

The Influence of Psychological Safety on Team Dynamics, Performance, and Society

A Rapid Review

Vernon S. Brown

Abstract— This rapid review provides a summary analysis of the concept of psychological safety. The aim of this paper is to highlight the evolution, impact on team dynamics, performance, and its broader societal implications. This rapid research utilizes a streamlined systematic approach to discuss the crucial role psychological safety plays in teams and society.

Keywords— Psychological Safety, Team Dynamics, Team Performance, Society, Organizational Psychology, Rapid Review

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a rapid review centered on the concept of psychological safety. Defined as an environment where individuals feel they can take interpersonal risks without fear of negative implications to their self-image, status, or career (Kahn, 1990), psychological safety is pivotal in understanding group dynamics. Through this rapid review, the aim was to explore the evolution of this construct, its impact on team performance, and its broader implications for society.

II. METHODOLOGY

In conducting this rapid review, a streamlined version of the systematic review process was followed, which is recognized for its rigorous and replicable approach (Khangura et al., 2012). This started by identifying the research question focused on the *concept of psychological safety*, followed by developing a search strategy to identify relevant studies from databases such as PsycINFO, JSTOR, and Google Scholar using keywords related to psychological safety, team dynamics, and team performance. Subsequently, each identified study used for the rapid review underwent a careful assessment for its relevance to psychological safety and its contribution to the overall understanding of the concept.

III. EVOLUTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Psychological safety, initially linked with occupational health, served as a shield for employees from workplace hazards (Carmeli & Gittel, 2009). As research in the field evolved, the construct's scope extended towards team-level dynamics, particularly highlighting its significance in interpersonal relationships within teams (Edmondson, 2004). Today, psychological safety is acknowledged as a construct influencing not only organizational culture but also broader societal dynamics and individual needs (Newman et al., 2017).

IV. IMPACT ON TEAM DYNAMICS AND PERFORMANCE

Psychological safety exhibits a strong relationship with team dynamics and performance. Teams experiencing high levels of psychological safety display increased trust and open communication, resulting in reduced conflicts (Edmondson, 1999). These teams, cultivated in an environment of psychological safety, tend to share knowledge freely, engage in constructive conflict, and consequently enhance decision-making and problem-solving capacities (Newman et al., 2017).

V. INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY

Psychological safety's influence extends beyond organizational boundaries, impacting broader societal contexts and individual needs. For instance, educational environments that prioritize psychological safety often witness better learning outcomes (Kahn, 2014). Similarly, in healthcare settings, psychological safety promotes open communication and error reporting, leading to improved patient safety (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Furthermore, psychologically safe environments facilitate open and respectful societal dialogues on sensitive topics, ultimately contributing to more productive societal discourse (Carmeli et al., 2010).

VI. RESULTS

The results of this rapid review highlight the pervasive influence of psychological safety on team dynamics, performance, and societal interactions. Studies consistently indicate that high levels of psychological safety result in improved team dynamics and better performance outcomes. Furthermore, these benefits are not confined to the workplace but have substantial societal implications.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This rapid review served as an introduction with the purpose of gleaning the surface on the concept of psychological safety in team dynamics, performance, and society. Moving forward, future research should delve into the strategies for cultivating psychological safety within teams to examine their effectiveness. It would also be worthwhile to investigate how different factors—such as

cultural context, demographic characteristics, and industry type—interact with psychological safety. Furthermore, conducting longitudinal studies could yield valuable insights into the long-term impact of sustained psychological safety on team performance and societal dynamics. Additionally, utilizing a different methodology, such as that of a qualitative design, may provide a more in-depth and focused yield of understanding that could lead to new and undiscovered insight into the concept and understanding of psychological safety.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This rapid review underscores the pivotal role of psychological safety in shaping team dynamics, performance, and societal interactions. While rapid and brief in design, the findings highlight that fostering environments of psychological safety is not just crucial for the development of high-performing teams, but it also has far-reaching implications for the broader society. In summary, the pursuit of psychological safety within teams and society at large holds promise for the creation of a more inclusive, respectful, and high-functioning environment for all.

REFERENCES

- Carmeli, A., & Gittell, J. H. (2009). High-quality relationships, psychological safety, and learning from failures in work organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30(6), 709–729. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.565>
- Carmeli, A., Reiter-Palmon, R., & Ziv, E. (2010). Inclusive leadership and employee involvement in creative tasks in the workplace: The mediating role of psychological safety. *Creativity Research Journal*, 22(3), 250–260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2010.504654>
- Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350–383. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999>
- Edmondson, A. (2004). Psychological safety, trust, and learning in organizations: A group-level lens. *Trust and Distrust in Organizations: Dilemmas and Approaches*, 12, 239–272.
- Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692–724. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256287>
- Kahn, W. A. (2014). *The power of psychological safety at work*. TEDx Talk.
- Khangura, S., Konnyu, K., Cushman, R., Grimshaw, J., & Moher, D. (2012). Evidence summaries: the evolution of a rapid review approach. *Systematic Reviews*, 1, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2046-4053-1-10>
- Nembhard, I. M., & Edmondson, A. C. (2006). Making it safe: The effects of leader inclusiveness and professional status on psychological safety and improvement efforts in health care teams. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27(7), 941–966. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.413>
- Newman, A., Donohue, R., & Eva, N. (2017). Psychological safety: A systematic review of the literature. *Human Resource Management Review*, 27(3), 521–535. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2017.01.001>
- © 2023. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits the user to copy, distribute, and transmit the work provided that the original author(s) and source are credited.
- V. S. Brown (*vernon [at] psafe.org*) is with the PSafe Project, Honolulu, HI 96818 USA
- To cite this document:
- Brown, V. S. (2023). The influence of psychological safety on team dynamics, performance, and society: A rapid review. *Psychological Safety, Advancement and Review*, 1(1), 1–2. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8053648>
- Permanent link to this document:
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8053648>