



Psychological Safety in the Workplace: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Psychological safety in the workplace, a key concept in Organizational Behavior, refers to employees' perception that they can speak up, share ideas, and take interpersonal risks without fear of negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999). As organizations face increasing complexity and demand for innovation, psychological safety has become essential in fostering collaboration, learning, and employee well-being (Jin et al., 2024; Wang, 2021). This review aims to synthesize existing literature on psychological safety, focusing on its antecedents, outcomes, and relevance across different organizational contexts. A systematic search was conducted using databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and the Web of Science. Inclusion criteria covered peer-reviewed journal articles published in English between 2015 and 2025, while non-scholarly sources were excluded. The review identifies several key themes: the critical role of inclusive leadership (Shankar et al., 2025; Rabiul et al., 2025), the importance of trust and open communication (Hallam et al., 2023; Hunt et al., 2021), and the positive impact of psychological safety on team performance, innovation, and employee engagement (Jin et al., 2024; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025). However, findings also reveal that hierarchical structures and cultural factors, particularly high-power distance, may hinder its development (Hofstede, 2001; Ip et al., 2025). Despite extensive research, gaps remain in understanding psychological safety in non-Western contexts, its long-term organizational impact, and its application in remote or hybrid work environments (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023; Dong & Xing, 2025). Future research should address these limitations to enhance its practical implementation.

Keywords: psychological safety, organizational behavior, employee voice, inclusive leadership, team performance, workplace climate

Introduction

Psychological safety in the workplace has emerged as a critical concept within Organizational Behavior, particularly in the context of increasingly dynamic, complex, and knowledge-driven organizations. Originally conceptualized by Edmondson (1999), psychological safety refers to a shared belief among team members that the workplace is safe for interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999; American Psychological Association, 2023). This includes the ability to speak up with ideas, ask questions, admit mistakes, and challenge existing practices without fear of negative consequences such as embarrassment, rejection, or punishment. As organizations shift toward collaborative work structures and innovation-oriented strategies, psychological safety has become a foundational element for fostering open communication and continuous learning (Newman et al., 2017).



The growing relevance of psychological safety is closely tied to the evolving nature of work. Modern organizations are increasingly reliant on teamwork, collaboration across departments, and knowledge sharing. In such environments, employees are expected not only to perform tasks but also to contribute ideas, provide feedback, and engage in problem-solving. However, these behaviors require a supportive climate where individuals feel valued and respected. Without psychological safety, employees may withhold information, avoid participation, or remain silent about potential issues, ultimately hindering organizational effectiveness. Thus, psychological safety is not merely a desirable trait but a necessary condition for high-performing teams.

The importance of psychological safety extends across multiple fields, including business management, public administration, education, and healthcare. In business organizations, it has been linked to improved team performance, innovation, and employee engagement (Jin et al., 2024; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025). Employees who feel psychologically safe are more likely to share knowledge, collaborate effectively, and take initiative. In public administration, psychological safety supports transparency, ethical decision-making, and responsiveness to public needs. In educational settings, it encourages student participation, critical thinking, and a willingness to learn from mistakes. Similarly, in healthcare, psychological safety plays a crucial role in reducing medical errors and improving patient outcomes (Grailey et al., 2021; Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2025), as it allows healthcare professionals to speak up about concerns without fear of blame or retribution. These diverse applications highlight the broad significance of psychological safety as a driver of both individual and organizational success.

Despite its recognized importance, fostering psychological safety remains a challenge for many organizations. Factors such as hierarchical structures, authoritarian leadership styles, and cultural norms can inhibit open communication (Hofstede, 2001; Ip et al., 2025) and discourage employee voice. For instance, in cultures characterized by high power distance, employees may be less likely to question authority or express dissenting opinions. Additionally, organizational climates that emphasize competition over collaboration may undermine trust and reduce psychological safety. Leaders who demonstrate inclusiveness, empathy, and openness can create an environment where employees feel safe to contribute (Shankar et al., 2025; Rabiul et al., 2025). Practices such as encouraging feedback, acknowledging mistakes as learning opportunities, and promoting mutual respect are essential for cultivating psychological safety within teams.

Given the increasing attention to this concept, there is a need to systematically examine the existing body of literature on psychological safety in the workplace. This literature review aims to synthesize current research findings, identify key themes and patterns, and evaluate the factors that influence the development and outcomes of psychological safety. Specifically, the review seeks to explore the antecedents of psychological safety, such as leadership behavior and organizational culture, as well as its consequences, including employee performance, engagement, innovation, and well-being. Furthermore, the review aims to assess how psychological safety is understood and applied across different organizational and cultural contexts.

To achieve these objectives, the literature review is guided by the following research questions:

1. What factors contribute to the development of psychological safety in the workplace?
2. How does psychological safety influence employee behavior, team performance, and organizational outcomes?
3. What barriers and challenges do organizations face in fostering psychological safety?
4. What gaps exist in the current literature, and what areas require further research?

By addressing these questions, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of psychological safety and its implications for modern organizations. The findings are expected to contribute to both academic knowledge and practical applications, offering insights for managers, policymakers, and researchers seeking to create more inclusive, innovative, and resilient workplaces.

Methodology



This study adopts a systematic literature review approach to examine psychological safety in the workplace. A systematic review is characterized by a structured, transparent, and replicable process of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing existing research. Compared to narrative reviews, this method minimizes bias through clearly defined procedures and inclusion criteria, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of findings. The approach is guided by established principles from Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses or PRISMA, which provide a standardized framework for conducting and reporting systematic reviews.

Databases and Sources of Literature. To ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant studies, multiple academic databases were utilized. These include Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, which are widely recognized for indexing high-quality peer-reviewed research across disciplines. Additional sources such as ScienceDirect and JSTOR were also consulted to capture interdisciplinary perspectives, particularly from fields such as management, psychology, education, and healthcare. The use of multiple databases reduces the likelihood of publication bias and increases the breadth of literature included in the review.

Search Strategy and Keywords. A rigorous and systematic search strategy was employed using a structured combination of keywords, Boolean operators, and search refinement techniques to ensure comprehensive retrieval of relevant studies. The primary keywords were selected based on the core constructs of the review and included "psychological safety," "workplace psychological safety," "employee voice," "team learning," "organizational climate," "interpersonal risk-taking," and "leadership behavior." Secondary and related terms such as "team performance," "employee engagement," "innovation," "organizational culture," and "inclusive leadership" were also incorporated to capture studies examining the antecedents and outcomes of psychological safety across diverse organizational contexts.

These terms were systematically combined using Boolean operators to maximize both precision and recall. The operator AND was used to narrow results to studies addressing multiple constructs simultaneously, while OR was applied to broaden the search to capture synonymous or related terms. The operator NOT was additionally employed in select instances to exclude irrelevant fields such as purely clinical or educational psychology contexts unrelated to organizational settings. Representative search strings include:

- "psychological safety" AND "workplace"
- "psychological safety" AND ("employee performance" OR "innovation")
- "team psychological safety" AND "leadership"
- "employee voice" AND "organizational climate" AND "psychological safety"
- "psychological safety" AND ("remote work" OR "hybrid work" OR "virtual teams")
- "inclusive leadership" AND "psychological safety" AND "team performance"

To further enhance the breadth and sensitivity of the search, truncation symbols (e.g., "organiz*" to capture both "organizational" and "organization") and spelling variations (e.g., "organisational" vs. "organizational") were applied across all databases, accounting for differences in British and American English conventions. Phrase searching using quotation marks was consistently used to ensure that multi-word constructs were retrieved as complete units rather than as isolated terms. Additionally, subject-specific thesaurus terms and database indexing vocabularies — such as MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) terms where applicable — were consulted to align search strings with the classification systems of individual databases, thereby reducing the risk of relevant studies being overlooked due to inconsistent terminology across disciplines.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria. To maintain consistency and relevance, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established prior to the screening process. Studies were included if they met the following criteria: (1) published in peer-reviewed academic journals; (2) written in English; (3) focused on psychological safety within workplace or organizational settings; and (4) published within the selected timeframe of 2015 to 2025. Both quantitative and qualitative studies were considered to allow for a comprehensive understanding of the topic.



Exclusion criteria included: (1) non-peer-reviewed articles such as opinion pieces, editorials, and blog posts; (2) studies not directly related to workplace contexts (e.g., purely educational or clinical settings without organizational relevance); (3) duplicate records; and (4) articles with insufficient methodological rigor or incomplete data. These criteria ensured that only high-quality and relevant studies were included in the final analysis.

Timeframe of the Study. The review focuses on literature published between 2015 and 2025. This timeframe was selected to capture recent developments and contemporary perspectives on psychological safety, particularly in light of evolving work environments such as remote work, digital collaboration, and organizational transformation. While earlier foundational studies were acknowledged, the primary emphasis was placed on recent empirical research to ensure the relevance of findings.

Screening and Selection Process. The screening and selection process followed a rigorous PRISMA-style flow — consistent with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines established by Moher et al. (2009) — to ensure a systematic, transparent, and reproducible approach to identifying and selecting relevant studies. This structured multi-phase process was designed to minimize selection bias and maximize the methodological integrity of the final sample.

In the first phase, a comprehensive and exhaustive database search across Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar yielded an initial pool of 72 articles. These records were retrieved based on the predefined search strings and keyword combinations outlined in the search strategy, ensuring that the initial identification phase was both broad enough to capture the full scope of relevant literature and sufficiently targeted to exclude clearly irrelevant fields. Following this initial retrieval, a systematic deduplication process was conducted, resulting in the removal of 9 duplicate records that had appeared across multiple databases. This step reduced the working pool to 63 unique articles, each representing a distinct and independently identified source.

In the second phase, all 63 remaining articles were subjected to a structured title and abstract screening process, during which each record was evaluated against the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. This screening was conducted independently and systematically to ensure consistency in judgment across all records. At this stage, 13 studies were excluded on the grounds of irrelevance to the core construct of psychological safety in workplace or organizational settings, or failure to meet one or more of the established inclusion criteria. This reduced the pool to 50 articles that were deemed potentially eligible for inclusion in the review.

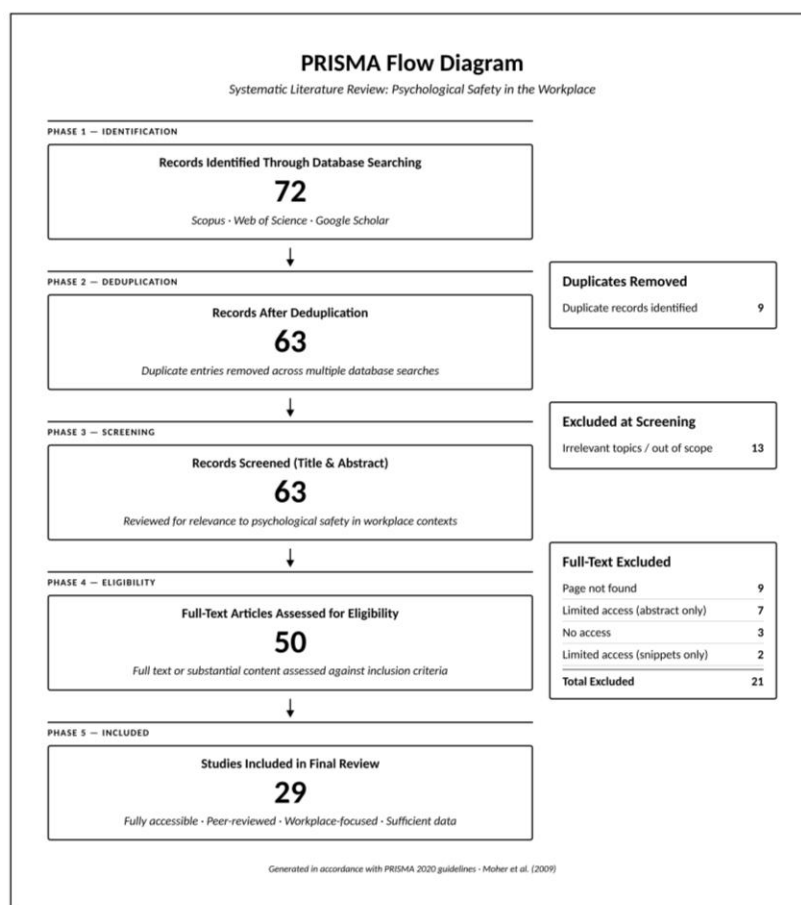
In the third and most rigorous phase, all 50 remaining articles underwent a comprehensive full-text review to assess their relevance, methodological quality, and accessibility. This stage involved a detailed evaluation of each study's research design, sample characteristics, analytical approach, and alignment with the thematic focus of the review. During this phase, 21 articles were excluded for a combination of practical and methodological reasons, including inaccessible full texts due to pages not being found ($n = 9$), limited access restricted to abstract only ($n = 7$), complete lack of access ($n = 3$), and limited access providing snippets only ($n = 2$), rendering full methodological appraisal impossible. Following this final exclusion stage, 29 studies were confirmed for inclusion in the final synthesis — all of which were fully accessible, peer-reviewed, workplace-focused, and contained sufficient data to support meaningful thematic analysis and evidence-based conclusions.

The selection process can be summarized as follows:

- Records identified through database searching: 72
- Duplicate records removed: 9
- Records screened (title and abstract): 63
- Records excluded: 13
- Full-text articles assessed for eligibility: 50
- Full-text articles excluded: 21
- Studies included in final review: 29



Figure 1. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses Flow Diagram



This structured screening process enhances the transparency and reproducibility of the review.

Data Extraction and Synthesis. Relevant data from the selected studies were systematically extracted and organized into key categories, including author(s), year of publication, research design, sample characteristics, key findings, and identified themes. A thematic analysis approach was employed to synthesize the findings, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns and relationships across studies. Themes such as leadership influence, communication climate, team dynamics, and organizational culture were analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of psychological safety in the workplace.

In summary, this systematic methodology ensures a rigorous and transparent review process, providing a strong foundation for analyzing the current state of research on psychological safety. By adhering to structured procedures and established guidelines such as PRISMA, the study enhances the credibility and academic quality of its findings.

Systematic Review of Literature

To provide a comprehensive and analytically rigorous understanding of psychological safety in the workplace, the reviewed studies are organized into interconnected thematic areas rather than presented as individual article summaries. This decision reflects a deliberate methodological choice: thematic synthesis moves beyond the descriptive cataloging of individual findings to enable a higher-order analysis that reveals patterns, relationships, contradictions, and emerging trends embedded across the broader body of literature. Rather than treating each



study as an isolated contribution, this approach situates findings within a cumulative intellectual conversation, allowing for a more nuanced and integrative understanding of how psychological safety operates, develops, and produces outcomes across diverse organizational settings.

The analysis draws on studies spanning multiple industries — including business, healthcare, education, and public administration — and incorporates a range of methodological approaches, from large-scale quantitative surveys and experimental designs to qualitative case studies and systematic reviews. This diversity of context and method strengthens the analytical depth of the synthesis, as it allows for the identification of findings that hold across different organizational environments as well as those that are sensitive to specific cultural, structural, or situational conditions. Where the evidence converges, conclusions are drawn with greater confidence; where studies diverge or contradict one another, these tensions are examined critically rather than resolved artificially, reflecting the genuine complexity of the construct.

Through this process of thematic analysis, four major and interconnected themes emerged from the literature as the primary organizing frameworks for understanding psychological safety in the workplace. The first theme examines leadership and the development of psychological safety, exploring how leader behaviors — particularly inclusive, empathetic, and vulnerability-modeling practices — shape the interpersonal climate within which psychological safety either flourishes or falters. The second theme addresses communication, trust, and team dynamics, investigating the relational and interactional mechanisms through which psychological safety is established, reinforced, or undermined at the team level. The third theme focuses on organizational culture and structural influences, analyzing how broader institutional values, norms, hierarchical arrangements, and formal systems either enable or obstruct the development of psychologically safe environments. The fourth and final theme synthesizes the outcomes of psychological safety on performance, innovation, and well-being, drawing together evidence on the individual, team, and organizational consequences of operating in (or being denied) a psychologically safe workplace. Together, these four themes form an integrated analytical framework through which the current state of knowledge on psychological safety can be comprehensively examined and critically evaluated.

Theme 1: Leadership and the Development of Psychological Safety. Across a wide body of research, leadership consistently emerges as one of the most influential factors in shaping psychological safety within teams and organizations (Artinger et al., 2025; Shankar et al., 2025; Rabiul et al., 2025; Chen et al., 2019). Studies converge on the idea that leadership behaviors directly affect whether employees feel safe to engage in interpersonal risk-taking (Kobayashi, 2025). In particular, inclusive leadership — characterized by openness, accessibility, and appreciation of employee contributions — has been strongly associated with higher levels of psychological safety (Shankar et al., 2025; Dong & Xing, 2025; Li & Tan, 2023; Khairy et al., 2023). Leaders who actively solicit input, listen attentively, and respond constructively to feedback create an environment where employees feel valued and respected (Rabiul et al., 2025).

This aligns with the foundational framework of Edmondson (1999), which emphasizes that psychological safety is largely shaped by interpersonal interactions, particularly those involving authority figures. Contemporary studies expand on this perspective by demonstrating that leadership behaviors influence not only individual perceptions but also collective team norms (Artinger et al., 2025; Kobayashi, 2025). When leaders model vulnerability — such as admitting their own mistakes or uncertainties — they signal that it is acceptable for others to do the same, thereby reinforcing a culture of openness (Shankar et al., 2025).

However, literature also highlights important nuances. While inclusive leadership is generally associated with positive outcomes, its effectiveness may vary depending on contextual factors such as organizational structure and cultural norms (Dong & Xing, 2025; Artinger et al., 2025). In highly hierarchical environments, even well-intentioned leaders may struggle to overcome deeply ingrained power dynamics that discourage employee voice (Rabiul et al., 2025). Similarly, in cultures with high power distance, employees may interpret leader openness differently, potentially limiting its impact on psychological safety (Hofstede, 2001).



Another key trend in the literature is the shift from viewing leadership as an individual attribute to understanding it as a distributed or shared process (Kobayashi, 2025). Studies increasingly suggest that psychological safety is not solely dependent on formal leaders but can also be influenced by peer leadership and team-level interactions (de Lissier et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2019). This perspective emphasizes that all members of a team contribute to the creation of a psychologically safe environment (Hallam et al., 2023).

Despite broad agreement on the importance of leadership, some studies caution against over-reliance on leadership as the primary driver of psychological safety (Artinger et al., 2025). Organizational systems, including performance evaluation, reward mechanisms, and communication structures, can either reinforce or undermine leader behaviors (Wang, 2021). For instance, a leader may encourage open dialogue, but if employees are penalized for mistakes through formal evaluation systems, psychological safety is unlikely to be sustained (Plezia & Moczydłowska, 2025). This suggests that leadership must be supported by aligned organizational practices to be effective (Schein, 2010).

Theme 2: Communication, Trust, and Team Dynamics. A second major theme centers on the role of communication and trust as foundational elements of psychological safety. Across multiple studies, open and transparent communication is consistently identified as a key mechanism through which psychological safety is established and maintained (Dong et al., 2024; Hallam et al., 2023; Hunt et al., 2021). Teams that engage in frequent dialogue, constructive feedback, and active listening tend to exhibit higher levels of psychological safety (de Lissier et al., 2024).

Trust plays a central role in this process and is often described as both an antecedent and an outcome of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999; Khairy et al., 2023; Zavaglia, 2023). When employees trust their colleagues and leaders, they are more willing to share ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes (Hunt et al., 2021). At the same time, environments that support such behaviors further strengthen trust, creating a reinforcing cycle (Hallam et al., 2023). This reciprocal relationship suggests that psychological safety and trust are deeply interconnected and evolve together over time (de Lissier et al., 2024).

Research also highlights the importance of team norms in shaping communication patterns (Dong et al., 2024). Teams that establish norms of respect, inclusivity, and openness are more likely to create psychologically safe environments (Hunt et al., 2021). These norms influence how team members respond to one another's contributions, particularly in situations involving disagreement or uncertainty (Hallam et al., 2023). Constructive responses to diverse perspectives encourage further participation, while dismissive or critical reactions may discourage future engagement (de Lissier et al., 2024).

However, the literature presents some contradictions regarding the role of conflict in psychologically safe teams. While many studies argue that psychological safety enables constructive task-related conflict — leading to better decision-making and innovation — others suggest that conflict, if not properly managed, can undermine trust and reduce psychological safety (Hunt et al., 2021; Dong et al., 2024). This tension highlights the importance of distinguishing between productive and destructive forms of conflict. Psychological safety appears to facilitate the former while mitigating the negative effects of the latter, but only when supported by effective conflict management practices (Hallam et al., 2023).

Another emerging trend is the role of virtual communication in shaping psychological safety. With the rise of remote and hybrid work environments, communication patterns have shifted significantly (Dong & Xing, 2025). Some studies suggest that digital communication tools can both enhance and hinder psychological safety (Dong & Xing, 2025; Santana et al., 2025). On one hand, they may provide alternative channels for expression, particularly for individuals who are less comfortable speaking in face-to-face settings (Dong & Xing, 2025). On the other hand, the lack of non-verbal cues and potential for misinterpretation may create barriers to trust and openness (Santana et al., 2025). This indicates that communication dynamics in virtual settings require deliberate management to sustain psychological safety (Dong et al., 2024).



Theme 3: Organizational Culture and Structural Influences. Organizational culture and structural factors are widely recognized as critical determinants of psychological safety (Schein, 2010; Wang, 2021; Newman et al., 2017). The literature consistently demonstrates that cultures characterized by openness, learning orientation, and mutual respect are more conducive to psychological safety (Schein, 2010). In such environments, mistakes are viewed as opportunities for learning rather than grounds for punishment, encouraging employees to take risks and experiment with new ideas (Wang, 2021; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025).

Conversely, cultures that emphasize blame, competition, or rigid hierarchies tend to inhibit psychological safety (Schein, 2010). In these settings, employees may fear negative consequences for speaking up, leading to silence and reduced engagement (Ip et al., 2025). The influence of culture is particularly evident in how organizations respond to errors and failures. Supportive responses that focus on learning and improvement contribute to psychological safety, while punitive responses undermine it (Wang, 2021; Grailey et al., 2021).

Cultural context at the societal level also plays a significant role. Drawing on the work of Hofstede (2001), studies suggest that psychological safety is influenced by cultural dimensions such as power distance and collectivism (Ip et al., 2025). In high power-distance cultures, employees may be less likely to challenge authority or express dissenting opinions, even in environments that encourage openness (Hofstede, 2001). This highlights the importance of considering cultural context when implementing strategies to enhance psychological safety (Shankar et al., 2025).

In addition to culture, organizational structures and systems are critical in shaping psychological safety (Schein, 2010). Formal mechanisms such as reporting systems, performance evaluations, and reward structures can either support or undermine a psychologically safe environment (Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025). For example, systems that reward innovation and learning are likely to reinforce psychological safety, while those that penalize failure may discourage risk-taking (Wang, 2021; Ip et al., 2025).

The literature also emphasizes the importance of alignment between culture and structure (Schein, 2010). Organizations that promote openness and collaboration at the cultural level must ensure that their formal systems are consistent with these values (Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025). Misalignment between espoused values and actual practices can create confusion and reduce trust, ultimately undermining psychological safety (Wang, 2021).

Theme 4: Outcomes of Psychological Safety on Performance, Innovation, and Well-being. A substantial body of research highlights the positive outcomes associated with psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999; Jin et al., 2024). Across studies, psychological safety is consistently linked to improved team performance, increased innovation, and higher levels of employee engagement (Frazier et al., 2017; Jin et al., 2024; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025; Khairy et al., 2023). Employees who feel psychologically safe are more likely to share knowledge, collaborate effectively, and contribute creative ideas (Hallam et al., 2023; de Lisser et al., 2024).

Innovation is one of the most frequently cited outcomes of psychological safety (Jin et al., 2024). By reducing fear of failure, psychological safety encourages experimentation and exploration of new ideas (Edmondson, 2018). This is particularly important in industries that rely on continuous improvement and adaptation (Santana et al., 2025). Teams with high psychological safety are more likely to engage in learning behaviors, such as seeking feedback and reflecting on performance, which contribute to innovation over time (Jin et al., 2024; Kobayashi, 2025).

In addition to performance and innovation, psychological safety has been associated with employee well-being (Wang, 2021). Studies indicate that psychologically safe environments reduce stress, increase job satisfaction, and promote a sense of belonging (Ip et al., 2025; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025; Shin et al., 2025). Employees who feel safe to express themselves are less likely to experience anxiety or burnout, contributing to overall organizational health (Wang, 2021; Grailey et al., 2021).

However, the relationship between psychological safety and performance is not entirely straightforward (Jin et al., 2024). Some studies suggest that psychological safety alone is insufficient to drive high performance (Edmondson, 2018). Instead, it must be combined with accountability and clear expectations (Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025).



Without such balance, there is a risk that psychological safety may lead to reduced motivation or complacency (Kobayashi, 2025). This perspective reflects an emerging consensus that effective organizations must create environments that are both supportive and performance-oriented (Jin et al., 2024; Artinger et al., 2025).

Another area of debate concerns the potential trade-offs associated with psychological safety. While it generally promotes positive outcomes, some studies suggest that excessive focus on harmony may limit critical evaluation and decision-making (Hunt et al., 2021). This highlights the need for a balanced approach that encourages open dialogue while maintaining rigorous standards (Edmondson, 2018; Kobayashi, 2025).

Integrated Synthesis and Emerging Trends. The synthesis of these four interconnected themes reveals that psychological safety is not a singular or fixed phenomenon but rather a complex, multi-level construct that emerges from the dynamic interplay among leadership behaviors, communication patterns, organizational culture, and formal institutional systems (Edmondson, 1999; Schein, 2010). No single factor operates in isolation; rather, it is the alignment — or misalignment — among these elements that ultimately determines whether a psychologically safe climate is established, sustained, or eroded within a given organizational context. There is broad and consistent consensus across the reviewed literature that psychological safety serves as a foundational enabler of employee voice, organizational learning, innovation, and individual well-being (Jin et al., 2024; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025; Wang, 2021). However, the literature equally emphasizes that its effectiveness is never context-free. Cultural dimensions such as power distance and collectivism, structural variables such as hierarchy and accountability systems, and situational factors such as team composition and work modality all moderate the degree to which psychological safety can be developed and leveraged (Hofstede, 2001; Ip et al., 2025). This context-dependence is a critical insight, as it cautions against the uncritical application of universally prescribed interventions across organizationally and culturally diverse settings.

A significant and growing trend across the literature is the reconceptualization of psychological safety as a dynamic, evolving process rather than a stable or static organizational trait (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). Earlier scholarship tended to treat psychological safety as a relatively fixed team-level characteristic measurable at a single point in time. Contemporary research, however, increasingly recognizes that psychological safety is continuously renegotiated through ongoing interpersonal interactions, leadership responses to failure, peer-to-peer communication, and the cumulative experience of whether risk-taking is met with support or sanction (Kobayashi, 2025; de Lisser et al., 2024). This shift carries important practical implications: organizations cannot simply establish psychological safety through a one-time intervention or policy change and expect it to persist. Rather, sustaining psychological safety requires continuous, deliberate effort — including consistent modeling of inclusive behaviors by leaders, regular reinforcement of team norms, and ongoing responsiveness to the evolving needs and concerns of employees (Artinger et al., 2025). The fragility of psychological safety, particularly in the face of organizational disruption, leadership transitions, or performance pressure, further underscores the necessity of embedding it within durable cultural and structural conditions rather than relying solely on individual leader behaviors.

A second prominent emerging trend is the rapidly expanding scholarly and practitioner interest in how psychological safety operates within non-traditional work environments, particularly remote and hybrid settings (Dong & Xing, 2025; Santana et al., 2025). The widespread normalization of distributed work arrangements — accelerated by global disruptions and enabled by digital technologies — has fundamentally altered the interpersonal dynamics through which psychological safety is built and maintained. Unlike co-located teams, remote and hybrid teams must navigate the absence of spontaneous face-to-face interaction, reduced access to non-verbal communication cues, and the potential for feelings of isolation or disconnection that can erode the relational trust foundational to psychological safety (Dong et al., 2024). At the same time, digital platforms may create new opportunities for psychological safety by offering alternative, lower-stakes channels of communication for individuals who find formal group settings intimidating. The tension between these democratizing and constraining effects of digital work remains insufficiently theorized and empirically underexplored, representing one of the most pressing frontiers for future research in this domain.



Collectively, the accumulated body of literature provides compelling and multi-faceted evidence for the organizational value of psychological safety, while simultaneously illuminating the considerable complexity involved in fostering it across diverse, dynamic, and increasingly virtual work environments (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). The evidence consistently points to the inadequacy of single-level or single-factor approaches. Sustainable psychological safety requires integration across individual, team, and organizational levels — aligning leadership practices, communication norms, cultural values, and formal systems in a mutually reinforcing configuration (Schein, 2010; Hofstede, 2001; Jin et al., 2024). As the nature of work continues to evolve at an accelerating pace, so too must the conceptual frameworks and practical strategies through which organizations seek to create environments where every member feels genuinely safe to contribute, challenge, and grow.

Critical Analysis and Synthesis

The systematic review of the selected 29 studies, drawn from peer-reviewed literature published between 2015 and 2025 across diverse organizational contexts and methodological traditions, reveals a finding of considerable theoretical and practical significance: psychological safety is not a standalone trait, a personality characteristic of individual employees, or a simple byproduct of positive workplace culture. Rather, it is a complex, a complex construct shaped by multiple interacting factors — simultaneously shaped by and shaping the organizational environment in which it exists — that functions as what may be understood as the "connective tissue" binding together the structural, relational, and cultural dimensions of an organization and translating them into meaningful performance outcomes (Edmondson, 1999; Jin et al., 2024). Just as connective tissue in the human body does not merely fill space but actively integrates, stabilizes, and enables the functioning of surrounding systems, psychological safety operates as the essential integrative mechanism through which leadership behaviors are converted into employee voice, through which organizational values are experienced as lived reality rather than espoused rhetoric, and through which individual potential is either mobilized or suppressed by the interpersonal climate of the team. Without it, even the most strategically designed organizational structures, the most well-resourced teams, and the most capable leaders may fail to unlock the collaborative intelligence and adaptive capacity that modern organizations increasingly depend upon. It is this integrative, cross-level, and enabling function — rather than any single measurable outcome — that defines the distinctive organizational significance of psychological safety and justifies its central place in both scholarly inquiry and evidence-based management practice.

The Hierarchy-Safety Paradox. A critical and recurring tension identified across the reviewed literature is the fundamental conflict between formal hierarchical structures and the psychological freedom required for genuine employee voice. While leadership is consistently identified as the primary driver of psychological safety, the evidence reveals an important paradox: rigid hierarchies and high power distance can function as powerful structural silencers that neutralize even the most sincere and well-intentioned inclusive leadership efforts, effectively rendering leader-driven safety initiatives insufficient in the absence of broader structural reform (Hofstede, 2001; Ip et al., 2025; Rabiul et al., 2025). In highly hierarchical organizations, the formal architecture of authority — manifested through rigid reporting lines, punitive performance systems, and limited channels for upward communication — creates an ambient climate of evaluative threat that persists regardless of how openly any individual leader behaves (Wang, 2021; Schein, 2010). Employees in such environments rationally calculate that the institutional risks of speaking up outweigh the interpersonal encouragement offered by a single inclusive supervisor, particularly when the broader organizational system continues to reward conformity and penalize dissent (Ip et al., 2025; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025).

This paradox is further compounded at the societal level by the moderating influence of cultural dimensions. In organizational contexts embedded within high power-distance cultures — where deference to authority is a deeply internalized social norm rather than merely a formal expectation — the social cost of speaking up, challenging superiors, or admitting mistakes remains prohibitively high, even when leaders actively signal openness and accessibility (Hofstede, 2001; Shankar et al., 2025). Research suggests that employees in such contexts may interpret inclusive leadership behaviors with culturally conditioned skepticism, questioning whether expressed openness reflects genuine safety or represents a performative gesture with hidden consequences (Dong & Xing, 2025; Artinger



et al., 2025). This finding carries a critical practical implication: psychological safety interventions designed within Western, low power-distance organizational frameworks cannot be uncritically transposed onto non-Western or high power-distance contexts without meaningful cultural adaptation (Hofstede, 2001; Shankar et al., 2025; Ip et al., 2025). Universal prescriptions risk not only ineffectiveness but the potential reinforcement of existing power imbalances if they fail to account for the structural and cultural conditions that fundamentally shape how employees perceive and respond to interpersonal risk-taking opportunities.

Synthesis of the Safety-Performance Link. The synthesis of empirical findings across the reviewed studies confirms with considerable consistency that psychological safety enables high performance — but critically, it does so not directly, but specifically through the mediation of learning behaviors, including knowledge sharing, feedback-seeking, error reporting, and collective reflection on performance (Edmondson, 1999; Jin et al., 2024; Kobayashi, 2025). This mediating pathway is theoretically significant because it clarifies the mechanism through which psychological safety translates into tangible organizational outcomes, moving the literature beyond simple correlational claims toward a more precise causal account. When employees feel safe from interpersonal threat, they engage more freely in the learning behaviors that drive continuous improvement, adaptive problem-solving, and innovation — behaviors that are systematically suppressed in climates of fear or evaluative threat (Jin et al., 2024; Artinger et al., 2025).

However, a significant and nuanced critical finding emerging from the synthesis is that psychological safety, when present without a counterbalancing emphasis on accountability and high performance standards, carries the risk of producing complacency — what some scholars have characterized as a "culture of nice," in which collegial harmony is preserved at the expense of rigorous critical evaluation, honest feedback, and the pursuit of excellence (Kobayashi, 2025; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025). This finding challenges overly optimistic portrayals of psychological safety as an unconditional organizational good and suggests that its performance benefits are contingent upon its integration within a broader climate that couples interpersonal safety with clear expectations, meaningful accountability, and a genuine commitment to high standards (Edmondson, 1999; Artinger et al., 2025). The most effective organizations, the evidence suggests, are those that cultivate what Edmondson (2018) describes as a "fearless organization" — one in which employees are safe to speak, challenge, and fail, but within a framework of shared purpose and mutual accountability that channels that safety toward continuous learning and improvement rather than comfortable stagnation. Nowhere is this balance more consequential than in high-stakes professional environments such as healthcare, where psychological safety functions as a critical risk-mitigation mechanism: by lowering the interpersonal barriers to error reporting and concern-raising, psychologically safe clinical teams identify failures, near-misses, and systemic risks earlier and more reliably, with measurable consequences for patient safety and clinical outcomes (Grailey et al., 2021; de Lisser et al., 2024; Hallam et al., 2023).

The Relational Reciprocity of Trust. Among the most theoretically significant findings synthesized across the reviewed literature is the identification of a reciprocal, self-reinforcing relationship — a "virtuous cycle" — between interpersonal trust and psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999; de Lisser et al., 2024). Rather than operating as a simple linear antecedent, trust and psychological safety are revealed to be mutually constitutive: trust provides the foundational relational conditions that enable initial acts of interpersonal risk-taking, such as sharing an unconventional idea, admitting uncertainty, or raising a concern about a colleague's decision (Hunt et al., 2021; Hallam et al., 2023). When those initial acts of vulnerability are met with constructive, respectful, and affirming responses — when the individual is heard rather than dismissed, supported rather than ridiculed — the experience of positive social reinforcement deepens both the individual's and the team's collective sense of psychological safety, which in turn encourages further risk-taking and strengthens the underlying trust that made it possible (de Lisser et al., 2024; Dong et al., 2024). Conversely, when early acts of risk-taking are met with indifference, criticism, or punishment, the cycle operates in reverse: trust erodes, psychological safety contracts, and employees learn to self-censor in ways that may be rational at the individual level but are organizationally costly at the collective level (Wang, 2021; Schein, 2010).

This understanding of trust and psychological safety as dynamically co-constructed through repeated interactional experiences has important implications for how organizations approach the cultivation of safe climates. It suggests



that psychological safety cannot be established through structural declaration alone — through policy statements, values documents, or leader announcements — but must be built incrementally through the accumulation of positive relational experiences that are themselves shaped by consistent behavioral modeling and responsive interpersonal practices (Hallam et al., 2023; Artinger et al., 2025). Critically, the reviewed literature increasingly challenges the assumption that this relational work is solely the responsibility of formal leaders. Emerging research on distributed and shared leadership demonstrates that peer-to-peer interactions — the daily exchanges, collaborative problem-solving moments, and informal social encounters among team members — are nearly as influential as supervisor-to-subordinate dynamics in shaping and sustaining a psychologically safe team climate (Hallam et al., 2023; de Lissier et al., 2024; Kobayashi, 2025). This finding democratizes the responsibility for psychological safety, positioning every member of a team as an active co-creator of the relational environment rather than a passive recipient of leadership-driven safety conditions.

Critical Gaps in Digital Synthesis. While traditional theories of psychological safety were built upon the foundational importance of non-verbal cues, physical presence, and face-to-face interaction, the accelerating shift toward remote and hybrid work environments has introduced a new and underexplored set of challenges to the construct (Dong & Xing, 2025; Santana et al., 2025). Digital communication platforms present a paradox: on one hand, they can democratize employee voice by providing alternative channels of expression that some individuals — particularly those who are introverted or uncomfortable in formal group settings — may find less intimidating than in-person interactions (Dong & Xing, 2025). On the other hand, the absence of non-verbal context, such as tone, facial expression, and body language, creates significant barriers to the development of deep interpersonal trust, which the literature consistently identifies as the relational foundation upon which psychological safety is built (Santana et al., 2025; Hallam et al., 2023).

This tension means that virtual environments can simultaneously expand and constrain the conditions necessary for psychological safety, depending on the individual and the team (Dong & Xing, 2025). Compounding this challenge is a broader systemic failure identified across many organizations — the persistent misalignment between espoused values and enacted values (Schein, 2010; Wang, 2021). Organizations may publicly promote openness, learning, and safety, yet simultaneously maintain punitive performance review systems that penalize the very mistakes and risk-taking behaviors that psychological safety is meant to encourage (Plezia & Moczydłowska, 2025). This contradiction produces a "trust gap" that effectively dismantles the safety construct from within, rendering even the most best-intentioned leadership efforts insufficient when the formal systems of the organization send an opposing message to employees (Schein, 2010; Wang, 2021).

Research Gaps and Future Directions

While the existing body of literature on psychological safety has advanced considerably over the past decade — expanding from Edmondson's (1999) foundational conceptualization of team-level interpersonal safety to a richly diversified field encompassing leadership theory, organizational culture, cross-cultural psychology, and the emerging realities of digital work — the present systematic review reveals that this progress, though substantial, remains uneven and incomplete. Despite the proliferation of empirical studies, theoretical refinements, and practitioner-oriented frameworks that have collectively elevated psychological safety to one of the most widely examined constructs in contemporary organizational behavior research (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023; Newman et al., 2017), a critical and dispassionate examination of the reviewed literature exposes several significant gaps that constrain both the theoretical completeness and the practical applicability of current knowledge. These are not peripheral omissions or minor methodological limitations that future research may address incrementally; rather, they represent fundamental blind spots in the existing evidence base that, if left unaddressed, risk producing an understanding of psychological safety that is contextually narrow, temporally static, structurally incomplete, and insufficiently responsive to the rapidly evolving realities of modern organizational life (Hofstede, 2001; Dong & Xing, 2025; Schein, 2010).



The consequences of these gaps extend beyond academic incompleteness. When practitioners, human resource professionals, and organizational leaders draw on a body of literature that is disproportionately rooted in Western organizational contexts, predominantly cross-sectional in design, theoretically underdeveloped with respect to digital work environments, and insufficiently attentive to the structural conditions that silently undermine safety, the interventions they implement are likely to be misaligned with the actual conditions faced by their organizations and workforces (Shankar et al., 2025; Ip et al., 2025; Wang, 2021). Addressing these gaps is therefore not merely an academic exercise in theoretical refinement; it is an urgent practical imperative for developing a more nuanced, globally relevant, culturally sensitive, and contextually adaptive understanding of psychological safety — one that is genuinely capable of informing evidence-based leadership, inclusive organizational design, and sustainable workforce well-being across the full diversity of modern organizational contexts (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023; Jin et al., 2024; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025).

Gap 1: The Underrepresentation of Non-Western Organizational Contexts. Perhaps the most significant limitation in the current literature is its heavy reliance on Western, particularly North American and Northern European, organizational settings (Hofstede, 2001; Shankar et al., 2025). The majority of empirical studies reviewed were conducted within cultural contexts characterized by relatively low power distance and individualistic values, where open communication and the challenging of authority are generally more socially acceptable. This creates a fundamental validity problem: the frameworks and interventions derived from these studies may not translate meaningfully to organizational environments in East Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, or Sub-Saharan Africa, where collectivist norms and high power distance may fundamentally alter how employees perceive and respond to opportunities for interpersonal risk-taking (Hofstede, 2001; Ip et al., 2025).

Although the review acknowledges Hofstede's cultural dimensions as a relevant lens, empirical studies that directly test how psychological safety manifests, develops, and produces outcomes in high power-distance cultures remain scarce. Future research must conduct culturally grounded studies within these contexts to develop locally valid models of psychological safety. The proposed study addresses this gap by examining psychological safety within a specific non-Western organizational context, with attention to how indigenous cultural norms interact with leadership behaviors and communication practices to shape safety perceptions.

Gap 2: The Absence of Longitudinal Evidence on Long-Term Organizational Impact. A second major gap concerns the predominantly cross-sectional design of existing studies (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). While cross-sectional surveys have established significant correlations between psychological safety and outcomes such as innovation, team performance, and employee well-being, they are inherently limited in their ability to establish causality or track how psychological safety evolves over time. It remains unclear whether high psychological safety consistently sustains performance improvements, whether it can erode under organizational pressure, or whether its benefits of plateau after an initial period. Furthermore, the long-term consequences of the "safety-performance balance" — specifically, how organizations maintain both psychological safety and high accountability without one undermining the other — have not been adequately studied (Jin et al., 2024; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025). Future research should employ longitudinal or mixed methods designs to capture these dynamic processes. The proposed study incorporates a longitudinal component to trace changes in psychological safety levels and their downstream effects over a defined organizational period.

Gap 3: Psychological Safety in Remote and Hybrid Work Environments. The rapid normalization of remote and hybrid work following global disruptions has introduced a third critical gap. The theoretical foundations of psychological safety were largely developed in the context of co-located teams (Edmondson, 1999), where face-to-face interaction, non-verbal communication, and shared physical environments play a central role in building trust and openness. As the review notes, digital communication tools may democratize voice for certain individuals while simultaneously creating barriers (Dong & Xing, 2025; Santana et al., 2025) to deep relational trust due to the absence of non-verbal cues. Yet empirical research specifically examining how psychological safety is established, maintained, and measured in virtual or hybrid team settings remains limited and underdeveloped.



There is a particular need to understand how leaders can model inclusive behaviors effectively through digital channels, how team norms around openness are communicated and enforced in asynchronous environments, and whether existing measurement instruments for psychological safety retain their validity in remote contexts. The proposed study contributes to this gap by incorporating a sample that includes both in-person and remote team members, allowing for direct comparisons of psychological safety dynamics across work modalities.

Gap 4: The Misalignment Between Espoused and Enacted Organizational Values. A final and often overlooked gap concerns the structural and systemic conditions that undermine psychological safety even when leaders are genuinely committed to fostering it. The review identifies a recurring "trust gap" produced by the misalignment between an organization's stated values — such as openness, learning, and innovation — and its formal systems of performance evaluation (Schein, 2010; Wang, 2021; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025), reward, and accountability. Despite the theoretical recognition of this phenomenon, very few studies have empirically examined how specific organizational systems either reinforce or contradict leader-driven efforts to build psychological safety. Future research should investigate the mechanisms through which systemic misalignment erodes psychological safety and identify structural interventions — beyond leadership development — that can create more coherent enabling conditions. The proposed study directly addresses this by examining both leadership practices and organizational system characteristics as parallel predictors of psychological safety, offering a more integrated and practically actionable framework for organizational diagnosis and intervention.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical architecture of this study conceptualizes psychological safety as a dynamic, multi-dimensional construct that serves as the essential mechanism bridging organizational inputs with high-performance outcomes. Rather than viewing it as a static trait, this framework positions psychological safety as an evolving climate shaped by the continuous interplay between leadership behaviors, organizational culture, and individual perceptions (Edmondson, 1999; Schein, 2010). The framework is systematically structured into four integrated phases: foundational antecedents, mediating and moderating influences, the core construct of psychological safety, and systemic outcomes, all of which are supported by empirical evidence from a decade of peer-reviewed research.

Foundational Antecedents. The process is initiated by foundational antecedents that establish the necessary conditions for a safe interpersonal environment. Evidence from the reviewed literature identifies inclusive leadership as the primary driver, characterized by accessibility and the active solicitation of diverse perspectives (Shankar et al., 2025; Artinger et al., 2025). This is reinforced by leader vulnerability, where authority figures model the admission of errors to signal that risk-taking is acceptable. Furthermore, relational trust serves as a critical prerequisite, creating a reciprocal "virtuous cycle" (Edmondson, 1999; de Lissier et al., 2024) where initial risk-taking leads to positive social outcomes that further solidify the team's collective security. These leadership behaviors are sustained at the organizational level by a culture that prioritizes a learning orientation over punitive responses to failure (Schein, 2010; Wang, 2021), supported by formal reward systems that incentivize transparency and innovation rather than penalizing honesty.

Mediating and Moderating Influences. The impact of these antecedents is further shaped by several mediating and moderating variables. Learning behaviors—including feedback-seeking, knowledge sharing, and performance reflection—serve as the primary mediators (Jin et al., 2024; Kobayashi, 2025) through which a safe climate is converted into tangible performance. However, this relationship is frequently influenced by moderating barriers; specifically, high power distance and rigid hierarchies can act as "structural silencers" that increase the social cost of speaking up, potentially neutralizing even inclusive leadership efforts. To ensure this environment remains performance-oriented, the framework incorporates accountability as a vital moderator (Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025; Kobayashi, 2025). This balance ensures that psychological safety facilitates constructive task-related conflict, allowing for the critical evaluation of ideas, while simultaneously serving to mitigate destructive relationship conflict that can erode team cohesion. Finally, the framework acknowledges the modern moderating challenge of digital



work, where the lack of non-verbal cues requires a more deliberate approach (Dong & Xing, 2025; Santana et al., 2025) to maintaining trust.

Core Construct: Psychological Safety. At the center of the framework is the construct of psychological safety, defined as a shared belief among team members that the workplace is safe for interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999; American Psychological Association, 2023). This manifested condition allows individuals to contribute ideas, ask questions, and challenge existing practices without fear of negative consequences such as embarrassment, rejection, or punishment. It represents the psychological state that must be present for the transition from organizational inputs to successful outputs.

Systemic Outcomes. The final phase of the framework outlines the diverse consequences derived from this psychological climate. For the organization, these outcomes include heightened innovation through experimentation, improved team collaboration (Jin et al., 2024; Santana et al., 2025), and enhanced risk mitigation—particularly in high-stakes environments where psychological safety allows for the early identification of errors. On an individual level, the data confirms significant improvements in employee well-being, characterized by higher job satisfaction (Wang, 2021; Ip et al., 2025), a deeper sense of belonging, and a measurable reduction in the psychological triggers of stress and burnout. Ultimately, this systematic approach demonstrates that psychological safety is not merely an end, but a critical mechanism for organizational resilience and human flourishing in complex work environments.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review set out to examine psychological safety in the workplace by addressing four central research questions: what factors contribute to its development, how it influences employee behavior and organizational outcomes, what barriers organizations face in fostering it, and what gaps remain in the current literature. Drawing on twenty-nine peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2025, this review synthesized existing evidence across four interconnected thematic areas, providing a comprehensive understanding of psychological safety as a dynamic and a construct that operates across individual, team, and organizational levels (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Bransby, 2023).

The review identified four major themes that collectively explain how psychological safety operates within organizations. First, leadership emerged as the most influential driver of psychological safety, with inclusive leadership behaviors — such as openness, accessibility, and modeling vulnerability — consistently associated with higher levels of safety across teams (Shankar et al., 2025; Artinger et al., 2025; Rabiul et al., 2025). Second, trust and open communication were identified as foundational elements, functioning both as antecedents and outcomes of psychological safety in a mutually reinforcing cycle (Edmondson, 1999; Hallam et al., 2023; Hunt et al., 2021). Third, organizational culture and structural factors were shown to either enable or obstruct psychological safety, with learning-oriented cultures supporting it and punitive or hierarchical systems undermining it (Schein, 2010; Hofstede, 2001; Wang, 2021). Fourth, the outcomes of psychological safety were found to be wide-ranging, encompassing improved team performance, heightened innovation, stronger employee engagement, and enhanced individual well-being (Jin et al., 2024; Plezia & Moczyłowska, 2025; Grailey et al., 2021).

Despite these well-established findings, the review identified four critical gaps that limit the completeness and applicability of current knowledge. The literature remains heavily weighted toward Western organizational contexts, leaving non-Western settings — particularly those characterized by high power distance and collectivist norms — significantly underrepresented (Hofstede, 2001; Ip et al., 2025). Additionally, the predominance of cross-sectional research designs prevents a clear understanding of how psychological safety evolves and sustains itself over time (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). The rapid normalization of remote and hybrid work has further exposed a gap in understanding how psychological safety is established and maintained in virtual environments where non-verbal cues are absent (Dong & Xing, 2025; Santana et al., 2025). Finally, the persistent misalignment between



organizations' espoused values and their enacted systems of evaluation and accountability continues to undermine even the sincerest leadership efforts to build psychological safety (Schein, 2010; Plezia & Moczydłowska, 2025).

The findings of this review carry important practical implications for managers, organizations, and policymakers. Leaders at all levels should prioritize inclusive behaviors, model vulnerability, and actively create space for employee voice as foundational practices for building psychological safety (Rabiul et al., 2025; Kobayashi, 2025). Organizations must ensure that their formal systems — including performance evaluation, reward structures, and accountability mechanisms — are aligned with their stated values of openness and learning, as structural misalignment can silently dismantle even the strongest safety cultures (Schein, 2010; Wang, 2021). For policymakers and human resource practitioners, these findings underscore the need for culturally sensitive approaches to psychological safety, particularly in diverse and non-Western organizational contexts where universal Western frameworks may be less effective or require meaningful adaptation (Hofstede, 2001; Shankar et al., 2025).

In conclusion, psychological safety is not merely a desirable feature of workplace culture but a critical mechanism for organizational resilience, innovation, and human flourishing amid hybrid work, accelerating technological change, and rising demands for innovation (Edmondson, 1999; Jin et al., 2024). Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to track how psychological safety develops and sustains over time, culturally grounded investigations in non-Western settings, and empirical studies specifically examining psychological safety in remote and hybrid work environments (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023; Dong & Xing, 2025). By addressing these gaps, scholars and practitioners alike can build a more complete, globally relevant, and practically actionable understanding of psychological safety — one that empowers organizations to create workplaces where every individual feels safe, valued, and free to contribute their best.

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