PSYCHOSOCIAL SAFETY CLIMATE AS A CATALYST FOR THRIVING EMPLOYEE ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR (OCB) DURING ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

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Abstract

Managing employee emotional stress is one of the most significant global challenges in workplaces today, and it is anticipated to exacerbate in the coming years. For example, employee work-related stress is responsible for 12 billion lost workdays and a cost of over US$1 trillion to the worldwide economy annually (ILO - International Labour Organisation 2022), while Businesses in Australia lose over $11 billion a year as a result of inadequately attending to the needs of workers who are dealing with mental health issues (Dept of Social Services, Australia 2023). Employee emotional stress occurs when there are discrepancies between the physiological demands of a workplace and the inability of employees to manage the work demands (Akanji 2013). Particularly during the organisational change process, when employees are assigned new tasks or pressured to adapt, their stress levels tend to rise, which may have a negative impact on the change's outcomes (Hanelt et al. 2021; Petrou et al. 2018; Stouten et al. 2018).Thus, employee reaction and commitment to executing organisational change are vital (Oreg et al. 2011; Stouten et al. 2018). Due to various reasons, including advancing technologies and unpredictable factors in the competitive business world, identifying and implementing organisational changes become necessary for the survival and thriving of organisations in the competitive business world (Cetindamar et al. 2021; Troise et al. 2022). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the necessity of modifying organisational policies, procedures and practices has increased. However, around 70% of organisational change initiatives fail worldwide because employees are afraid, unwilling, or pessimistic about participating in organisational change initiatives (Beer & Nohria 2000; Brown & Cregan 2008; Islam et al. 2022). Thus, employee extra commitment, such as OCB, is key in implementing organisational changes. Nonetheless, when employees feel emotional stress, they are likelier to engage in primary job performance instead of engaging in OCB (Bakker & Demerouti 2007; Welsh et al. 2020). Therefore, finding solutions for mitigating employee emotional stress to execute organisational changes has become more crucial.

There is a need for fresh viewpoints in light of recent scholarly discussions on employee emotional well-being (Dasgupta 2022; Wang et al. 2021), particularly psychosocial safety climate due to its features connected with employee emotional stress. A psychosocial safety climate is "organisational policies, practices, and procedures for protecting worker psychological health and safety" (Dollard & Bakker 2010, p. 580). Management commitment and support for employee psychological health and the mitigation of work-related stress is referred to as the psychosocial safety climate (Dollard et al. 2012). Employees who feel about organisations prioritising their emotional well-being may engage in OCB and help implement organisational change. In that sense, this study examines how the psychosocial safety climate reacts to flourishing employee citizenship behaviour during the organisational change process. The proposed research will be quantitative in methodology and employ a cross-sectional questionnaire. The data gathered from operational-level workers in manufacturing firms in Sri Lanka will be subjected to regression analysis. This study will advance knowledge of this important topic by eliciting in-depth insights into the relationship between different aspects of psychosocial safety climate and employee organisational citizenship behaviour. It will also present recommendations to create the appropriate conditions for establishing and sustaining a psychosocial safety climate among business firms to mitigate employee emotional stress levels. In return, it will help organisations to improve employee citizenship behaviour and implement organisational change successfully.

Keywords: Emotional Stress, Organisational Change, Psychosocial Safety Climate, OCB.