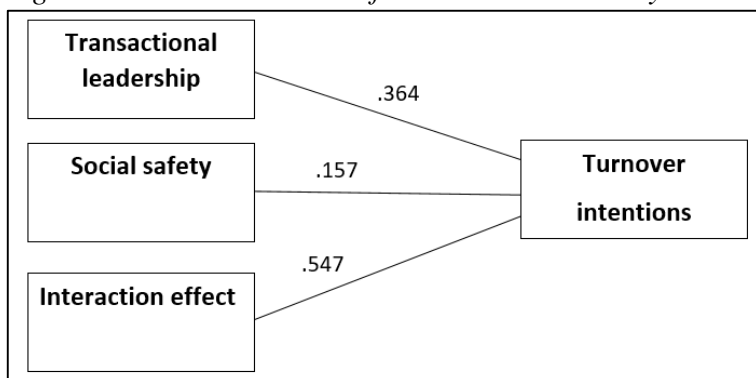
Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

Figure 2: Statistical model of the moderation analysis with psychological safety.

Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

Does transformational leadership moderate the relation between a perceived social safety climate and turnover intention, with covariates?

The analysis did not reveal a significant main effect of perceived social safety climate on turnover intention, $b = -0.06$, $t(98) = -0.44$, $p = .662$ Transformational leadership did significantly affect turnover intentions, $b = -0.40$, $t(98) = -2.47$, $p = .016$. Moreover, the interaction between transformational leadership and perceived social safety climate on

turnover intention was not significant, $b = 0.15$, $t(98) = 1.44$, $p = .152$ (See Figure 3). These results indicate that transformational leadership does not moderate the relationship between perceived social safety climate and turnover intention. To ensure validity, we also tested the model with psychological safety, which was also not significant (see Figure 4).

Figure 3: Statistical model of the moderation analysis with perceived social safety climate.
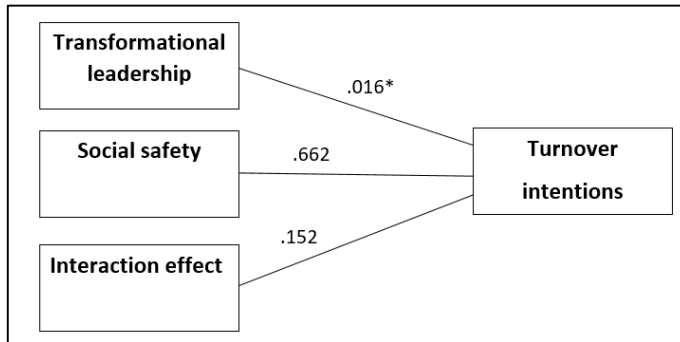
Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

Figure 4: Statistical model of the moderation analysis with psychological safety.
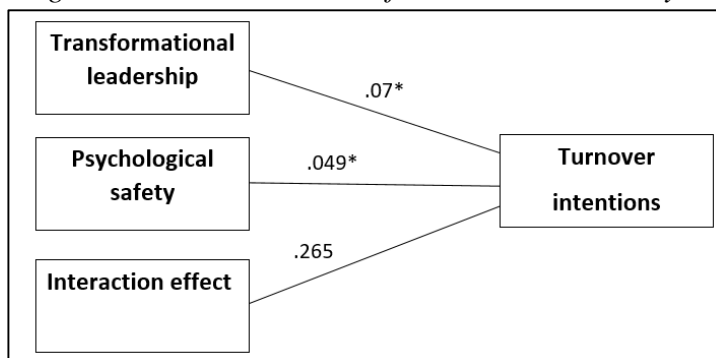
Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

Differences

In this model, we used the covariates that had a moderate to high correlation with the variables (e.g. education, age, tenure, sectorD, and supervisory position). The mahalnobis distance was to high (18.66), which means there were a lot of outliers. Furthermore, the P-value in de moderation model of perceived social safety was not significant ($p = .579$). This led to the decision to not use the covariates within our analyses.

Results with condition as an independent variable

Do participants who perceive working in a high socially safe climate report lower turnover intentions compared to participants who perceive working in a low socially safe climate?

We did not found that the condition that participants were in significantly affected their reported turnover intentions, $(F(1, 123) = 0.004, p < .951)$, $B = -0.01$, $\beta = -0.01$, $R^2 = 0.00$, adjusted $R^2 = -.01$ (See table 3). This model accounted for 0% of total variance.

Table 3: Regression analysis summary for social safety predicting turnover intention.

Variable	B	95% CI	ß	t	p
(Constant)	3.15	[2.83, 3.48]		19.01	<.001**
Perceived social safety climate	-.01	[-.48, 0.45]	-.01	-.06	.951

*Note. $R^2 = .00$. *p < .05, **p < .001. CI = Confidence Interval for B.*

Does transactional leadership moderate the relation between a perceived social safety climate and turnover intention?

There was not a significant main effect between perceived social safety climate and turnover intention, $b = 0.06$, $t(125) = 0.27$, $p = .788$. Further, a non-significant effect was found for transactional leadership on turnover intentions, $b = -0.20$, $t(125) = -1.63$, $p = .106$. Additionally, the interaction between transactional leadership and perceived social safety climate on turnover intention was non-significant, $b = 0.28$, $t(125) = 1.14$, $p = 0.259$ (See figure 5). These results indicate that the effect of perceived social safety climate on turnover intention is not moderated by transactional leadership.

Figure 5: Statistical model of the moderation analysis with perceived social safety climate.
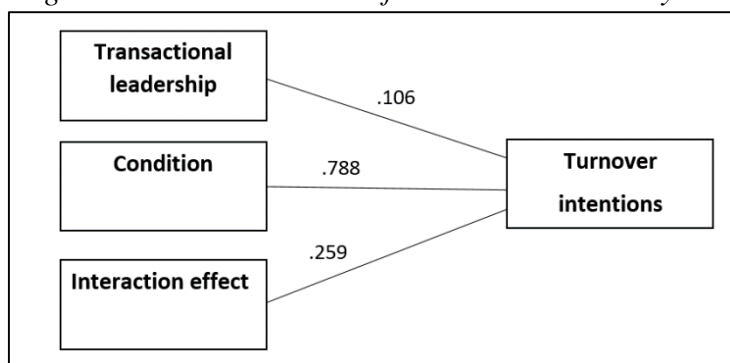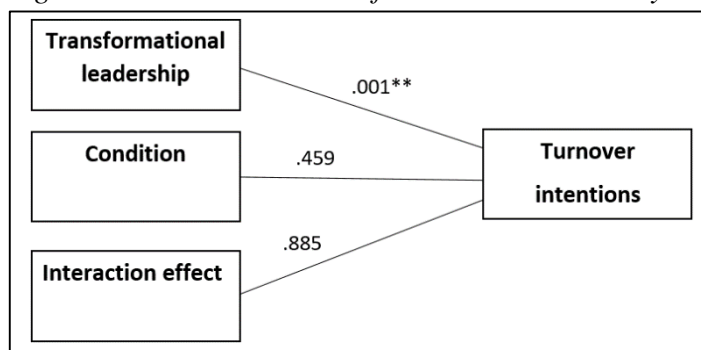

*Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.*

Does transformational leadership moderate the relation between a perceived social safety climate and turnover intention?

The analysis did not reveal a significant main effect of perceived social safety climate on turnover intention, $b = 0.17$, $t(125) = 0.74$, $p = .459$. Transformational leadership significantly affected turnover intentions, $b = -0.45$, $t(125) = -3.31$, $p = .001$. However, the interaction between transformational leadership and perceived social safety climate on turnover intention was not significant, $b = -.039$, $t(125) = -0.15$, $p = .885$ (See Figure 6). These results indicate that transformational leadership does not moderate the relationship between perceived social safety climate and turnover intention.

Figure 6: Statistical model of the moderation analysis with perceived social safety climate.

Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

The main differences between the analyses

We choose to not use the variable condition as an independent variable, because the p-value for the regression was not significant (p = .951). Furthermore the adjusted R² of the other model (*Adjusted R² = .14*) is better when using the condition as a variable (*Adjusted R² = .00*). In this model, the η2 was too high (η2 = .28), which suggests that the covariates explain a significant portion of the variability in the outcome.

Results with condition as an independent variable and covariates

Do participants who perceive working in a high socially safe climate report lower turnover intentions compared to participants who perceive working in a low socially safe climate, with covariates?

We found that the condition that participants were in did not significantly affected their reported turnover intentions, $F(1, 91) = 0.45$, $p = < .505$, $B = .16$, $\beta = .07$, $R^2 = .19$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.13$ (See table 5). This model accounted for 13% of total variance.

Table 5: Regression analysis summary for social safety predicting turnover intention with the covariates education, age, tenure, sectorD, and supervisory position.
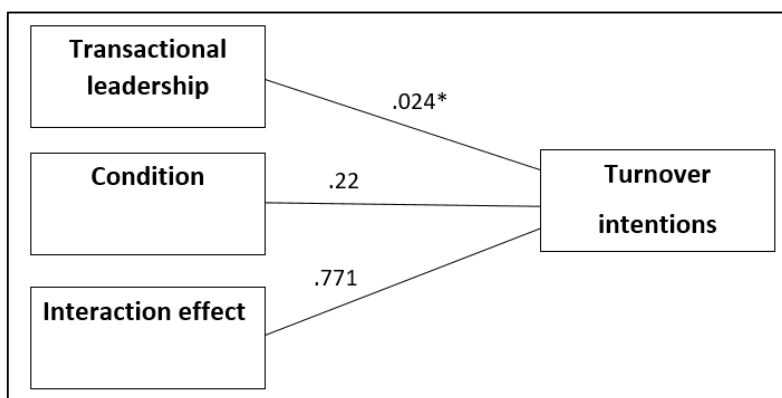
Variable	B	95% CI	ß	t	p
(Constant)	3.16	[1.39, 4.93]		3.54	<.001**
Condition	.16	[-.32, -.65]	.07	.67	.505

Note. $R^2 = .19$. *p < .05, **p < .001. CI = Confidence Interval for B.

Does transactional leadership moderate the relation between a perceived social safety climate and turnover intention with covariates?

There was not a significant main effect between perceived social safety climate and turnover intention, $b = .31$, $t(98) = 1.23$, $p = .22$. However, a significant effect was found for transactional leadership on turnover intentions, $b = -0.30$, $t(98) = -2.29$, $p = .024$. The interaction between transactional leadership and perceived social safety climate on turnover intention was non-significant, $b = -0.08$, $t(98) = -0.29$, $p = .771$ (See figure 2). These results indicate that the effect of perceived social safety climate on turnover intention is not moderated by transactional leadership.

Figure 2: Statistical model of the moderation analysis with perceived social safety climate.
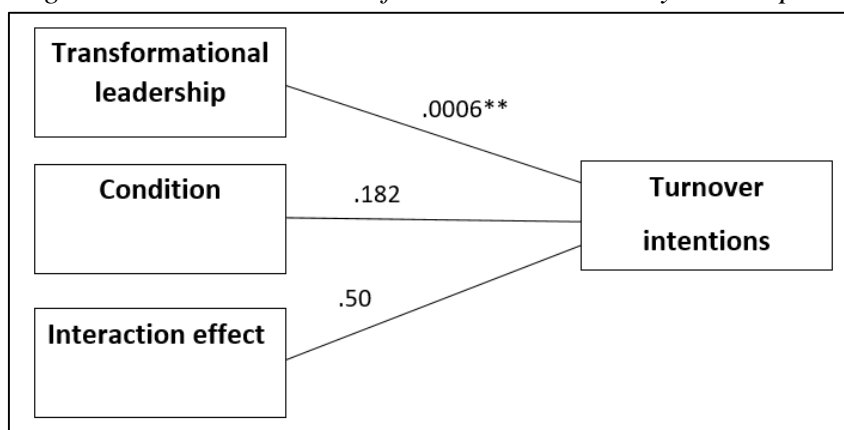

Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

Does transformational leadership moderate the relation between a perceived social safety climate and turnover intention, with covariates?

The analysis did not reveal a significant main effect of perceived social safety climate on turnover intention, $b = 0.32$, $t(98) = 1.34$, $p = .182$. However, transformational leadership did significantly affect turnover intentions, $b = -0.51$, $t(98) = -3.57$, $p = .0006$. Lastly, the interaction between transformational leadership and perceived social safety climate on turnover intention was not significant, $b = -0.19$, $t(98) = -0.68$, $p = 0.500$ (See Figure 4). These results indicate that transformational leadership does not moderate the relationship between perceived social safety climate and turnover intention.

Figure 4: Statistical model of the moderation analysis with perceived social safety climate.

Note: *p = .05, **p = .001.

Main differences

In this model, we used the variable condition as an independent variable, with covariates. Unfortunately, we did not find any significant effects. That is why we choose not to include these analyses in our research.