



**Universiteit Utrecht**

**Social Safety Climates in the Workplace and Their Impact on Employee Job Satisfaction – Moderated by Transformational and Transactional Leadership?**

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### **Abstract**

Few research has been conducted on the novel concept of social safety climates, but studies on related concepts such as psychological safety or psychosocial safety climates reveal their impact on job satisfaction. Additionally, while leaders seem to struggle with facilitating social safety, transformational and transactional leadership styles have been shown to influence job satisfaction. To investigate how social safety climates impact job satisfaction and how this is qualified by said leadership styles, in the scope of a survey, we manipulated participants' perceived social safety climate and randomly assigned participants to either a safe or unsafe condition, followed by questionnaires on social safety, psychological safety (to have a comparable reference for social safety), the leadership styles, and job satisfaction. Results showed that contrary to our expectations, a causal relationship between experienced social safety and job satisfaction was only accepted with caution. Transformational and transactional leadership were both found to increase job satisfaction. However, contrary to what was expected, they did not moderate the relationship between experienced social safety and job satisfaction. Future research should focus on exploring the effects of social safety climates to get a deeper understanding, potentially using a more realistic manipulation and accounting for personal characteristics as possible influences. As transformational and transactional leadership styles both foster higher job satisfaction, organizations and leaders should put resources and efforts into facilitating and adopting these leadership styles.

*Keywords: Social Safety Climate, Social Safety, Psychological Safety, Job Satisfaction, Transformational Leadership Style, Transactional Leadership Style*

## Introduction

In Western countries, we tend to spend the majority of our time at work, approximately one-third of the life of the average person according to Industrial-Organizational psychologist Andrew Naber (Gettysburg College, 2023). Feeling safe at work is therefore undeniably important for employees. All too often, however, this is not a given. In the Netherlands, fields such as the Dutch broadcast sector or Dutch academia have been shown to commonly entail employees being afraid of unsafe and inappropriate behaviour at work (KNAW, 2022; van Rijn et al., 2024). A recent advisory report has now drawn attention to a newly emerging concept – social safety climate (KNAW, 2022). In the process of analysing the social safety climate at Dutch universities, many dysfunctional and unsafe mechanisms have been uncovered, such as harassment at work, unclear behavioural codes of conduct, and transgressional behaviour. However, this report is one of only a few about social safety out there at the moment, and it is specified in (Dutch) academia. Therefore, to better understand the impact of working in a socially safe or unsafe climate, more empirical evidence is needed that applies to other organizational sectors as well.

Due to limited literature on social safety climates, related concepts must be considered. Generally, how safe employees feel at work is largely shaped by co-workers, management, and organizational policies and climates (Agostinho Silva & Santos Fugas, 2015; Clarke et al., 2015). For instance, many studies have investigated the effects of psychosocial safety climates or psychological safety on employee outcomes such as job satisfaction (Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Idris et al., 2011; Law et al., 2011; Ahmad & Umrani, 2019; Lintanga & Rathakrishnan, 2024). These studies have accentuated how higher safety levels positively affect job satisfaction, thereby indicating the importance of a safe social environment in facilitating beneficial work outcomes.

The current research investigates how the social safety climate at work impacts employees' job satisfaction, by experimentally checking for causality. It is proposed that working in a safe social climate positively impacts employees' job satisfaction. Conversely, it is assumed that working in an unsafe social climate negatively impacts employees' job satisfaction. Moreover, independent of this, different management styles (i.e. leadership styles) have been shown to influence job satisfaction (Saleem, 2015; Asghar & Oino, 2017). Therefore, this research also explores whether leadership styles, specifically transformational versus transactional styles, strengthen or weaken a possible relationship between experienced social safety climate and job satisfaction.

**Premise: Why Focus on Social Safety Climates and not Psychosocial Safety Climates?**

As research on social safety climates (SSC) is limited, research on related concepts such as the psychosocial safety climate (PSC) is included in this study to draw connections and build the theoretical framework. For clarification purposes, it is vital to briefly explain the difference between the two climates and highlight why this study's focus lies on SSCs.

The SSC is a relatively new concept and encompasses the nature and dynamics of workplace interpersonal relations and interactions. As stated in the KNAW advisory report (2022), in a socially safe climate “people do not feel threatened by the behaviour of others and can be confident that they can express a different opinion or bring forward new facts without being insulted, humiliated, intimidated, or silenced” (p. 11). This is how SSC is conceptualised in this research. In comparison, the PSC covers organizational policies and practices aimed at protecting employees (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). So, while the SSC focuses specifically on how safely employees experience their social environment, the PSC focuses on how safe employees perceive organizational policies and practices to be. Evidently, these are two quite similar yet nuanced concepts. This is useful for drawing relations, while simultaneously it remains important to investigate both concepts separately to give insights into their distinct characteristics. Research on PSCs is already quite readily available, while the concept of SSC is still under-researched. Therefore, this study aims to specifically expand knowledge on SSCs.

### **Theoretical Foundation: The Job-Demands and Resources Model**

To understand the mechanisms behind how SSC impacts job satisfaction and how this is qualified by leadership styles, it is imperative to first set the stage by explaining the psychosocial theory they can be understood by. A useful model to take as the backdrop for this research is the Job-Demands and Resources (JD-R) Model (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Essentially, the model proposes that two types of job characteristics impact employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction: job demands and job resources. As originally explained by Demerouti and colleagues (2001), job demands refer to “physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort” (p.501). Job resources refer to those (physical, social, and organizational) aspects that do not require this effort and instead, help with work goals, reduce job demands, or facilitate personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., 2001). To illustrate, interpersonal conflict is an example of a job demand while social support is an example of a job resource (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Moreover, job demands and resources are said to trigger two processes through which they affect outcome measures. High job demands trigger the health impairment process in which the negative consequences of said job demands lead to stress or burnout, thereby resulting in negative outcomes. High job resources trigger the motivational process in which employees become

more engaged which results in positive outcomes, for example, better performance (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). The following sections explore how the JD-R model can be connected to the features studied in this research.

### **Social Safety Climates in the Workplace – Demand and Resource**

SSCs can come with benefits just as much as pitfalls, depending on whether the climate is safe or unsafe, respectively (KNAW, 2022). Unfortunately, there are various threats to achieving a safe SSC. In Dutch academia, supervisory boards may monitor the SSC but this frequently remains ineffective: reporting procedures are uncertain, or reports of undesired behaviour get ignored. Other reports highlight instances of exclusion and a lack of inclusive culture in the workplace. Additionally, hierarchical structures and high-pressure climates can fuel unsafe social behaviour and inhibit the reporting thereof. While these findings have primarily focused on the field of Dutch academia, hierarchical structures and high-pressure climates are not limited to occur in this sector only. Hence, it can be assumed that other sectors face similar problems (KNAW, 2022). It is therefore critical to invest more in research into SSCs across all sectors.

There are also several benefits of safe SSCs such as employee well-being, job satisfaction, learning from each other, or employees not being afraid to make mistakes and thus taking on more opportunities (KNAW, 2022). SSC further encompasses related concepts like the previously mentioned PSC or psychological safety, which concerns team-level social safety regarding how safe one feels to be oneself without facing negative consequences (Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Yin et al., 2019). Studies on these concepts demonstrate similar positive results as the ones reported by KNAW (2022), and they can be connected to the JD-R model.

The PSC has been found to trigger both the health impairment process and the motivational process (Law et al., 2011). If present, PSC facilitates positive work outcomes. Reversely, if not present, PSC leads to negative work outcomes, such as stress. Additionally, if enforced by management, a PSC can buffer the negative consequences of bullying and harassment (Law et al., 2011). This has also been demonstrated by Dollard (2012) who reported that when PSC is present and actively enforced, employees report less unsafe workplace behaviour (such as bullying and harassment). Moreover, a PSC perceived by employees has been considered to increase feelings of comfort and safety, thereby positively impacting job satisfaction. When it comes to psychological safety, Ahmad and Umrani (2019) highlight its critical role in explaining that when employees feel safe to make mistakes or propose new ideas, their job satisfaction will be enhanced. As SSC may be considered as an umbrella term and concept that encompasses – among other aspects – both of these dimensions, it may be

assumed that it comes with comparable effects, also in the context of the JD-R model. For example, a safe SSC can potentially be considered a social job resource which subsequently positively influences employee outcomes, like job satisfaction (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). However, similar to psychosocial risks as mentioned by Dollard (2012), if the SSC is unsafe, it might be considered as a job demand as dealing with negative characteristics such as transgressive behaviour or humiliation may put a strain on employees. How the SSC at work specifically impacts employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction, is therefore an important mechanism to be investigated.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Generally, and in this research, job satisfaction (JS) refers to the degree of satisfaction employees feel while doing their job. Other scholars have similarly conceptualised JS as the “pleasure derived while doing a job” (Asghar & Oino, 2017, p. 3). Employees’ JS is of critical importance not only for their personal and professional well-being but also for the success of an organization in terms of, for instance, better work results, reduced absenteeism, and sustained loyalty (Lintanga & Rathakrishnan, 2024).

JS is influenced by job demands and resources, as noted in the JD-R model. Focusing specifically on the social dimensions of these, it has been shown that job resources such as the presence of PSC, or social support from colleagues are associated with an increase in JS (Dollard, 2012; Han et al., 2020). However, job demands such as interpersonal conflicts can also lead to reduced JS due to, for example, emotional exhaustion (Han et al., 2020).

The SSC at the workplace has somewhat been connected to JS by KNAW (2022) in terms of stating that investing in it may prevent reduced JS. Still, considering the relatively recent emergence of the concept, there appears to be no tested direct connection between SSC and JS as of now. Considering the previously pointed out findings, however, SSC may be considered a job demand if unsafe, thereby potentially negatively impacting JS. Conversely, SSC may be considered a job resource if safe, in which case it may positively influence JS. This is further investigated in the present research.

### **The Impact of Leadership Styles – Transformational Versus Transactional**

As previously mentioned, it has been shown that leaders (e.g. supervisory boards or managers) frequently do not know how to facilitate social safety in the workplace or attempts to do so remain ineffective, potentially due to the novelty of the concept and the concomitant lack of clear guidelines on codes of conduct concerning SSCs (KNAW, 2022). They do, however, seem to play a pivotal role in influencing employee outcomes – as is also the case

with JS. It is therefore imperative to investigate if and how leadership styles (LS) impact employees' JS in socially safe versus unsafe climates; they might not yet have clarity on how to specifically enable safe SSCs, however, they might amplify or mitigate any potential effects of SSC on JS. In this research, I will focus on the transformational LS versus the transactional LS. Transformational leaders are encouraging, engaging, and inspiring, as well as confident in and respectful towards their subordinates (Saleem, 2015). Additionally, they support their subordinates' productivity and give them room to be creative and innovative. In turn, subordinates are more appreciative, loyal, and trusting towards their leaders and organizations. In comparison, transactional leaders focus on rewards and punishment depending on their subordinates' performance, in the expectation of effort and loyalty. They tend to act in self-interest and "use control strategies to get subordinates to perform the preferred way" (Saleem, 2015, p. 564).

The transformational LS has been suggested to be more effective than other leadership styles in increasing JS (Asghar & Oino, 2017). Focusing on JS, subordinates are generally more satisfied with their job when they are treated well and leaders believe in them. In her study, Saleem (2015) also reported that transformational LS was positively associated with JS. Conversely, transactional LS may negatively affect JS (Asghar & Oino, 2017). However, transformational LS appears to be more influential than transactional LS. While transformational LS did affect JS, transactional LS did not (Asghar & Oino, 2017). Saleem (2015) found a weak negative association between transactional LS and JS. Nonetheless, there is an established impact of transformational and transactional LS on JS. Because of this, it is of interest to inquire into whether any of the two can have a moderating effect on the influence of SSC on JS. Based on the theory and previous findings, it may be assumed that transformational LS has a positive effect on JS and potentially buffers the negative consequences of an unsafe SSC on JS. Reversely, transactional LS might negatively affect JS as well as inhibit the positive effects of a safe SSC on JS.

### **This Research**

Following this line of reasoning, the present study aims to answer the research question: *To what extent does working in a social safety climate predict employees' job satisfaction and how do the transformational and transactional leadership styles qualify this relationship?*

This is investigated by employing an experimental research design in which the participants are subjected to a manipulation of either a safe or an unsafe SSC. Based on the theoretical insights, various hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Employees who experience working in a safe social safety climate report higher job satisfaction than those who experience working in an unsafe social safety climate.

H2a: Employees who experience their leader to employ a transformational leadership style report higher job satisfaction.

H2b: Employees who experience their leader to employ a transactional leadership style report lower job satisfaction.

H3: Transformational leadership style qualifies the relationship between experienced social safety climate and job satisfaction in such a way that in an unsafe social safety climate, employees are more likely to report higher job satisfaction.

H4: Transactional leadership style qualifies the relationship between experienced social safety climate and job satisfaction in such a way that in a safe social safety climate, employees are more likely to report lower job satisfaction.

## **Methods**

### **Participants and Design**

In total, 228 participants took the survey. An a priori G\*Power calculation for Linear Multiple Regression with a Fixed Model ( $R^2$  increase) and an effect size of 0.05 (small to medium) determined a required sample size of  $N = 208$ . For data analysis, only those participants who had fully progressed through the survey, passed the attention check, and had given consent before taking the survey and after having been debriefed about the manipulation were included. The final number of participants suitable for data analysis was  $N = 132$ . A summary of the participants' demographics is shown in Table 1.



**Table 1.***Participants' Characteristics*

Characteristic	Full Sample, <i>N</i> = 132			
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	106		35.42	12.85
Gender				
Male	56	42		
Female	75	57		
Non-binary/third gender	0	0		
Prefer not to say	1	1		
Nationality				
Netherlands	72	55		
Germany	35	27		
Other	25	19		
Education				
Less than secondary (high) school graduation or equivalent	1	1		
Secondary (high) school graduation or equivalent	18	14		
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	38	29		
Master's degree or equivalent	68	52		
Doctoral degree or equivalent	7	5		
Sector	127			
Financial institutions	31	24		
Education	17	13		
Other	79	62		
Supervisory Position				
Yes	34	26		
No	98	74		
Working Hours	131		37.99	11.36
Tenure	132		77.1	98.23

*Note.* *N* = 132. Age was measured in years. Working hours were measured in hours per week. Tenure was measured in months.

## **Procedure**

Before starting the survey, ethical approval was requested and granted by the Ethical Review Board of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University (reference: 24-0433). The link to the survey was distributed by us – four researchers – among our personal and professional networks (e.g., family members and friends, internship organizations) and published on social media (Instagram and LinkedIn). It was also posted by the first supervisor on her LinkedIn profile. Data collection lasted from March 4, 2024, to April 18, 2024. First, participants read the purpose and informed consent of the study, stating that social safety climates are worth investigating to reveal potential effects on employees and implications for organizations, that participation is voluntary, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, and pointing out inclusion criteria for participation. Participants then had to consent to continue with the survey. Those who did not consent were automatically guided to the end of the survey. Participants first were asked to indicate demographics and were then subjected to the manipulation in which they were randomly assigned to one of two manipulations: safe versus unsafe SSC. Following this, participants answered questions that measured their perceived social and psychological safety to test whether the manipulation worked as intended. After that, participants answered the questionnaires on moderator and outcome variables in the following order: transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, and job satisfaction. Other measured concepts, such as work performance, were also included in the survey for the other researchers' studies, but have been excluded from this thesis. Lastly, participants had to consent to their participation again after having been debriefed about the manipulation. The debrief included the reason for manipulation, that they had been randomly assigned to one of the two conditions (safe versus unsafe) and that the scenarios were made up by the researchers. If they did not consent the second time, their data was not included in the analyses. In the end, they were also offered to enter any questions or feedback in an open text box. Respondents did not receive any rewards or compensation for participation.

## **Manipulation**

For the manipulation, we made up two scenarios. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two cases. In the first scenario – the safe condition – participants read about current developments in the Netherlands and Germany that highlight how companies increasingly place more and more value on social and psychological safety and how this positively affects employees. To underline this, we included fictional employee quotes as well as a fictional pie chart showing the percentage of organizations that foster safe (87%) versus

unsafe (13%) climates. In the second scenario – the unsafe condition – participants read about the opposite case, in which companies in the Netherlands and Germany fail to foster socially and psychologically safe environments. Again, we highlighted this with fake employee quotes and a pie chart depicting the percentage of organizations that foster safe (13%) versus unsafe (87%) climates (see Appendix A for the complete vignettes). To get participants even more into the mindset of what they had read before, they were asked to give three examples of either safe or unsafe situations, according to the condition they had been assigned to, they had experienced at work.

### **Materials**

In the order of mention, the following questionnaires relevant to this thesis were included. The full survey can be found in Appendix A. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*) unless stated otherwise.

### ***Demographics***

We included questions on the following demographics: age, gender, nationality, highest completed education level, work sector, supervisory position, working hours, and tenure.

### ***Manipulation Check: Social Safety***

To measure perceived social safety in their organizations, we developed six items based on the KNAW (2022) definition of social safety. Example items were: “Generally, my organization encourages the reporting of socially undesirable behaviour (such as being insulted, humiliated, or silenced).” and “Within my organization, we discuss what is socially desirable and undesirable behaviour.” For this sample, the social safety scale showed good reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha of .75. An additional attentional check item was incorporated between these items: “Click ‘completely disagree’ (furthest left) on this item to show that you are paying attention.”

### ***Manipulation Check: Psychological Safety***

We measured psychological safety using seven items from Baer and Frese (2003). Example items were: “In my organization, some employees are rejected for being different.” and “When someone in our organization makes a mistake, it is often held against them.” For this sample, the scale had good reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha of .79.

### ***Transformational and Transactional LS***

Transformational LS was measured by five items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 1999). Example items were: “My boss spends time teaching and coaching me.” and “My boss seeks differing perspectives from me when solving

problems.” Participants ranked these items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 5 (*completely agree*). For this sample, the items demonstrated good reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha of .81.

Transactional LS was measured with the 5-item scale by Podsakoff and colleagues (1990). Example items were: “My boss always gives me positive feedback when I perform well.” and “My boss gives me special recognition when my work is very good.” Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 5 (*completely agree*). For this sample, the scale showed excellent reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha of .92.

### ***Job Satisfaction***

Job satisfaction was measured using a single item: “Generally, I am satisfied with my job.”

### **Data Analysis**

Data cleaning and analysis were done using R and RStudio (version RStudio 2024.04.1+748). For the demographics analysis, a table was created (see Table 1). For the analyses, the psychological safety items one, two, and four, as well as the last item of the transactional LS scale, were reverse-coded. The analyses of the preliminary and hypothesised effects were completed in the following order.

The first analysis was a correlational analysis to examine whether the demographic variables gender, nationality, and sector were correlated with any relevant variables (predictor, moderator, and outcome). For this, dummy variables were created for the three variables of interest with the two most common categories each.

The second analysis included assumptions checking for multiple linear regressions, checking four assumptions: linearity, normality of residuals, homoskedasticity, and independence of residual error terms. The assumptions were tested for three models, all using JS as the outcome variable. Model 1 included *condition* as the predictor, Model 2 included *transformational LS* as the predictor, and Model 3 included *transactional LS* as the predictor.

Third, a manipulation check was completed by checking for significant differences in social and psychological safety scores between participants in safe versus unsafe conditions. For this, a Welch Two Sample t-test was performed.

Lastly, the hypotheses testing was completed. A Welch Two Sample t-test was performed to test H1. Fitted linear model analyses were completed to check for the main effects proposed in H2. Hayes’ PROCESS macro was analysed to check for the moderation effects proposed in H3 and H4.

## **Results**

### **Preliminary Analysis**

Table 2 (see Appendix B) summarises the results of the correlation analysis which was conducted to check background variables (gender, nationality, and sector) for possible covariates which we might include in the analyses. After careful consideration, none of the analysed variables were included as covariates as none showed to be strongly correlated with other variables of interest.

### **Checking Assumptions**

For Model 1, testing the effect of condition on JS, all assumptions were met. For Model 2, testing the effect of transformational LS on JS, the assumption of homoskedasticity was violated (see Figure 1, Appendix C). For Model 3, testing the effect of transactional LS on JS, the assumption of homoskedasticity was violated as well (see Figure 2, Appendix C). This indicates that the standard errors of the regression may be biased, hence, conclusions about the significance levels should be made with caution.

### **Did the Manipulation Work as Intended?**

As anticipated, participants in the unsafe condition reported significantly lower experienced social safety ( $M = 4.92$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ), than those in the safe condition ( $M = 5.45$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ),  $t(128) = -2.7$ ,  $p = .008$ . Cohen's  $d = -0.47$  indicated a small effect size. Similarly, participants in the unsafe condition also reported significantly lower experienced psychological safety ( $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ), than the participants in the safe condition ( $M = 5.19$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ),  $t(124) = -2.4$ ,  $p = .019$ . Cohen's  $d = -0.42$  indicated a small effect size. Hence, the manipulation was successful.

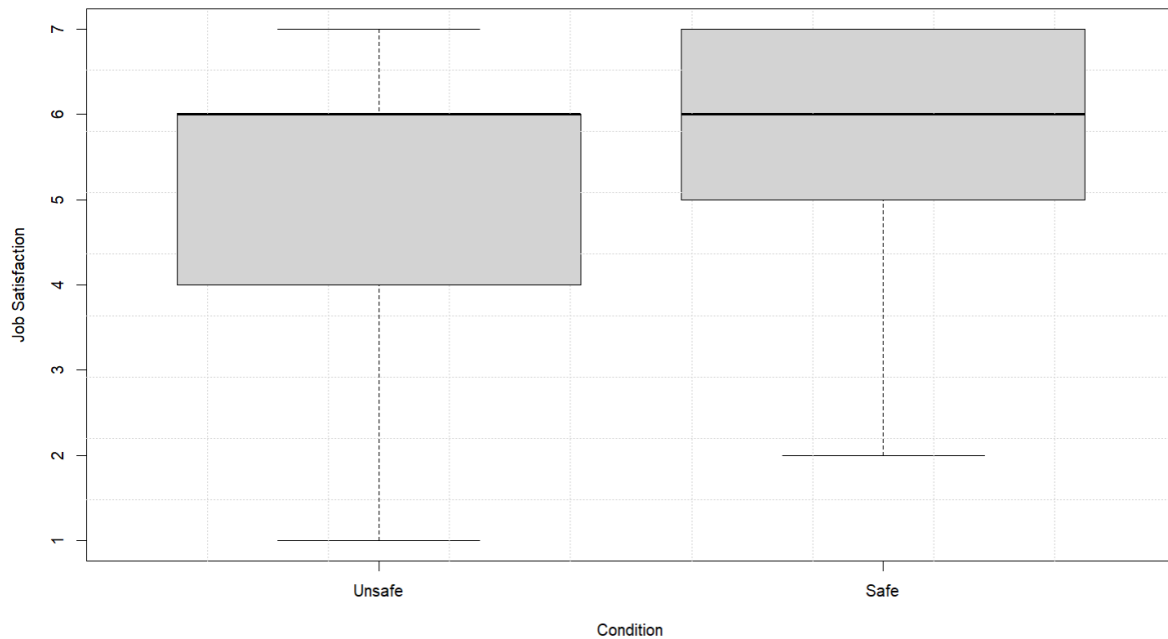
### **Hypotheses Testing**

#### ***Does Experienced SSC Affect JS?***

In line with H1, experienced SSC appears to affect job satisfaction, as indicated by a marginal significance and small to medium effect size ( $b = .49$ ,  $SE = .25$ ,  $p = .053$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ ). This suggests that participants who experience to be working in an unsafe SSC indeed report lower job satisfaction than participants who experience to be working in a safe SSC. Thus, H1 was accepted with caution.

**Figure 3.**

*Boxplots of Job Satisfaction According to SSC Condition – Unsafe vs Safe*



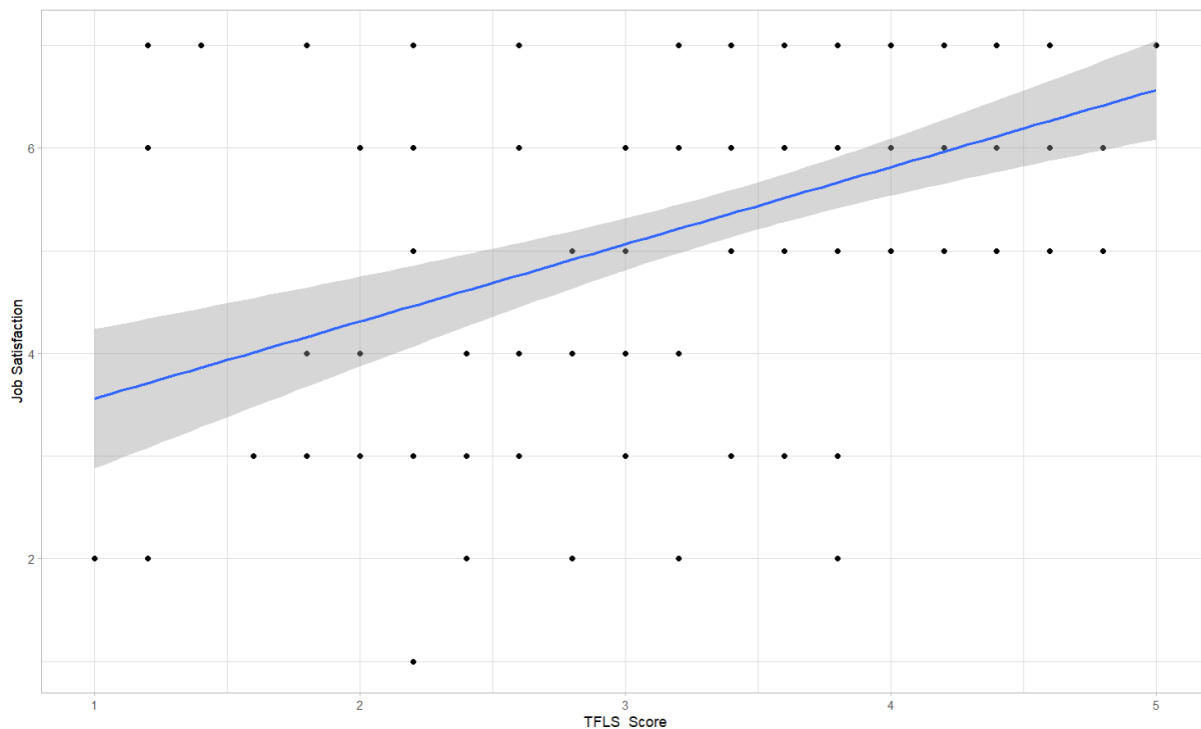
*Note.* The x-axis shows the SSC conditions unsafe versus safe. The y-axis shows the JS scores.

### ***Do Transformational and Transactional LS Affect JS***

As expected in H2a, the effect of transformational LS on job satisfaction was found to be statistically significant and positive, with a large effect size ( $b = .75$ ,  $SE = .13$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .2$ ), indicating that the more participants perceived their leader to employ a transformational LS, the higher job satisfaction they reported. Hence, H2a was accepted. Two observations were excluded due to missing values. These results are additionally illustrated in Figure 4.

**Figure 4.**

*Scatterplot of the Relationship Between Transformational LS and JS*

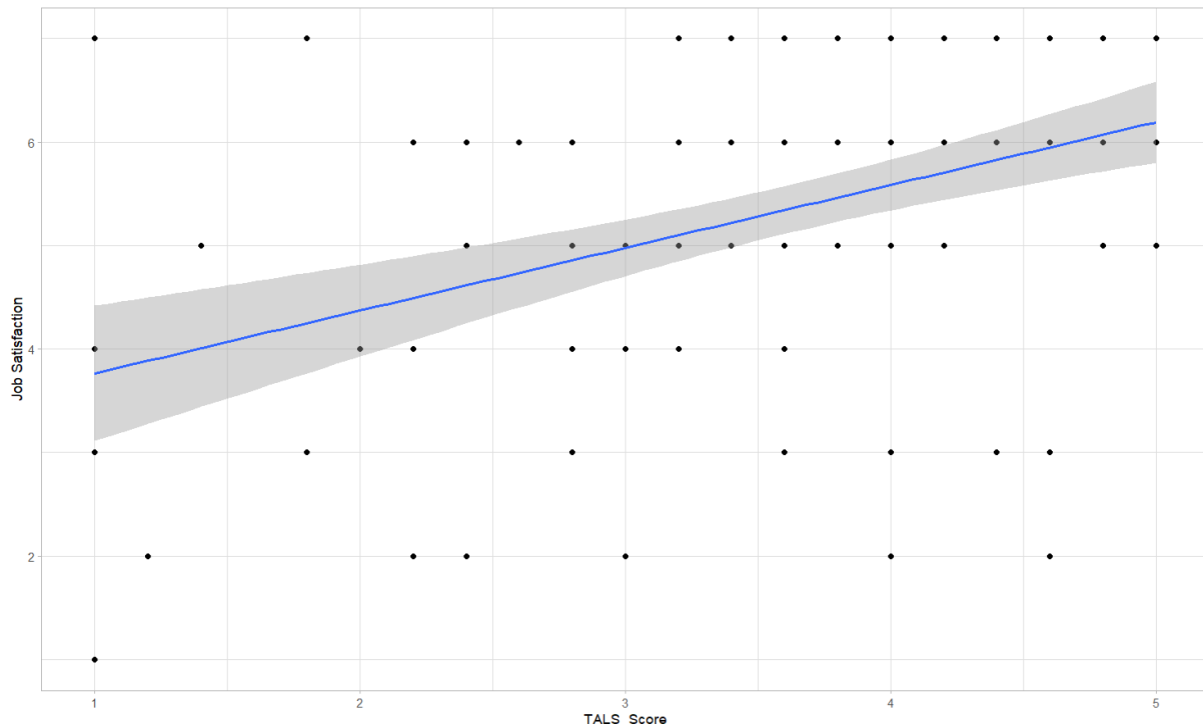


*Note.* The x-axis shows the TFLS Score, indicating transformational LS. The y-axis shows JS.

Contrary to H2b, the effect of transactional LS on job satisfaction was found to be significant and positive, with a large effect size ( $b = .61$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .17$ ), showing that the more participants perceived their leader to employ a transactional LS, the higher job satisfaction they reported, instead of lower job satisfaction as previously assumed. Thus, H2b was rejected. One observation was excluded due to a missing value. These results are further illustrated in Figure 5.

**Figure 5.**

*Scatterplot of the Relationship Between Transactional LS and JS.*



*Note.* The x-axis shows the TALS Score indicating transactional LS. The y-axis shows JS.

### ***Does Transformational LS Moderate the Relationship Between Experienced SSC and JS?***

Contrary to H3, we did not find an interaction effect between experienced SSC and transformational LS,  $b = -.36$ ,  $SE = .27$ , and  $p = .182$ . Additionally, there was no significant main effect of experienced SSC on job satisfaction,  $b = 1.46$ ,  $SE = .96$ ,  $p = .130$ . The effect of transformational LS on job satisfaction was significant and positive with  $b = 0.91$ ,  $SE = .2$ , and  $p < .001$ . Two observations were excluded due to missing values. These results are summarised in Table 3. The insignificant interaction suggests that transformational LS does not moderate the relationship between experienced SSC and JS. Therefore, the third hypothesis was rejected.

### ***Does Transactional LS Moderate the Relationship Between Experienced SSC and JS?***

Contrary to H4, we did not find an interaction effect between experienced SSC and transactional LS,  $b = -.12$ ,  $SE = .25$ ,  $p = .617$ . Moreover, the results presented a non-significant effect of experienced SSC on job satisfaction with  $b = .69$ ,  $SE = .95$ , and  $p = .468$ . The effect of transactional LS on JS was found to be significant and positive with  $b = 0.63$ ,  $SE = .15$  and  $p < .001$ . One observation was excluded due to missing values. Table 4 shows a



summary of these results. The insignificant interaction indicates that transactional LS does not moderate the relationship between experienced SSC and JS. Consequently, the fourth hypothesis was rejected.

### **Discussion**

This study investigated how employees' job satisfaction is impacted by experienced social safety climates at work. Additionally, we explored if and how transformational and transactional leadership styles influence that relationship. Our data revealed that while the social safety climate has no strong but possibly confirmed impact on job satisfaction, both transformational and transactional leadership styles facilitate employees' job satisfaction. They do not, however, affect any potential connection between social safety climates and job satisfaction. Therefore, this research suggests that the discussed leadership styles are valuable for organizations and employees in fostering job satisfaction. Social safety climates could have the same effect but this remains to be concluded with caution.

#### **The Impact of Experienced Social Safety Climates on Job Satisfaction**

Contrary to what was expected, experienced social safety did not strongly affect participants' job satisfaction, as participants' job satisfaction only marginally significantly differed depending on whether they experienced a safe versus unsafe social climate. This somewhat supports suggestions stemming from literature on the JD-R model, which states that the social dimension of job demands and resources can influence job satisfaction (Dollard, 2012; Han et al., 2020). An explanation for the weak influence may be that other dimensions of job demands and resources, such as the physical (e.g. heavy lifting) and organizational (e.g. job insecurity due to a fixed-term contract) dimensions, bear more impact on job satisfaction. For instance, social support as a job resource has been shown to not impact job satisfaction as it might not be strong enough to exert its positive effects over other variables (Wang et al., 2024). Counterintuitively, cognitive job demands seem to increase job satisfaction as well, suggesting that the nature of the job has a positive impact when it is considered challenging rather than impairing (Scanlan & Still, 2019). Job earnings also seem to increase job satisfaction (Yeh, 2015). Previous studies also suggest individual characteristics such as attitude and interest in working as more powerful predictors of job satisfaction (Faradila et al., 2020). These individual resources may be just as important in predicting job satisfaction as job resources (Wang et al., 2024). Therefore, they should be taken into account when further investigating social safety climates.

Furthermore, the marginal significance level, and considering that we did not reach full power with the limited participant number, give reason to assume that with sufficient power,

the data might yield clearer results, potentially confirming a significant impact of social safety climates on job satisfaction. This remains to be further investigated in future research.

Another aspect to consider is that while the manipulation of the social safety climate worked in affecting experienced social and psychological safety, it might not have been strong enough to make the condition a sufficiently reliable and effective predictor for job satisfaction. In other words, solely putting people in the mindset of safe versus unsafe social climates was not strong enough to affect how people generally appraise their jobs. Influences such as participants' (unintentional) awareness of the manipulation or a lack of mundane realism, referring to how much the made-up scenario represents the participants' actual experiences related to the given scenario, might have limited the predictive power of condition due to participants not being able to relate to the scenario (Chester & Lasko, 2020; Wilson et al., 2020).

### **The Impact of Transformational and Transactional Leadership on Job Satisfaction**

As expected, people who perceived their leader to engage in a transformational leadership style also reported higher job satisfaction which is thus in line with numerous previous research findings. However, people who perceived their leader to display a transactional leadership style reported higher job satisfaction as well which is opposite to what was hypothesised. This means that both leadership styles positively impact employees' job satisfaction.

Concerning transactional leadership, the literature seems to diverge. Some studies found no significant impact of the transactional leadership style on job satisfaction (Asghar & Oino, 2017; Sunarsi et al., 2021). Others have reported it to have a negative impact, such that it is negatively associated with job satisfaction, potentially due to transactional-style leaders being more concerned with achieving organizational goals and less with motivating their subordinates (Saleem, 2015). However, as in our research, transactional leadership has also been found to have a positive impact on job satisfaction, as indicated by a high positive correlation between the two (Lumbantoruan et al., 2020). This may be due to employees receiving rewards when performing well which may make them feel more appreciated and valued for their performance. This line of reasoning connects to Skopak and Hadzaihmetovic's (2022) suggestions as well, stating that contingent rewards stimulate job satisfaction. Additionally, taking into account our sample, participants predominantly work in stable and prestigious sectors in The Netherlands and Germany, such as finance or education. Our sample is also very well-educated, with most participants holding a Master's degree. This gives reason to assume that the majority of our sample receives contingent rewards, such as a high salary or

promotions, thus supporting job satisfaction. Hence, while our findings were different from what was expected, they contribute to research by highlighting the positive qualities of transactional leadership and their importance in fostering job satisfaction in employees.

### **The Influence of Transformational and Transactional Leadership on the Relationship Between Experienced Social Safety Climates and Job Satisfaction**

Contrary to what was hypothesised, neither having a transformational nor transactional leader buffered or amplified the effects of working in a socially safe versus unsafe climate on employees' job satisfaction. These findings are surprising considering the generally well-established independent impact of transformational and transactional leadership on job satisfaction, which, as previously mentioned, has been supported by our results.

In other contexts, transformational leadership has been shown to moderate the relationship between psychosocial risks due to work (e.g. workload) and psychosomatic disorders by buffering against said risks (Grau-Alberola et al., 2022). Similarly, transactional leadership has been found to negatively moderate in other settings, such as the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance (Aslam, 2015). However, when it comes to moderating any effect of employees' social environment at work, other factors could be more influential. Personal characteristics such as being highly career-oriented or having no or low managerial ranks have been found to strengthen the negative effects of workplace racial harassment – which can be considered indicative of an unsafe social safety climate – on job satisfaction (Stoermer et al., 2019). In a similar vein, personal aspects such as social anxiety or external locus of control can amplify the negative effects of workplace harassment (Van den Brande et al., 2021). In contrast, personal characteristics such as self-efficacy or job autonomy may be considered to buffer the negative effects of workplace harassment, suggesting that these aspects serve as coping mechanisms (Van den Brande et al., 2021). This implies a strong influence of individual differences in employees on characteristics of unsafe social climates at work. It is difficult to say whether any of these factors apply to our sample. Future research could consider also checking for personal characteristics to explore whether they bear more influence as moderators.

### **Practical Implications**

This study comes with numerous practical implications. First, while experienced social safety as a condition did not affect job satisfaction, the manipulation check revealed that if being put in the mindset of unsafe social climates, both social and psychological safety scores were significantly lower than when having been put into the mindset of safe social climates. This suggests that if simply being put in the mindset of such an experience, actually living this

experience may come with even more pronounced effects. In combination with other studies showing that social support increases job satisfaction and psychosocial safety climates positively impacting work outcomes, the importance of one's social environment at work for employee outcomes and well-being becomes apparent (Dollard, 2012; Sigursteinsdottir & Karlsdottir, 2022). This suggests that organizations should pay attention to their social workplace climate and invest in efforts to monitor and improve these so that employees and the organization at large can benefit as much as possible.

Moreover, this research adds to previous findings by highlighting the impact of transformational and transactional leadership on job satisfaction. Both leadership styles increase job satisfaction. Due to diverging findings regarding the valence of the influence of transactional leadership, organizations and leaders are advised to be mindful of the potentially negative effects it might have on job satisfaction, such as found in Saleem's study (2015). For instance, the transactional nature does not just include rewards for good work, but also punishments for insufficient work. If the transactions lay more on the side of punishments, it might lower the recipient's job satisfaction. However, both leadership styles commonly seem to improve job satisfaction. Hence, organizations and leaders should consider working on adopting these leadership styles.

### **Strengths, Limitations, and Further Research**

As this study employed a between-subjects experimental design aimed at investigating causality – and being the first one to do so – an important pre-condition for the investigation was to manipulate participants' experienced social safety climate. A strength of this research is that this was done successfully. Considering that a general trend indicating an influence of experienced social safety on job satisfaction could be observed, the manipulation proves to be useful. Another strength is the reliability of our scales. All used scales were highly reliable which adds power to the study design and future studies may take inspiration and replicate our methods. Last but not least, with participants coming from an array of different countries and working in various sectors we have an extensive research scope.

Various limitations must be considered as well. Circling back to the finding on experienced social safety as an influence, it must be considered that the result was only marginally significant. Hence, the general trend should be accepted with caution. It may be that social safety climates simply do not have a strong impact on job satisfaction, but the trend suggests that the impact might be there. Considering that we did not reach sufficient power with our sample size, future research should ensure a large enough number of participants so that the data may yield clearer results which can confirm or refute our results.

Connected to the previous limitation of the insufficient number of participants, the reliability and validity of our results are compromised. Furthermore, the generalisability to the population at large is limited as with the insufficient number of participants and a mainly Western, highly educated sample, we do not have a representative sample. The insufficient number of respondents may have been caused by not consenting the second time after being debriefed about the manipulation. Furthermore, the survey was conducted in English only, posing a potential language barrier to some. In addition, we mainly used convenience sampling, which also might have impaired recruiting participants. To overcome this limitation, future research should utilise more strategic sampling methods and consider surveying in other languages as well. This is crucial to provide reliability, validity, and generalisability of results.

Moreover, caution should be exercised when applying the results to practice in the real world. Experimental manipulation provides a fake scenario that can potentially look very different to how things are in reality, where various other influences are at work (Levitt & List, 2007). This can limit the generalisability of results as well. If experimental manipulation were to be used in future studies on social safety climates, it is advised to focus on making the manipulations as realistic as possible. An idea could be to manipulate participants' actual social safety climate at work. It would require more effort and resources, but also provide more reliable information on causality.

Last but not least, a general direction for future research should be to conduct more studies on the dynamics and characteristics of social safety climates in the workplace, using the KNAW (2022) or a comparable definition of social safety to ensure reliability and generalisability. It is also recommended to investigate the potential long-term effects of social safety climates on employees and organizations because social safety climates may be susceptible to change, so what is true at one point in time may not be true anymore at a later point in time. Potential effects could gain or lose strength over time. Investigating these trends can provide critical insights for practice, regarding where and when to concentrate efforts for supporting employee job satisfaction, which may help improve organizations' success.

## **Conclusion**

This study highlights the importance of further investigating social safety climates in the workplace to discover their impact on employee outcomes such as job satisfaction. As social safety at work is an upcoming topic in social and organizational psychology, expanding research is crucial to establish best practices that benefit organizations and their employees. Additionally, transformational and transactional leadership styles prove to be effective in fostering job satisfaction which highlights the importance of leaders and how they lead and

interact with their subordinates. This knowledge serves to benefit organizations and leaders in enhancing their workplace culture and ultimately supporting employee well-being.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A

#### *Qualtrics Survey*

#### **Organisational Safety Climates and Their Effects on Work Outcomes**

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#### Start of Block: Purpose of the study and informed consent

##### **Informed consent**

Dear Participant,

For our Master's thesis research, we are curious to hear about your experiences with social safety at work.

##### **Purpose:**

Even 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 socially safe work environments and their consequences in organizations. 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.

##### **Your participation:**

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 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.

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 **ca. 15 minutes** to complete. The questionnaire contains two attention checks to ensure reliable results.

To participate, it is crucial that:

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

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-fetsocwet@uu.nl).

If you agree, **please click "Yes" below**. If you do not wish to give permission, you can close the questionnaire. By clicking "Yes", you indicate that you have read the information, that you meet the study requirements, and that you agree to participate. We very much appreciate your participation!

Would you like to participate in this study?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Dear Participant, For our Master's thesis research, we are curious to hear about your experiences... = No*

**End of Block: Purpose of the study and informed consent**

---

**Start of Block: Demographics**



What is your age in years?

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---

What gender do you identify most with?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)
- 



What is your country of origin?

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

---

What sector do you work in?

- Healthcare & Social work (1)
- Water supply, Energy supply, and Waste management (2)
- Education (3)
- Government (4)
- Wholesale & Retail trade (5)
- Manufacturing (6)
- Real estate (7)
- Public administration & Services (8)
- Information & Communication (9)
- Technology (10)
- Financial institutions (11)
- Scientific activities (12)
- Other (13)

---

Do you have a supervisory position within your organization?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

---

\*

What are your average working **hours** per week?

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How many **months** have you worked for your current organization already?

For reference, here are some benchmarks to facilitate your calculation:

1 year = 12 months

3 years = 36 months

3,5 years = 42 months

5 years = 60 months

10 years = 120 months

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**End of Block: Demographics**

---

**Start of Block: Manipulations - Safe Condition**

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

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Page Break

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 behaviour 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 recognise 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 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 behaviours 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."



Thank you for reading the provided information. Now please name **three situations** where you felt socially and psychologically safe yourself in your organization. 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.

Situation 1 (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 2 (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 3 (3) \_\_\_\_\_

**End of Block: Manipulations - Safe Condition**

---

**Start of Block: Manipulations - Unsafe Condition**

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

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Page Break \_\_\_\_\_

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 behaviour 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 behaviours 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."

Thank you for reading the provided information. Now please name **three situations** where you felt socially and psychologically unsafe yourself in your organization. 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 unsafe.

- Situation 1 (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- Situation 2 (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- Situation 3 (3) \_\_\_\_\_

**End of Block: Manipulations - Unsafe Condition**

---

**Start of Block: Manipulation Check**



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



I am confident that reports or complaints about socially undesirable behaviour will be handled properly. (4)

I do not feel threatened by the behaviour of others in my organization. (5)

Click "completely disagree" (furthest left) on this item to show that you are paying attention. (6)

I feel confident to share my opinions and views without the risk of being insulted, humiliated, or silenced. (7)

Please rate the following statements.





The people  
in my  
organization  
value others'  
unique skills  
and talents.

(6)

As an  
employee in  
my  
organization,  
one is able  
to bring up  
problems  
and tough  
issues. (7)

**End of Block: Manipulation Check**

---

**Start of Block: Moderators**

**Emotional Intelligence:** Please rate the following statements.



I am usually able to find ways to control my emotions when I want to.  
(6)

I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions.  
(7)

On the whole, I am able to deal with stress. (8)

I usually find it difficult to keep myself motivated.  
(9)

I believe that I'm full of personal strengths.  
(10)

I generally believe that things will work out fine in my life.  
(11)

I tend to  
"back  
down"  
even if I  
know I'm  
right. (12)

---

Page Break

**Transformational Leadership Style:** Please rate the following statements on the leadership in your organization.

	1 - Completely Disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Completely Agree (5)
My boss spends time teaching and coaching me. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My boss seeks differing perspectives from me when solving problems. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My boss acts in ways that build my respect. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My boss talks to me about their most important values and beliefs. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My boss talks optimistically about the future to me. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Transactional Leadership Style:** Please rate the following statements on the leadership in your organization.

	1 - Completely Disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Completely Agree (5)
My boss always gives me positive feedback when I perform well. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My boss gives me special recognition when my work is very good. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My boss commends me when I do a better-than-average job. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My boss personally compliments me when I do outstanding work. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My boss frequently does not acknowledge my good performance. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Moderators

Start of Block: Outcome variables

**Job Satisfaction:** Please rate this statement about your job satisfaction.

	1 - Completely Disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 - Completely Agree (7)
Generally, I am satisfied with my job. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Page Break

**Work Performance:** Please rate these statements about your work.

In the past 3 months...

	1 - Rarely (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Always (5)
... I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... my planning was optimal. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... I kept in mind the results that I had to achieve in my work. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... I was able to separate main issues from side issues at work. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... I was able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Turnover Intentions:** Lastly, please rate these statements about your future at your organisation.

	1 - Strongly Disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Strongly Agree (5)
In the next few years, I intend to leave this organization. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the next few years, I expect to leave this organization. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think about leaving this organization. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to work in this organization until retirement. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Outcome variables

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Start of Block: Debriefing

What is your highest completed level of education?

- Less than secondary (high) school graduation or equivalent (1)
  - Secondary (high) school graduation or equivalent (2)
  - Bachelor's degree or equivalent (3)
  - Master's degree or equivalent (4)
  - Doctoral Degree or equivalent (5)
- 

### **Debriefing**

As a last step, **please read the debriefing and answer the question below.**

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 emphasised **either** how organizations increasingly focus on fostering socially and psychologically safe environments, **or** how organizations 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 organizations in this context. This is also one of the main reasons why we are conducting this study. We used this manipulation to investigate the effect of working in a socially and psychologically safe environment on positive work outcomes. This has practical relevance for organizations and their employees as our research may highlight the importance of creating safe working environments.

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**Consent #2:** After having learned that this study used manipulation/deception, you have the right to withdraw from the study. By clicking "I will still participate." you indicate that you still agree to participate. By clicking "I want to withdraw." you indicate that you no longer

agree to participation and your responses will be excluded from this study.

**Please indicate below and then click on the arrow on the bottom.**

I will still participate (1)

I want to withdraw (2)

---

Page Break

Contacts Thank you for your trust, time, and participation! **Click on the arrow on the bottom** to record your response.

If you have any questions or feedback about this study, feel free to contact us via mail: f.vanderrijst@students.uu.nl or m.m.terborg@students.uu.nl or fill in the box below.

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).

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Comments If you have any remarks or comments, feel free to write them down here.

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**End of Block: Debriefing**

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**Appendix B****Table 2.***Means, standard deviations, and correlations*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	35.42	12.85									
2. Gender	0.42	0.50	-.06								
3. Nationality	0.55	0.50	.20*	-.02							
4. Sector	0.24	0.43	.05	.12	-.04						
5. Condition	0.52	0.50	-.02	-.06	.15	.10					
6. SS Score	5.19	1.14	.20*	.17	.32**	.04	.23**				
7. PS Score	4.97	1.05	-.09	.13	.27**	-.02	.21*	.68**			
8. TFLS Score	3.41	0.87	-.06	.04	.36**	.10	.23**	.46**	.48**		
9. TALS Score	3.64	1.00	.07	.05	.33**	.08	.21*	.46**	.40**	.62**	
10. Job Satisfaction	5.38	1.46	-.19	.07	.35**	-.00	.17	.58**	.64**	.44**	.41**

*Note.* *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Correlations were computed with a 95% confidence interval.

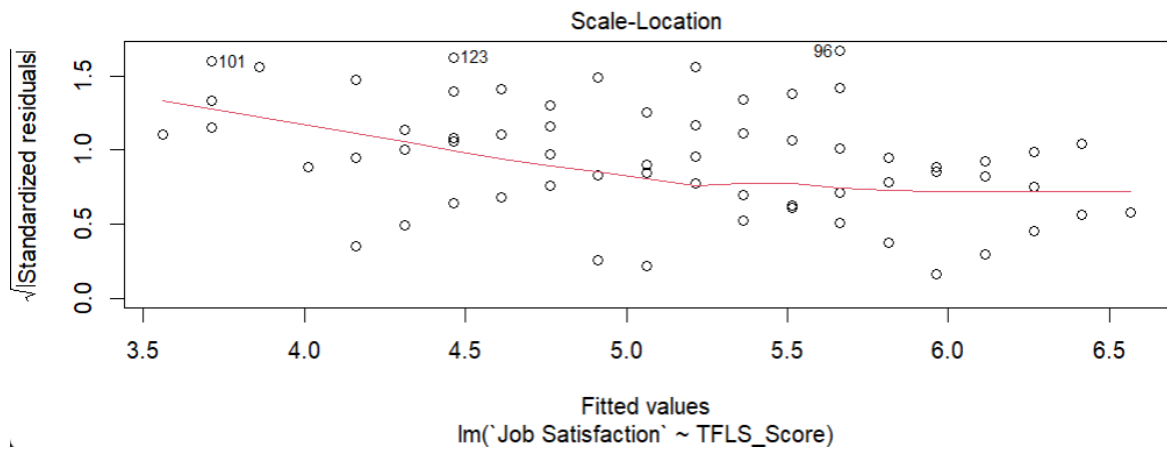
The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). \*

indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . Gender was dummy-coded with men vs. women. Nationality was dummy-coded with Dutch vs. rest. Sector was dummy-coded with Financial sector vs. rest.

## Appendix C

**Figure 1.**

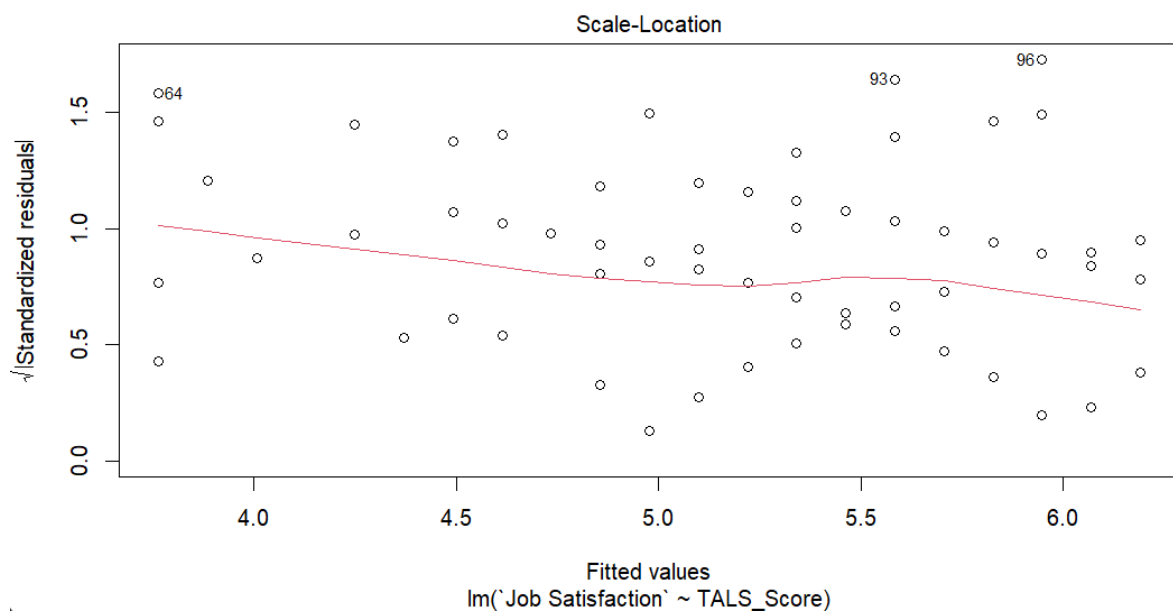
*Model 2: Check for the Homoskedasticity Assumption*



*Note.* The variability of residual points seems to decrease with an increase in the outcome variable, indicating heteroscedasticity.

**Figure 2.**

*Model 3: Check for Homoskedasticity Assumption*



*Note.* The variability of residual points seems to decrease with an increase in the outcome variable, indicating heteroscedasticity.

