

Psychosocial Safety and Authenticity: Associations and Mediators

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Abstract

Through a cross-sectional sample of 90 participants, this study aimed to understand how perceptions of psychosocial safety influence employees' sense of authenticity in the workplace, and whether job crafting and learning behaviours play a mediating role in this relationship. It was assumed that high levels of psychosocial safety would relate to higher levels of learning and job crafting, and that higher levels of learning and job crafting would be positively associated with authenticity. Contrary to expectations, the results indicate that authenticity was not associated with psychosocial safety, learning, or job crafting. However, both learning and job crafting were positively associated with psychosocial safety, highlighting the importance of supportive organisational climates in facilitating employees' engagement in proactive behaviours. Decision authority and job demands emerged as influential predictors in the relationship among all variables, and their intersection with facilitating job crafting is worthy of further investigation. These findings highlight the imperative for organisations and individuals alike to prioritise autonomy and manageable workloads in fostering authentic workplaces. In shedding light on the intricate interplay between authenticity and psychosocial safety, a topic that remains relatively understudied, this study offers valuable insights into the nuance dynamics at play within organisational climates.

Keywords: authenticity, psychosocial safety, job crafting, learning, work

1. Introduction

In the contemporary global landscape, where basic survival needs are often met, our attention has turned inward to the survival of our identity (Brooks, 2011). The preservation and expression of one's true identity have become a critical element in achieving personal fulfilment and full functionality, and, according to Rogers (1965), authenticity – representing genuine alignment between one's inner self and outward expression – is the primary condition in this pursuit. This enduring quest for authenticity finds resonance in ancient philosophical dictums, such as the inscription "know thyself" on the Temple of Apollo and Socrates' assertion that an unexamined life is not worth living.

Yet, the journey toward authenticity does not unfold in isolation but is deeply intertwined with the environmental context in which individuals operate. In the context of the workplace, the psychosocial safety climate – a measure of the shared perceptions of safety within an organisation (Zadow et al., 2019) – emerges as a pivotal factor shaping the development and expression of authenticity at work. In the contemporary landscape of organisational psychology, the exploration of the relationship between psychosocial safety climate and authenticity represents a crucial endeavour, particularly for researchers and practitioners seeking to enhance workplace well-being and productivity. However, despite how much the buzz-words authenticity and psychological safety have been discussed together recently (Ostermeier, 2021; Schindler, 2024), there is very limited research on their connection. It's an intuitive relationship – to fully show up authentically, employees need a work environment where they feel safe to express themselves. But how does it work? And why?

Central to our theoretical framework is the understanding that a positive psychosocial safety climate signals to employees that they can engage in job crafting behaviours – a process where individuals proactively adjust the task, relational, and cognitive aspects of their jobs to better suit their strengths, preferences, and values (Wrzesniewski, 2001) –, thereby fostering authenticity. Through job crafting, individuals modify their job demands (the tasks and responsibilities required of them) and resources (the support, tools, and opportunities available to them) to enhance their well-being, aligning their work experiences with their authentic selves. Moreover,

our theoretical framework posits that a positive psychosocial safety climate facilitates learning, leading to increased authenticity among employees. Learning behaviours allow individuals to adapt and improve, aligning their work selves with their authentic selves over time. It is hypothesised that by fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth, organisations can create environments where authenticity flourishes, enriching both individual experiences and organisational outcomes.

Taking all this into account, the current research aims to add to the scientific exploration of these topics and find out the specific mechanisms that lead to this relationship by investigating the following research question: *Is there a relationship between psychosocial safety climate and authenticity, and is this association mediated by job crafting and learning?*

1.1 Theoretical framework

1.1.1 Authenticity at work

In the field of psychology, the importance of authenticity has attracted widespread attention, echoing through diverse theoretical frameworks. Karen Horney's psychoanalytic work illuminated the link between the absence of authenticity and the development of neurosis (Horney, 1951). Humanistic psychology underscored authenticity as integral to an individual's journey toward self-actualisation, emphasising congruence between the self-concept and actual experiences (Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1961). In the realm of positive psychology, authenticity is defined as the genuine ownership and consistent expression of one's inner thoughts and feelings (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Additionally, self-determination theory posits that authenticity is closely tied to autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and that individuals who feel authentic in their actions are more likely to experience well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A growing body of scientific literature supports the myriad benefits associated with authentic living. Authenticity has been discovered to be positively related to life satisfaction, well-being, and positive affect, as well as negatively related to anxiety, stress, and depression (Emmerich & Rigotti, 2017).

As the term is typically used, authenticity can be briefly explained as the degree to which someone acts in accordance with their true self (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014). But what does *true self* mean? According to Sheldon et al. (1997), conceptions of authenticity can fall into two approaches: trait-self and true-self. The trait-self approach measures authenticity by consistency of personality traits, believing that one's self is stable over social-contextual influences. On the other hand, the true-self approach describes the pursuit of authenticity as a "self-narrative", in which behaviour is experienced as being authored by the self (Sutton, 2020). It is important to note that contradictory behaviour can also be authored, and authenticity is derived from acknowledging this and malleabilising it within one's self-concept. In this view, authenticity is also consistent with self-determination theory, in which authenticity is an inherent property of self-determined motivation (Van den Bosch & Taris, 2018). A similar link can be made to person-environment fit theory in which authenticity is contingent upon people feeling in agreement with their environment (Song et al., 2020; van den Bosch & Taris, 2018). In this study, we build on the true-self conceptualisation, and explore authenticity within the context of work. This approach is appropriate as the features of the work environment are heavily subject to change, and therefore one's experienced authenticity at work is also inferred to be subject to change.

Authenticity has become an increasingly valued trait in the workplace, as organisations recognise the benefits of creating an environment where employees can bring their true selves to work. For example, feeling authentic at work is associated with higher levels of work engagement and satisfaction (Metin et al., 2016), and lower levels of burnout (Van den Bosch & Taris, 2014). However, achieving authenticity at work has proven to be a challenge due to several factors. Roberts et al. (2009) suggests that people often prioritise conformity to organisational norms and cultures over authenticity to increase status, protect their image or avoid conflict. The fear of negative evaluation and the potential for judgement or even rejection from supervisors, colleagues, or clients can further hinder authenticity. Emotional labour, the concept that describes when employees are required to display specific emotions regardless of their authentic feelings, also presents a significant barrier to authenticity (Jeung et al., 2018). Lastly, limited opportunities for self-expression and a lack of self-awareness can impede individuals' ability to manifest authenticity.

1.1.2 Psychosocial safety climate

The psychosocial safety climate represents a critical aspect of organisational culture, reflecting the extent to which employees perceive their work environment to be supportive of their psychological well-being (Dollard et al., 2007). Research indicates that a positive psychosocial safety climate is characterised by factors such as perceived support from management, clear communication channels, and the availability of resources for managing work-related stressors (Dollard et al., 2007). Importantly, a positive psychosocial safety climate has been linked to various positive outcomes, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee well-being (Dollard et al., 2007).

Empirical evidence supporting the relationship between psychosocial safety climate and authenticity is still emerging but promising. For example, the study by Dollard et al. (2007) found that organisations with a positive psychosocial safety climate reported higher levels of employee well-being and job satisfaction, which are closely associated with authenticity at work (Ménard & Brunet, 2011). Ménard and Brunet (2011) examined the influence of perceived organisational culture on employees' authenticity and engagement with their jobs. Their findings revealed that cultures perceived to be inclusive and participative, such as clan and adhocracy cultures, neither nurture nor inhibit authenticity. Conversely, cultures emphasising stability, order, and control, such as hierarchical and market cultures, were negatively related to authenticity. Importantly, authenticity at work mediated the relationship between hierarchical and market cultures and work engagement, underscoring the significance of authenticity.

The evidence presented suggests that organisations fostering a positive psychosocial safety climate are more likely to cultivate an environment where employees feel free to be authentic, leading to enhanced well-being and performance outcomes. A supportive and psychologically safe work environment provides employees with the freedom and encouragement to express their true selves without fear of judgement or reprisal, fostering a sense of congruence between their personal identity and their professional roles (Dollard et al., 2007). Conversely, a negative or unsupportive psychosocial safety climate may hinder an individual's ability to be authentic, leading to feelings of dissonance and disengagement in the workplace.

In this study, the decision was made to measure psychosocial safety climate at the employee level rather than the organisational level. Employee perceptions may vary within the same organisation based on factors such as a job role or interpersonal dynamics, providing a deeper understanding of the psychosocial safety climate within different contexts.

Thus, the first hypothesis is formulated as such:

H1: Employee perceptions of psychosocial safety climate are positively associated with authenticity.

Overall, the existing literature provides preliminary evidence for the relationship between psychosocial safety climate and authenticity at work. However, further research is needed to elucidate the mechanisms through which psychosocial safety climate influences individuals' ability to be authentic in their professional roles. Therefore, the present study presents two possible mediating factors: job crafting and learning.

1.1.3 Learning

Learning behaviour in the workplace encompasses a spectrum of activities, including formal training initiatives facilitated by the organisation, as well as informal learning experiences that occur through interactions with colleagues, self-directed study, or on-the-job experiences (Eraut, 2000; Marsick & Watkins, 2016). Research suggests that employees who engage in continuous learning are better equipped to adapt to changing work environments, enhance their job performance, and achieve greater career success (Noe, 1986; Tannenbaum & Yuki, 1992). Moreover, learning behaviour has been linked to positive outcomes such as increased job satisfaction, motivation, and organisational commitment (Colquitt et al., 2000; Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999).

Recent studies have also highlighted the relationship between learning behaviour and authenticity at work. For example, Roberts et al. (2020) found that employees who actively pursued learning opportunities reported higher levels of authenticity in their professional roles.

Similarly, research by Ilies et al. (2021) demonstrated that employees who engaged in self-directed learning activities exhibited greater levels of self-awareness and confidence, contributing to their overall authenticity at work.

In addition to its association with authenticity, the literature suggests a strong link between learning behaviour and psychosocial safety climate in the workplace. Edmondson (1999) found that the level of psychological safety within a team influences how team members engage in learning behaviours. When teams feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to accept and learn from mistakes, as well as seek feedback. Conversely, when psychological safety is lacking, team members may hesitate to ask for assistance and may be less inclined to challenge the team. A study by Carmeli and Gittell (2009) highlighted how psychological safety mediates the relationship between high-quality relationships and learning, particularly learning from failures. This could also suggest a further connection between relational job crafting (to be introduced in section 1.1.4), psychological safety, and learning. Additionally, Osterloh and Frey (2000) suggest that organisational forms characterised by supportive structures and processes facilitate knowledge transfer and thus learning among employees.

Drawing on these insights, the present study proposes the following hypotheses:

H2: Learning behaviour mediates the relation between psychosocial safety climate and authenticity.

H2a: Learning behaviour is positively associated with psychosocial safety climate.

H2b: Learning behaviour is positively associated with authenticity.

These hypotheses suggest that a positive psychosocial safety climate may facilitate employees' engagement in learning behaviours, leading to increased authenticity at work. Conversely, a negative psychosocial safety climate may hinder employees' willingness or ability to engage in learning activities, resulting in decreased authenticity in the workplace.

1.1.4 Job crafting

Job crafting, defined as the proactive behaviour of employees to modify aspects of their jobs to better suit their individual preferences and needs (Tims & Bakker, 2010), has been linked to various positive outcomes, including increased job satisfaction, engagement, and well-being (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Petrou et al., 2012). Given its potential to shape employees' work experiences and perceptions, job crafting may serve as a crucial mechanism through which the psychosocial safety climate influences an individual's ability to be authentic in their professional role.

Empirical evidence supports the notion that authenticity at work is positively associated with an employee's ability to shape and modify their job through job crafting behaviours. Leroy et al. (2015) found that employees who engaged in job crafting reported higher levels of authenticity at work. Moreover, Metin et al. (2016) demonstrated that employees who experienced higher levels of authenticity at work were more likely to engage in job crafting behaviours, indicating a bidirectional relationship between authenticity and job crafting.

Drawing from a diverse range of literature, a relationship between psychosocial safety climate and job crafting can be proposed. Kahn's (1990) seminal work on employee engagement at work is of particular interest. While Kahn's work predates the explicit concept of psychosocial safety climate, his examination of the factors that contribute to an employee's willingness to invest themselves in their work role can be connected to the construct of psychosocial safety. In Kahn's framework, there are three psychological conditions that are crucial for fostering personal engagement at work: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. "Safety" here refers to employees feeling safe to express themselves and take risks without fear of negative consequences, and suggests that an organisational climate characterised by safety factors can create an environment where employees feel psychologically safe to engage in their work roles. Similarly, it can be inferred that job crafting behaviours may be facilitated by a work environment characterised by psychosocial safety. Various other studies also explore this connection. Research by Gong et al. (2009) suggests that an employee's commitment to their organisation can be influenced by feelings of safety and support in the workplace. Additionally, studies by Tims et al. (2012) and

Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) highlight the importance of factors like autonomy, social support, and empowerment in fostering employees' engagement in proactive behaviours such as job crafting. Furthermore, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) introduced the job demands-resources model, emphasising the significance of work environments in facilitating employee engagement and proactive behaviours. Deci and Ryan's (200) self-determination theory provides insights into human motivation and behaviour, suggesting that individuals are more likely to engage in activities that fulfil their psychological needs, which are closely tied to job crafting and psychosocial safety.

Taken together, these insights suggest that a positive psychosocial safety climate may create an environment conducive to job crafting behaviours. Employees who feel safe and supported in their workplace are likely to feel empowered to shape and modify aspects of their jobs to better suit their individual preferences and needs, ultimately leading to increased well-being in the workplace.

Drawing on these insights, the present study proposes the following hypotheses:

H3: Job crafting mediates the relation between psychosocial safety climate and authenticity.

H3a: Job crafting is positively associated with psychosocial safety climate.

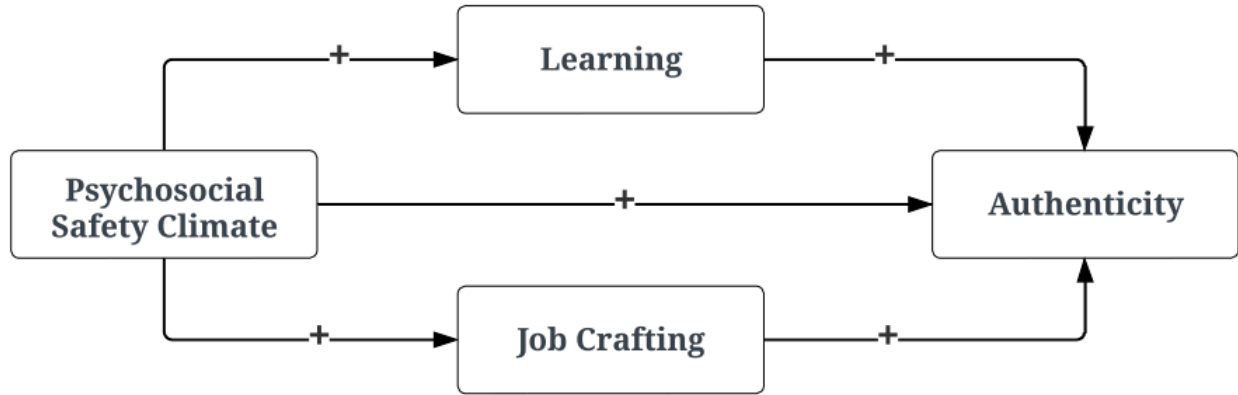
H3b: Job crafting is positively associated with authenticity.

These hypotheses suggest that a positive psychosocial safety climate may encourage employees to engage in job crafting behaviours, leading to increased authenticity at work. Conversely, a negative psychosocial safety climate may inhibit employees' ability to craft their jobs to better align with their authentic selves, resulting in decreased authenticity in the workplace. By exploring the mediating role of job crafting in this relationship, the present study seeks to deepen our understanding of the mechanisms through which organisational contexts influence authenticity at work.

1.1.5 Process model

Figure 1

Graphical representation of the hypotheses tested in this study



In addition, this study also controlled for decision authority and psychological job demands. These factors were considered due to their relevance in influencing employees' work experiences and perceptions. Research by Karasek (1979) and Johnson and Hall (1988) underscores the significance of decision authority in shaping job satisfaction and stress levels, while studies by Demerouti et al. (2001) and Bakker and Demerouti (2007) highlight the impact of psychological job demands on employee well-being and performance. By controlling for these factors, we aim to isolate the specific effects of psychosocial safety, learning, and job crafting on authenticity, providing a more comprehensive understanding of workplace dynamics.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

A convenience sampling method was utilised to recruit participants for this study via Qualtrics survey software. Participants were recruited from the researcher's network, including family, friends, and coworkers. Individuals who had previous employment experience were eligible to participate. A sample size exceeding 120 participants was sought based on power analysis considerations. A total of 159 participants completed the survey, out of which 132 responses

were deemed usable for analysis. Responses were considered unusable for analysis if participants did not finish all sections of the survey.

The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Faculty Ethics Review Board of Utrecht University, which stipulates the requirements for ethically responsible research conduct. The study received approval from the board, and the UU-SER number assigned was 23-0751. After opening the link to the survey, all participants were instructed to read a brief message before beginning that described the purpose, confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of participation in the study (see Appendix A). Participants did not receive any compensation for their contribution, and they could withdraw from the study whenever they wanted. Informed consent was then obtained by clicking the “I agree” button at the bottom of the page.

Of the 132 participants, 66 (50.00%) identified as female, 65 (49.24%) identified as male, and 1 participant chose to respond “prefer not to say”. Participants’ ages ranged from 17 to 66 years, with an average age of 38.85 years ($SD = 14.69$). The majority of participants held at least a bachelor’s degree (47.73%), with many also holding a master’s degree (21.21%) or higher (6.82%). The remaining participants had completed intermediate vocational education (8.33%) or high school only (13.64%).

Regarding employment status, the majority of participants were employed (68.18%), followed by self-employed individuals (19.70%), and a small portion were unemployed (12.12%). Participants who were unemployed were instructed to respond based on their last job experience. Most participants reported full-time employment (67.18%), while others were part-time (24.43%), interns (7.63%), or on-call workers (0.76%).

In terms of seniority level, most participants held entry-level positions (32.06%), followed by mid-level (27.48%), executive or senior management positions (23.66%), and lastly senior-level (12.98%). This distribution was determined through a demographic question inquiring about participant’s seniority levels in which they could pick from the aforementioned choices. For further details, refer to Appendix B.

As further explained in section 3.2.1, a decision was made to remove participants who were unemployed from the dataset for analysis. Following the adjustment, the sample size of the dataset was 90. Descriptive statistics for this refined sample revealed a mean of 37.54, a standard deviation of 14.37, a range of 47, and a minimum and maximum of 19 and 66, respectively.

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Demographic measure

After opening the questionnaire, participants were directed to respond to a series of demographic questions covering age, gender, level of education, employment status, employment type, and seniority level (see Appendix B). These demographic inquiries aimed to gather essential background information necessary for the analysis. Following the demographic section, participants proceeded to engage with various sections of the survey, including assessments of job characteristics, psychosocial safety, authenticity, job crafting behaviours, and learning experiences. Each section featured carefully selected measurement instruments designed to capture specific facets of the participants' work experiences and perceptions.

2.2.2 Job characteristics measure

Job characteristics were assessed using Karasek's Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) (Karasek et al., 1998; Sale & Kerr, 2002), from which two measures were extracted: decision authority (see Appendix C) and psychological job demands (see Appendix D). The decision authority measure consisted of 3 items and the psychological job demands measure consisted of 5. Decision authority was assessed using items such as "My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own," while psychological job demands were measured with items like "My job requires working very fast." Participants rated their agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

For decision authority, a factor analysis revealed a single dimension explaining 68.64% of the variance, with high loadings above .5, indicating a coherent construct. Cronbach's alpha was .75,

surpassing the recommended threshold for reliability. A new variable representing decision authority was computed by taking the mean of variables 1-3 for each participant.

For psychological job demands, a factor analysis exposed a two-dimensional structure representing effort expenditure (items 4-5) and workload (items 6-8) (see Appendix D for item details). When forced into a single dimension, this explained 46.76% of the variance. The decision to combine these dimensions was supported by factor loadings above .5. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .71, surpassing the recommended threshold for reliability. Therefore, a new variable representing psychological job demands was computed.

2.2.3 Psychosocial safety climate measure

Psychosocial safety climate was assessed using the Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC-12) questionnaire developed by Hall et al. (2010) (see Appendix E). The PSC-12 is composed of 12 items that measure the shared perceptions of organisational policies, practices, and procedures for the protection of employees' psychological health. Participants responded to items such as "In my workplace senior management acts quickly to correct problems/issues that affect employees' psychological health" using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

The preliminary analysis of the PSC-12 scale (Dollard & Coward, 2010) confirmed its structural soundness and reliability. A factor analysis indicated a single factor representing 67.13% of the variance. Subsequent reliability analysis demonstrated a high Cronbach's alpha of .96, affirming strong internal consistency, and examination of the "Cronbach's alpha if item deleted" column reinforced the significance of all 12 questions. Given the established empirical foundation of the PSC-12 and the consistency of results with expectations, no modifications were deemed necessary. Thus, a new variable named psychosocial safety was computed by aggregating responses to all 12 questions.

2.2.4 Authenticity measure

Authenticity was measured using the shortened version of the Individual Authenticity Measure at Work (IAM Work) developed by van den Bosch and Taris (2013) (see Appendix F). The IAM Work taps the three dimensions of authenticity defined by Wood et al. (2008) using four items for each dimension: authentic living (e.g., “I am true to myself at work in most situations”), self-alienation (e.g., “At work, I feel alienated”), and accepting external influence (e.g., “At work, I feel the need to do what others expect me to do”). The scale assesses the extent to which individuals feel true to themselves and behave in accordance with their values and beliefs in the workplace. Participants were asked to indicate to what extent each statement applied to them at work, using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 7 = “strongly agree”).

Initially, the factor analysis revealed three factors with eigenvalues of 5.00, 2.27, and 1.30. The pattern matrix showed that items 1-4 loaded on factor 2, items 5-8 loaded on factor 1, and items 9-12 loaded on factor 3 (see Appendix F for item details), which aligned precisely with the thematic content of the questions. To optimise results, a decision was made to force the analysis to consider only one factor. However, items 4 and 12 (see Appendix F for item details) exhibited suboptimal loadings (.36 and .32), prompting their exclusion in a subsequent exploratory analysis. A reliability analysis conducted with all 12 questions yielded a Cronbach’s alpha of .86, with items 4 and 12 exhibiting the lowest corrected item-total correlations (.25 and .29). Subsequently, a reliability analysis without items 4 and 12 resulted in a slightly increased alpha of .87. Given the marginal improvement and the underperformance of items 4 and 12, the decision was made to exclude them from further analyses. A new variable representing authenticity was then computed using the remaining 10 items, ensuring a reliable and optimised measure for subsequent investigations.

2.2.5 Learning measure

Participants completed two measures for learning behaviours: Grosemans et al.’s (2020) Work-Related Learning Measure (see Appendix G) and a shortened version of Decius et al.’s (2019) Informal Workplace Learning Measure (see Appendix H). Grosemans et al.’s measure

assessed how often participants engaged in various learning activities related to work through 14 items, such as searching for information, taking part in a workshop, and asking the opinion of others. Participants indicated the frequency of each learning behaviour on a 7-point Likert scale that included never, once or twice, monthly, a few times each month, weekly, a few times each week, and on a daily basis. The Decius et al. (2019) measure included 24 items assessing different aspects of workplace learning organised into four categories, each with two sub-categories. Sample items from each category include: “I use my own ideas to improve tasks at work” (Experience/Action), “I ask my colleagues about the methods and tricks they use at work” (Feedback), “Before starting a new task, I think about how I can do my work best” (Reflection), and “I want to learn something new at work for myself because then I can pursue my career at the company (Intent to learn). A shortened version developed by Decius et al. (2019) with 8 questions – one for each sub-category – was used, and rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Initially, a factor analysis of the Grosemans learning measure revealed two factors. Recognising that the nuances between asking and observing others might not significantly impact the study’s overarching objectives, a one-factor solution was pursued, which showed satisfactory loadings. Based on these findings, we proceeded to conduct a factor analysis on both the Grosemans and Decius measures together. While maintaining separate variables was a feasible option, this approach aligned with the study’s focus on learning as a comprehensive concept, prioritising a holistic understanding over subtle distinctions between the two instruments.

The factor analysis on the combined instrument revealed six factors, with one particularly substantial factor (eigenvalue of 7.31). Given the prominence of this factor, a decision was made to explore a one-factor solution, which accounted for 33.21% of the variance, and the subsequent reliability analysis showed a Cronbach’s alpha of .90. This assessment affirmed the convergent validity of the instruments, indicating that, despite their differences in item content and formulation, the items measured the same underlying construct. The larger number of items in this scale (22) naturally contributed to a higher alpha and increased reliability. Examination of the corrected item-total correlation and Cronbach’s alpha if item deleted columns affirmed the

contribution of all items to the reliability, though suggesting potential redundancy due to overlapping functions. Consequently, a new variable representing learning was computed.

2.2.6 Job crafting measure

Job crafting behaviours were assessed using Slemp and Vella-Brodrick's (2013) Job Crafting Questionnaire (JCQ), comprising 19 items measuring three dimensions: task crafting (7 items; see Appendix I), cognitive crafting (5 items; see Appendix J), and relational crafting (7 items; see Appendix K). Participants indicated the extent to which they engage in various job crafting behaviours on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Participants were asked questions such as "I introduce new approaches to improve my work" (task crafting), "I think about how my job gives my life purpose" (cognitive crafting), and "I engage in networking activities to establish more relationships" (relational crafting).

A factor analysis on all 19 questions together revealed four factors. Further analysis indicated that three factors were representative of the categories of the scale: task crafting, cognitive crafting, and relational crafting. An attempt was also made to force the measure into one factor, however this was not successful. The decision was made to analyse the three categories separately to better understand their specific implications.

The factor analysis on task job crafting demonstrated complexity, with items loading onto two factors, resulting in the emergence of four factors initially. Notably, items 5 and 6 loaded onto a separate factor from the rest (see Appendix I for item details). These items, centred around engaging in tasks deemed interesting and fun, diverged from the other task job crafting questions, which focused on altering task approaches, such as simplification. Despite this complexity, the decision was made to compute a single factor. This factor accounted for 48.87% of the variance with a Cronbach's alpha of .86, indicating that task job crafting can be reliably measured as a single construct. Thus, a new variable was computed.

The factor analysis on cognitive job crafting revealed a single factor accounting for 64.06%, suggesting the suitability of a single-factor representation. A reliability analysis further affirmed

high internal consistency, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, and all items demonstrating significance. Consequently, a new variable for this category was computed.

Similarly, the factor analysis for relational job crafting revealed a single factor accounting for 55.23% of the variance, and a reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's alpha of .86. Following the established pattern, a new variable was computed for this category.

2.3 Statistical analysis

A correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between variables, utilising Pearson correlation coefficients. Following this, regression analyses were conducted. For authenticity, three models were tested: Model 1 included control variables, Model 2 added task, cognitive, and relational job crafting, and learning, and Model 3 further included psychosocial safety climate. Similarly, for learning behaviours and each type of job crafting (task, cognitive, relational), two models were examined: Model 1 included control variables, and Model 2 added psychosocial safety climate. Control variables in all analyses included age, gender, education, seniority, decision authority, and job demands. Subsequently, a mediation analysis, utilising Hayes' PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2022), was planned to assess the indirect effects of psychosocial safety climate on authenticity through job crafting and learning behaviours.

3. Results

3.1 Hypothesis testing

3.1.1 Correlation analysis

In the correlation analysis, we observed several significant correlations (refer to Table 1). Notably, authenticity demonstrated a significant positive correlation with decision authority ($p < .001$), as well as with task job crafting ($p = .01$) and cognitive job crafting ($p = .04$). There were also significant correlations between psychosocial safety climate and all types of job crafting. The associations that task job crafting and cognitive job crafting have with both psychosocial

safety climate and authenticity were particularly intriguing given the absence of a significant correlation between authenticity and psychosocial safety climate. This could suggest the presence of indirect paths connecting psychosocial safety climate and authenticity via job crafting behaviours. Based on this, a mediation analysis to further explore these effects still appears plausible.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients of the study variables ($N = 90$)

Note: Significant correlations are printed in bold

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Decision authority	5.14	1.27	1							
2. Job demands	3.98	1.09	-.04	1						
3. Psychosocial safety	4.36	1.37	.37**	.26*	1					
4. Authenticity	5.12	1.01	.43**	.12	.18	1				
5. Task job crafting	5.13	.97	.39**	-.03	.35**	.27*	1			
6. Cognitive job crafting	5.02	1.30	.28**	-.11	.26*	.22*	.41**	1		
7. Relational job crafting	5.07	1.17	.33**	-.22*	.39**	.13	.46**	.39**	1	
8. Learning	4.83	.92	.22*	-.17	.27**	.02	.42**	.44**	.54**	1

** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

3.1.2 Regression analysis on authenticity

Upon first running a regression analysis on authenticity, Model 1 demonstrated a notable explanatory power with an R square of .35 and an F change of 8.21 (sig. F change < .001). However, subsequent models (Model 2 and Model 3) did not contribute significantly to the explanation of authenticity beyond what was captured in Model 1. Within Model 1, decision authority ($p = 0.00$, $\beta = 0.27$) and employment status ($p = 0.03$, $\beta = 0.17$) emerged as significant predictors. To explore, the decision was made to not control for employment status and employment type, as these were deemed irrelevant.

The regression analysis was then rerun which found an R square of .32 and an F change of 9.42. This analysis revealed that decision authority remained significant ($p < .001$, $\beta = .30$), and psychological job demands also became significant ($p = .03$, $\beta = .18$).

Following these results, the decision was then made to also explore excluding participants who were unemployed to enhance the homogeneity of the data and to address the concern of challenges with memory recollection from those participants, as this may introduce noise into the analysis. Notably, after doing so, decision authority and job demands retained significance, and seniority also achieved significance. Table 2 shows that more senior participants ($p = .02$, $\beta = .36$) and participants reporting higher levels of decision authority ($p = .00$, $\beta = .30$) and job demands ($p = .02$, $\beta = .24$) were more likely to report higher levels of authenticity. Further, in Model 1, encompassing all control variables, a notable explanatory power emerges with an R square of .31, indicating 31% of the variance in authenticity is accounted for. The F change statistic yields a substantial F value of 6.20 (sig. F change $< .001$), signifying a significant improvement in the model's fit when adding these predictors. Model 2, incorporating learning and three job crafting types, exhibits a marginal increase in R square (.32) and a change of .01, yet the F change test suggests nonsignificant contributions of learning and job crafting to authenticity beyond what the control variables already capture (sig. F change = .40). Similarly, Model 3, focusing on psychosocial safety, shows no notable increase in R square or significant change. Although the ANOVA table indicates significance for Models 2 and 3, inspection of the F -square increase showed that only Model 1 added significantly to the explanation of the outcome variable.

Given these outcomes, it was decided to proceed with this tailored sample for the subsequent regression analyses.

Therefore, hypotheses 1, 2b, and 3b were not supported.

H1: Psychosocial safety climate is positively associated with authenticity.

H2b: Learning behaviour is positively associated with authenticity.

H3b: Job crafting is positively associated with authenticity.

Table 2

Predictors of authenticity (standardised effects)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-.03	-.04	-.06
Gender	.06	.08	.09
Education	-.09	-.09	-.11
Seniority	.36*	.32	.33
Decision Authority	.30**	.29**	.31**
Job Demands	.24*	.22*	.24*
Task Job Crafting		.06	.07
Cognitive Job Crafting		.11	.12
Relational Job Crafting		.00	.03
Learning		-.11	-.12
Psychosocial Safety			-.08
R square	.31	.32	.33
R square change		.01	.00

* effect significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** effect significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.1.3 Regression analysis on learning

The results of this analysis are further detailed in Table 3, which provides information on the standardised effects and significance levels.

Model 1, which included the control variables, accounted for 13.6% of the variance in learning, approaching statistical significance ($p = .05$).

Model 2, which introduced psychosocial safety climate as a predictor, demonstrated a significant improvement compared to Model 1. Psychosocial safety emerged as the sole significant predictor of learning ($p = .01$, $\beta = .29$), indicating a positive association between the two constructs. Specifically, for every one-unit increase in psychosocial safety, there was a corresponding increase of 0.29 units in learning. This finding suggests that employees who perceive their work environment as psychologically safe are more likely to engage in learning activities. The

significant R square change of .06 (sig. F change = .01) further supports the notion that psychosocial safety significantly contributes to explaining the variance in learning behaviour.

Therefore, hypothesis 2a was supported.

H2a: Learning behaviour is positively associated with psychosocial safety climate.

Table 3

Predictors of learning (standardised effects)

	Model 1	Model 2
Age	-.24	-.14
Gender	-.14	-.12
Education	.11	.16
Seniority	.25	.17
Decision Authority	.20	.08
Job Demands	-.12	-.20
Psychosocial Safety		.29*
R square	.14	.20
R square change		.06**

* effect significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** effect significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.1.4 Regression analysis on task job crafting

The results of this analysis are further detailed in Table 4, which provides information on the standardised effects and significance levels.

In Model 1, the control variables accounted for 25.6% of the variance in task job crafting, demonstrating statistical significance (sig. F change < .001). The significant predictors in this model were seniority ($p = .01$, $\beta = .46$) and decision authority ($p = .01$, $\beta = .27$). This suggests

that individuals in higher seniority positions and those with greater decision authority tend to engage more in task job crafting behaviours.

Model 2, which introduced psychosocial safety as an additional predictor, showed a notable improvement in the model's explanatory power. Specifically, a significant increase in *R* square change indicates that the variance explained by the model increased by 5% after accounting for psychosocial safety (sig. *F* change .02). In Model 2, seniority remained a significant predictor ($p = .02, \beta = .38$) and psychosocial safety ($p = .02, \beta = .26$) also emerged, suggesting that individuals who perceive their work environment as psychologically safe are more likely to engage in task job crafting behaviours.

Therefore, hypothesis 3a was supported.

H3a: Job crafting is positively associated with psychosocial safety climate.

Table 4

Predictors of task job crafting (standardised effects)

	Model 1	Model 2
Age	-.10	-.02
Gender	-.16	-.15
Education	.06	.11
Seniority	.46**	.38*
Decision Authority	.27*	.16
Job Demands	.14	.07
Psychosocial Safety		.26*
<i>R</i> square	.26	.31
<i>R</i> square change		.05*

* effect significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** effect significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.1.5 Regression analysis on cognitive job crafting

The results of this analysis are further detailed in Table 5, which provides information on the standardised effects and significance levels.

Model 1 demonstrated a statistically significant model fit, accounting for 19% of the variance in cognitive job crafting (sig. F change = .01). Seniority emerged as a significant predictor in this initial model ($p = .02$, $\beta = .39$), which suggests that individuals in higher seniority positions are more likely to engage in cognitive job crafting behaviours.

Model 2, which introduced psychosocial safety, exhibited a significant improvement in model fit as the variance explained by the model increased by 4% (sig. F change = .04). Psychosocial safety was the sole significant predictor ($p = .04$, $\beta = .23$) suggesting that a psychosocial safety climate within the workplace positively influences cognitive job crafting behaviours.

Additionally, the significance of seniority diminished, suggesting that its influence became less pronounced after accounting for psychosocial safety.

Therefore, hypothesis 3a was supported.

H3a: Job crafting is positively associated with psychosocial safety climate.

Table 5

Predictors of cognitive job crafting (standardised effects)

	Model 1	Model 2
Age	-.06	.02
Gender	-.22	-.20
Education	.11	.16
Seniority	.39*	.32
Decision Authority	.17	.07
Job Demands	.05	-.01
Psychosocial Safety		.23*
R square	.19	.23
R square change		.04*

* effect significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** effect significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.1.6 Regression analysis on relational job crafting

The results of this analysis are further detailed in Table 6, which provides information on the standardised effects and significance levels.

Model 1, incorporating the aforementioned control variables, accounted for 30% of the variance in relational job crafting, indicating statistical significance (sig. F change < .001). Among the significant predictors, gender demonstrated significance at the .01 level ($p = .00$, $\beta = -.33$), and the negative relationship suggests that females (coded as 1) tend to engage less in relational job crafting compared to males (coded as 2). Additionally, seniority ($p = .01$, $\beta = .41$) and decision authority ($p = .03$, $\beta = .23$) emerged as significant positive predictors, implying that individuals with higher seniority levels and greater decision-making authority tend to engage more in relational job crafting behaviours.

In Model 2, which introduced psychosocial safety, the R square change increased notably by .13, indicating a significant enhancement in the model's ability to explain relational job crafting variance (sig. F change < .001). Notably, psychosocial safety ($p < .001$, $\beta = .42$) emerged as a significant predictor, supporting the hypothesis that job crafting is positively associated with psychosocial safety climate. Furthermore, gender ($p = .00$, $\beta = -.31$) retained significance in Model 2, suggesting its continual influence on relational job crafting behaviours, and education ($p = .02$, $\beta = .21$) emerged as significant indicating that individuals with higher levels of education tend to exhibit greater involvement in relational job crafting activities.

Therefore, hypothesis 3a was supported.

H3a: Job crafting is positively associated with psychosocial safety climate.

Table 6

Predictors of relational job crafting (standardised effects)

	Model 1	Model 2
Age	-.08	.06
Gender	-.33**	-.31**
Education	.13	.21*
Seniority	.41*	.28
Decision Authority	.23*	.06
Job Demands	-.05	-.16
Psychosocial Safety		.42**
R square	.30	.43
R square change		.13**

* effect significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** effect significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.1.7 Mediation analysis

Given the findings from the regression analyses, it became apparent that there are no discernible effects of job crafting or learning directly on authenticity. The proposed mediation path hinged on the assumption that job crafting and learning would influence authenticity, and therefore conducting a mediation analysis to explore these paths becomes unnecessary.

Therefore, hypotheses 2 and 3 were not supported as no mediation effect was found.

H2: Learning behaviour mediates the relation between psychosocial safety climate and authenticity.

H3: Job crafting mediates the relation between psychosocial safety climate and authenticity.

3.2 Post-hoc analysis

In response to the discrepancy between the correlation analysis and regression analysis findings, a post-hoc analysis was conducted. The correlation analysis (refer to Section 3.1.1) revealed a significant positive correlation between task job crafting and authenticity, as well as cognitive job crafting and authenticity. However, the regression analysis for authenticity did not show a significant correlation to either of those variables. This discrepancy prompted further exploration as it was speculated that the addition of relational job crafting and learning in the authenticity regression analysis model might have masked the effects of task and cognitive job crafting on authenticity. Essentially, the interplay of multiple variables in the regression model could have masked the individual contributions of task and cognitive job crafting to authenticity. To address this, we decided to combine all three job crafting types into a unified variable.

The newly formed measure exhibited a reasonable level of reliability, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha of .67, suggesting that the three job crafting variables share commonality. However, this alpha does fall slightly below the preferred cutoff of .70, reinforcing the decision to treat them as distinct constructs. Despite this, for the sake of exploration, the decision was made to assess the consolidated job crafting variable's impact on authenticity.

Subsequently, a regression analysis was conducted using the newly created job crafting scale. The results of this analysis are further detailed in Table 7, which provides information on the standardised effects and significance levels. In Model 1, which included all control variables, 31% of the variance was explained, achieving statistical significance (sig. F change < .001). Model 2 incorporated learning and job crafting, however, the R square change (.01) was not significant (sig. F change = .54) and job crafting remained non-significant ($p = .32$, $\beta = .14$). Model 3, featuring psychosocial safety as a predictor, also did not yield significant results, as evidenced by the lack of significance of psychosocial safety ($p = .47$, $\beta = -.09$). In this model, the R square change (.00) was also not significant (sig. F change = .47).

Table 7

Predictors of authenticity with consolidated job crafting measure (standardised effects)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-.03	-.04	-.06
Gender	.06	.09	.09
Education	-.09	-.09	-.12
Seniority	.36*	.32	.32
Decision Authority	.30**	.29**	.31**
Job Demands	.24*	.22*	.24*
Job Crafting		.14	.18
Learning		-.12	-.11
Psychosocial Safety			-.09
R square	.31	.32	.33
R square change		.01	.00

* effect significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** effect significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To discern whether the lack of significance could be attributed to the inclusion of learning as a competing predictor, another analysis was then conducted that excluded learning. This allowed Model 2 to solely consider the impact of the consolidated job crafting variable, providing one last opportunity to demonstrate significance in this study. However, even with this refined approach, job crafting remained non-significant ($p = .58$, $\beta = .07$) and the R square change (.00) also did not significantly enhance the model's fit (sig. F change = .58). Similarly, the R square

change (.01) in Model 3 did not indicate a significant enhancement in the model's ability to explain authenticity (sig. F change = .45) and the added predictor of psychosocial safety was not significant ($p = .45$, $\beta = -.09$)

Table 8

Predictors of authenticity with consolidated job crafting measure and without learning (standardised effects)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-.03	-.02	-.04
Gender	.06	.08	.08
Education	-.09	-.10	-.12
Seniority	.36*	.33	.33
Decision Authority	.30**	.29**	.31**
Job Demands	.24*	.24*	.26*
Job Crafting		.07	.11
Psychosocial Safety			-.09
R square	.31	.31	.32
R square change		.00	.01

* effect significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** effect significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4. Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship between authenticity and psychosocial safety in the workplace, while exploring the potential mediating roles of job crafting and learning. By addressing this research question, we sought to contribute to the understanding of how organisational climate influences employees' sense of authenticity, and the mechanisms through which this influence may occur.

4.1 Interpretation of results

4.1.1 Authenticity

Our results indicated that psychosocial safety is not associated with authenticity, and that neither job crafting or learning mediates the relationship. While our study did not yield the anticipated results linking authenticity, psychosocial safety climate, job crafting, and learning, there are studies that support the theoretical basis for expecting links between them. For instance, Ostermeier et al. (2021) demonstrated support for a model proposing the establishment of a psychological authenticity climate within organisations. Despite this existing research, the present study did not provide empirical support for these connections. In taking this into account, it suggests that the relationships among these variables are more complex than initially anticipated. Several factors could contribute to the lack of significant findings, including sample size limitations, measurement issues, or unaccounted-for variables which will be further discussed in section 4.2. This also presents an opportunity for further exploration and refinement of the theoretical model which will be discussed in section 4.3. Despite all this, the study presented various interesting results.

Authenticity was positively related to decision authority, implying that individuals who possess greater control over their decisions and work processes tend to experience higher levels of authenticity in their professional roles, although it is difficult to interpret this association in causal terms as the direction of causality cannot be determined from this correlation alone. It is plausible that individuals who feel more authentic are more likely to seek out roles with higher decision authority, or conversely, that having greater decision authority fosters a sense of authenticity. Further longitudinal or experimental research is needed to establish the directionality of this relationship. This observed relationship aligns with self-determination theory, which posits that autonomy is a fundamental psychological need essential for authentic self-expression (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Individuals who have agency over their actions likely feel more aligned with their true selves.

Similarly, authenticity was positively linked with job demands, suggesting that individuals who perceive their workload as manageable and devoid of conflicting demands are more likely to experience authenticity at work. This finding is consistent with the Job-Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), which suggests that manageable job demands contribute to positive outcomes such as engagement and well-being. A positive association is also observed between authenticity and seniority which underscores the importance of hierarchical positioning, with higher-ranking individuals reporting greater levels of authenticity. This can be understood through role theory (Biddle, 1979), which suggests that individuals in higher-ranking positions have greater discretion and influence over their work, allowing for more authentic self-expression. It is plausible that the observed relationship with seniority is mediated by decision authority. As individuals ascend in seniority within an organisation, they often gain greater decision-making authority. Therefore, the positive association between authenticity and seniority may be attributed to the positive association observed between authenticity and decision authority.

4.1.2 Learning

Secondly, the study also revealed a positive relationship between learning and psychosocial safety, indicating that individuals operating in environments characterised by high levels of psychosocial safety tend to engage more actively in learning endeavours. This association can be understood through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which emphasises the importance of environmental factors in shaping behaviour. Psychologically safe environments provide individuals with the confidence to explore, experiment, and learn without fear of negative consequences or judgement. Furthermore, the positive correlation is consistent with research on organisational learning, which highlights the role of supportive climates in promoting knowledge sharing, experimentation, and innovation (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

4.1.3 Job crafting

Moreover, the investigation into different dimensions of job crafting yielded insightful results regarding their associations with psychosocial safety and other demographic variables. All three

types of job crafting are positively associated with psychosocial safety, which can be explained by the role of perceived control and social support in shaping work experiences. According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), individuals strive to acquire and maintain resources, including those related to their work environment. Psychosocial safety provides a supportive foundation that encourages individuals to proactively shape their work experiences through crafting tasks, cognitions, and relationships. Additionally, the positive association between relational job crafting and psychosocial safety underscores the role of social support in fostering a sense of safety and belonging within the workplace.

Task job crafting demonstrated positive associations with both seniority and psychosocial safety. This suggests that individuals in higher-ranking positions, as well as those operating in psychologically safe environments, are more inclined to engage in task-related modifications to optimise their work experiences.

Similarly, cognitive job crafting exhibited a positive association with psychosocial safety, indicating that individuals in psychologically safe work environments are more likely to engage in cognitive restructuring to enhance their job experiences.

Finally, relational job crafting was found to be positively associated with gender, education, and psychosocial safety. Men and individuals with higher levels of education were more likely to engage in relational job crafting, which involves shaping the social aspects of work relationships to better fit one's needs and preferences. It is plausible that within a predominantly patriarchal society, males may feel more comfortable expressing their preferences for how their job should change, indicating a propensity for instrumental use of relationships in achieving work-related goals. However, further research is needed to explore the underlying factors contributing to this gender disparity. The finding on education level may be attributed to several factors associated with higher educational attainment. Firstly, individuals with advanced degrees may possess a heightened awareness of the importance of investing in workplace relationships, recognising the potential benefits of networking for career advancement and professional development. Additionally, individuals with higher levels of education may exhibit greater interpersonal skills or emotional intelligence, facilitating their ability to navigate social interactions and engage in

relational job crafting behaviours effectively. Moreover, the strong association with psychosocial safety highlights the importance of a supportive work environment in fostering positive interpersonal interactions and social connections, which are essential for employee well-being and job satisfaction.

4.2 Strengths

One of the notable strengths of this study lies in the robustness of the questionnaire utilised, which incorporated empirically validated measures to assess the key constructs. The use of established measurement tools enhanced the reliability and validity of the data collected, providing a solid foundation for the study's findings.

The study yielded a multitude of highly significant relationships among the variables under investigation. These findings underscore the richness of the data collected and the depth of insight gained into the complex interplay between authenticity, psychosocial safety, learning, and job crafting within organisational settings. Additionally, the large number of significant relationships discovered suggests the comprehensive nature of the study's approach and its ability to capture various dynamics within the workplace environment.

The significant associations found between authenticity and both decision authority and job demands represents a notable strength. Although decision authority and job demands were not primary predictors in the research question, these results highlight the complexity of authenticity in the workplace. It opens up new avenues for exploration, particularly regarding how different aspects of job design can influence an individual's sense of authenticity. This discovery enriches our understanding and points to the potential benefits of further investigating these relationships in the future.

4.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Despite the robust methodology employed, several constraints warrant consideration to further validate and extend our findings. Firstly, the cross-sectional design presents a notable limitation.

The use of a cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between variables, limiting the depth of understanding regarding the dynamics between authenticity, psychosocial safety, and related constructs. Longitudinal or experimental designs would provide stronger evidence of causality and better elucidate the temporal relationships among variables. Assessing psychosocial safety at the organisational level rather than the employee level would also help address this limitation. Longitudinal studies conducted at this level can better track changes in psychosocial safety climate, providing insights into how organisational changes shape individual experiences and allowing researchers to better establish causality.

Secondly, the reliance on self-report measures poses another significant limitation. The self-report questionnaire used in the study is susceptible to various response biases, particularly the self-enhancement bias, which could inflate self-reported ratings on job-related measures. Participants may have provided responses that portray themselves in a more positive light than objectively warranted, impacting the accuracy of the data collected. Moreover, the reliance on self-report data for assessing behaviours related to the Grosemans et al.'s learning measure may introduce inaccuracies due to memory lapses. To address this limitation, future research could explore alternative methods for assessing job performance, such as incorporating objective performance metrics or utilising third-party evaluations from supervisors or colleagues. Additionally, future studies could explore integrating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain deeper insights into participants' experiences in the workplace. By triangulating data from multiple sources, researchers can mitigate the impact of self-enhancement bias and provide a more accurate assessment of individuals' work-related behaviours. For simplification purposes, future research could also consider conducting surveys across all employees within a single large company.

Lastly, the small sample size and associated issues with statistical power pose challenges to the generalisability and robustness of the findings. The reduced sample size, resulting from the exclusion of unemployed participants, fell short of the originally targeted 120 participants deemed necessary by the power analysis. This shortfall potentially compromised the statistical power of the study and may have limited the generalisability of the findings. Furthermore, the reliance on convenience sampling, particularly through social media networks and snowball

sampling, introduces inherent biases into the sample composition. Individuals who are not active on social media or who use it less frequently may be underrepresented in the sample due to this indirect criteria for inclusion. To enhance the external validity of the results, future studies should consider employing alternative recruitment strategies, such as random sampling or stratified sampling.

4.4 Theoretical implications

The findings of this study carry several theoretical implications for understanding the relationship between authenticity, psychosocial safety, job crafting, and learning in organisational contexts.

Firstly, the strong connection between authenticity and both decision authority and job demands suggests a potential avenue for exploring the role of authenticity in job crafting processes. While the regression analysis for authenticity revealed no significant relationship with job crafting, the correlation analysis demonstrated a significant relationship between authenticity and two types of job crafting. This discrepancy was explored in the post-hoc analysis, however the insignificant findings open the potential for an alternative exploration. One potential direction for future research is to re-examine the operationalisation and measurement of decision authority and job demands in relation to job crafting. For example, both decision authority and job crafting involve a degree of autonomy over one's work environment that enables employees to align their job with their personal goals. One of the questions on decision authority asks, "My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own." While this question pertains to decision authority, the actual act of making decisions independently about one's job is a form of job crafting. Therefore, future research should scrutinise the measurement of decision authority and job demands in relation to job crafting to determine if there are conceptual similarities. Exploring this connection may potentially uncover a link between job crafting and authenticity. Additionally, integrating questions about job crafting immediately after assessing decision authority and job demands may prompt participants to reflect on whether they engage in job crafting behaviours, potentially enhancing the clarity of responses.

The cross-sectional design of the study raises questions about the directionality of the observed relationships. While the current study focused on exploring how psychosocial safety climate influences authenticity, an alternative perspective could be considered: that authenticity fosters psychosocial safety within organisations. This reverse causality hypothesis merits exploration in future longitudinal studies to elucidate the temporal dynamics between authenticity and psychosocial safety.

In general, the topic of authenticity and its relationship with psychosocial safety remains understudied, and further research is needed to understand this interplay. Additional factors that have been connected to authenticity include personality traits (Fleeson & Wilt, 2010), organisational culture (Azanza et al., 2013; Edmondson, 1999), and leadership styles (Kleynhans et al., 2022). Observing how these variables influence the strength and direction of the observed relationships could provide valuable insights and offer a more comprehensive understanding.

4.5 Practical implications

The findings of this study hold significant practical implications for both organisations and individuals striving to enhance workplace authenticity and well-being.

The present study suggests that organisations can enhance workplace authenticity by prioritising decision authority and manageable job demands. Empowering leadership practices and transparent communication can achieve this goal. By providing employees with greater control over their work and clear expectations and resources to manage their workload effectively, organisations can increase the sense of ownership employees feel over their work. This not only enhances employee satisfaction and commitment, but also fosters authenticity.

Additionally, the study indicates that learning and job crafting can be increased by providing employees with a psychosocially safe environment. Open communication, supportive leadership, and a culture of trust and respect are key aspects of this (Edmondson, 2018), and trainings on conflict resolution, policies addressing harassment and discrimination, and inclusivity and diversity contribute to this environment (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Psychosocially safe

environments encourage employees to voice their opinions, take risks, and problem-solve, leading to increased job crafting and learning practices. This, in turn, fosters innovation and adaptability, ultimately enhancing organisational performance (Edmondson, 2012).

On an individual level, this study has shown that prioritising roles that offer decision authority and manageable job demands provides employees with the best opportunity to be authentic in the workplace. Individuals can also advocate for opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities, negotiate workload expectations, and pursue roles that offer autonomy and flexibility.

Similarly, seeking out roles that are psychosocially safe is important. This can be done through researching organisational culture, seeking feedback from current employees, and evaluating the presence of supportive leadership and communication practices (Edmondson, 2018; Kahn, 1990). Psychosocially safe environments encourage individuals to engage in job crafting and learning, which enables individuals to develop their skills, expand their knowledge, and adapt to changing work environments (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). This not only enhances personal growth and career advancement, but also fosters resilience and well-being (Tims et al., 2013). Ultimately, by prioritising authenticity and proactively shaping their work experiences, individuals can create fulfilling careers that align with their values and aspirations.

4.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the dynamics of authenticity, psychosocial safety, job crafting, and learning behaviours in the workplace. The findings emphasise the role of autonomy and manageable job demands in fostering authentic self-expression, and highlight the interconnectedness of job crafting and learning with the psychosocial safety climate of the workplace. While the study's methodology and results are robust, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations, such as the cross-sectional design, self-report measures, and modest sample size, which provide valuable directions for future research. Nonetheless, the implications of this study for organisations and individuals are promising, offering opportunities to cultivate authentic workplaces where well-being is prioritised.

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Appendix A

Survey Introduction

Welcome!

Thank you for participating in my MSc thesis research. The purpose of this study is to examine how the psychosocial safety of a workplace can influence the authenticity of its workers. In doing so, we hope to better understand how organisations both help and hinder the well-being of its workers.

We expect that this study will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. First, you will be asked general demographic questions. Subsequently, you will be asked to rank your agreement with various statements pertaining to different topics.

This study has been approved by the Ethical Review Board of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University. In accordance with the ethics code:

- We do not collect any identifying information and your answers will remain anonymous;
- The data is confidentially stored on a secure drive for 10 years where only the researchers have access;
- Your participation is voluntary. You can end your participation in the study at any time, without any explanation and without any negative consequences.

If you have any further questions, remarks, or complaints, you can send an email to the researcher Vanessa Kemeny via v.j.kemeny@students.uu.nl or their supervisor Toon Taris via awtaris@uu.nl

Thank you very much in advance!

By clicking on the “I agree” button below, you indicate that you have read the information and conditions of participating in this research and give consent to participate.

Appendix B

Demographics Measure

1. Age:
2. Gender:
 - Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary
 - Prefer not to say
 - Other, please specify:
3. Level of education:
 - High School
 - Trade/technical/vocational training
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - PhD or higher
 - Other, please specify:
4. Employment status:
 - Employed
 - Unemployed
 - Self-Employed
5. Employment type:
 - Full-time
 - Part-time
 - On-call
 - Internship
6. Seniority level:
 - Entry level (e.g. staff member)
 - Mid level (e.g. specialist, team lead, project manager)
 - Senior level (e.g. regional manager, director)
 - Executive or senior management (e.g. chief officers)

Appendix C

Decision Authority Measure

Item		Scale						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own.							
2	I have a lot to say about what happens at my job.							
3	In my job, I have very little freedom to decide how I do my work.							

Scale Key

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Somewhat agree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Somewhat disagree

6 = Disagree

7 = Strongly disagree

Appendix D

Psychological Job Demands Measure

Item		Scale						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	My job requires working very fast.							
2	My job requires working very hard.							
3	I am not asked to do an excessive amount of work.							
4	I have enough time to get the job done.							
5	I am free from conflicting demands that others make.							

Scale Key

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Somewhat agree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Somewhat disagree

6 = Disagree

7 = Strongly disagree

Appendix E

Psychosocial Safety Climate Measure

Item		Scale						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	In my workplace senior management acts quickly to correct problems/issues that affect employees' psychological health.							
2	Senior management acts decisively when a concern of an employees' psychological status is raised.							
3	Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment.							
4	Psychological well-being of staff is a priority for this organisation.							
5	Senior management clearly considers the psychological health of employees to be of great importance.							
6	Senior management considers employee psychological health to be as important as productivity.							
7	There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which affect me.							
8	Information about workplace psychological well-being is always brought to my attention by my manager/supervisor.							
9	My contributions to resolving occupational health and safety concerns in the organisation are listened to.							
10	Participation and consultation in psychological health and safety occurs with employees', unions, and health and safety representatives in my workplace.							
11	Employees are encouraged to become involved in psychological safety and health matters.							
12	In my organisation, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organisation.							

Scale Key

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Somewhat agree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Somewhat disagree

6 = Disagree

7 = Strongly disagree

Appendix F

Authenticity Measure

Item		Scale						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I am true to myself at work in most situations.							
2	At work, I always stand by what I believe in.							
3	I behave in accordance with my values and beliefs in the workplace.							
5	At work, I feel alienated.							
6	I don't feel who I truly am at work.							
7	At work, I feel out of touch with the "real me".							
8	In my working environment I feel "cut off" from who I really am.							
9	At work, I feel the need to do what others expect me to do.							
10	I am strongly influenced in the workplace by the opinions of others.							
11	Other people influence me greatly at work.							

Deleted items after factor analysis:

4	I find it easier to get on with people in the workplace when I'm being myself.
12	At work, I behave in a manner that people expect me to behave.

Scale Key

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Somewhat agree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Somewhat disagree

6 = Disagree

7 = Strongly disagree

Appendix G

Learning Measure 1

Item		Scale						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	<i>In the last six months, I...</i>							
1	Searched for information (websites, magazines, videos, books, etc.).							
2	Tried something new (technique, method, behaviour, etc.).							
3	Asked others for information.							
4	Took part in a seminar/conference.							
5	Attended a training/(additional) course.							
6	Thought about how I handled things.							
7	Observed how others managed things.							
8	Took part in a workshop.							
9	Attended a presentation.							
10	Asked the opinion of others on what I did.							
11	Talked about work experiences with others.							
12	Thought about how I would handle things beforehand.							
13	Read magazines, websites, books, etc.							
14	Watched visual material (documentary, films, instruction videos, etc.).							

Scale Key

1 = On a daily basis

2 = A few times each week

3 = Weekly

4 = A few times each month

5 = Monthly

6 = Once or twice

7 = Never

Appendix H

Learning Measure 2

Item		Scale						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	<i>Experience/Action: Trying and applying own ideas</i>							
1	I use my own ideas to improve tasks at work.							
	<i>Experience/Action: Model learning</i>							
2	I look at how others work in the company to improve my work.							
	<i>Feedback: Direct feedback</i>							
3	I ask my colleagues when I am not sure how well I worked.							
	<i>Feedback: Vicarious feedback</i>							
4	I ask my colleagues about the methods and tricks they use at work.							
	<i>Reflection: Anticipatory reflection</i>							
5	Before starting a new task, I think about how I can do my work best.							
	<i>Reflection: Subsequent reflection</i>							
6	When I have finished a new task, I think about what I still could do better next time.							
	<i>Intent to learn: Extrinsic intent to learn</i>							
7	I want to learn something new at work for myself because then I can pursue my career at the company.							
	<i>Intent to learn: Intrinsic intent to learn</i>							
8	I want to learn something new for myself because then I can solve problems at work faster.							

Scale Key

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Somewhat agree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Somewhat disagree

6 = Disagree

7 = Strongly disagree

Appendix I

Task Job Crafting Measure

Item		Scale						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I introduce new approaches to improve my work.							
2	I change the scope or types of tasks that I complete at work.							
3	I introduce new work tasks that better suit my skills or interests.							
4	I choose to take on additional tasks at work.							
5	I give preference to work tasks that suit my skills or interests.							
6	I change the way I do my job to make it more enjoyable for myself.							
7	I change minor procedures that I think are not productive.							

Scale Key

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Somewhat agree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Somewhat disagree

6 = Disagree

7 = Strongly disagree

Appendix J

Cognitive Job Crafting Measure

Item		Scale						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I think about how my job gives my life purpose.							
2	I remind myself about the significance my work has for the success of the organisation.							
3	I remind myself of the importance of my work for the broader community.							
4	I think about the ways in which my work positively impacts my life.							
5	I reflect on the role my job has for my overall well-being.							

Scale Key

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Somewhat agree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Somewhat disagree

6 = Disagree

7 = Strongly disagree

Appendix K

Relational Job Crafting Measure

Item		Scale						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I engage in networking activities to establish more relationships.							
2	I make an effort to get to know people well at work.							
3	I organise or attend work related social functions.							
4	I organise special events in the workplace (e.g., celebrating a co-worker's birthday)							
5	I introduce myself to co-workers, customers, or clients I have not met.							
6	I choose to mentor new employees (officially or unofficially).							
7	I make friends with people at work who have similar skills or interests.							

Scale Key

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Somewhat agree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

5 = Somewhat disagree

6 = Disagree

7 = Strongly disagree