

The relationship between organizational precursors and employee creativity during COVID-19 pandemic: An examination of the psychological safety mediation effect

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the mediating effect of psychological safety on the relationship between organizational antecedents (corporate social responsibility or CSR, transformational leadership style, and perceived organizational support) and employee creativity. This study lends its support to the mediating effect of psychological safety to inspect the underlying reasons that motivate employees to be more creative. The study employed a positivist approach based on 220 respondents. Data was collected through an online open-ended questionnaire using a convenient sampling technique. The collected data were further analyzed using partial least square structural equation modeling. The key findings reveal that the four domains of CSR (legal, philanthropy, economic and ethical), transformational leadership style, and perceived organizational contribute to creating a climate of psychological safety among employees. This climate, in turn, mediates the relationship between these organizational factors and employee creativity. This study highlights the importance of psychological safety as a mediator that motivates employees to be more creative. The results also underscore the need for organizational leaders to review CSR policies, leadership styles, and the support provided to employees to foster psychological safety and, consequently, stimulate employee creativity.

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Introduction

Organizations in this world are struggling with more challenges than ever before. Due to the intensified competition in the fast-changing business environment, businesses endeavor to sustain their competitive advantage to address the challenges (Islam, Chaudhary, Jamil & Ali 2021). As a result, organizations strive to get the best and the most from employees (Suifan, Abdallah & Janini 2018). This is mainly because many organizations draw on the resource-based view and consider employees as a sustainable source of competitive advantage that is hardly imitable by rivals (Adil, Hamid & Waqas 2020). Ibrahim, Isa & Shahbudin (2016) suggest that the emergence of employee creativity as a source of competitive advantage is due to its ability to stimulate innovation and create new knowledge, thereby adding value to the organization and improving organizational performance. Furthermore, the requirement for employee creativity has become more critical during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic as the operational practices of organizations have changed extensively, and the development potential of the organizations has been dramatically impacted (Fong, Law & Ye 2020; Zhang, Xie & Morrison 2021). Therefore, employee creativity plays a crucial part in enabling organizational survival to thrive in the time of crisis.

The sudden changes and high levels of uncertainty in the workplace presented by the COVID-19 health crisis impedes organizations from creating favorable working environment and conditions to stimulate employee creativity (Tang, Ma, Naumann & Xing 2020). This is primarily because the employees tend to concentrate on more controllable tasks rather than engaging in creativity under such stressful circumstances (Luis, Ruth & Zhang 2020). Furthermore, a study conducted by Marzo et al. (2021) have found that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had caused mental health issues on Malaysians, particularly depression and anxiety. Under such stressful situations, the employees may fear taking risks and prefer to maintain the status quo, thereby suppressing their creativity (Kassymova et al., 2019). Hence, this research endeavors to understand the possible determinants of employee creativity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In contrast to the increased attention on the importance of employee creativity on organizational innovation and success, little is known about the factors influencing employee creativity, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, this research investigates several key variables that may impact employee creativity. It can be deduced that employees' perceptions of organizational CSR (Abdelmotaleb, Metwally & Saha 2018; Chaudhary &

Akhouri 2019), leadership style (Herrmann & Felfe 2014; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015; Tu, Lu, Choi & Guo 2018), and organizational support (Maden 2015; Opoku, Apenteng & Boakye 2021) are central to cultivating employee creativity. Against this backdrop, the researchers attempt to investigate whether CSR, transformational leadership and perceived organizational support play a part in boosting employee creativity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recent researches posit that employee creativity is extremely important, especially in the challenging era presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, to promote organizational innovation and ensure organizational survival and sustainability amid intense competition (Siswanti & Muafi 2020; Azizi et al. 2021; Muñoz-Pascual, Galende & Curado 2021). In view of this, the authors considered psychological safety's role in investigating the factors affecting employee creativity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our research objectives, therefore, are to determine the direct relationship between CSR, transformational leadership, perceived organizational support, and psychological safety and to investigate the psychological safety mediation effect on employee creativity.

Literature Review

When an organization engages in CSR, it has an intrinsic desire to contribute to society. This conveys a message to the employees about the organization's ethical and non-opportunistic stance (Chaudhary & Akhouri, 2018). According to Farooq, Rupp & Farooq (2017), the organization's CSR practices enhance employees' development; for instance, education and training programs make the employees perceive that they are valued by the organization. Consequently, the employees develop psychological safety, which encourages them to express their opinion without fear of being judged or rejected (Rivera, Rodríguez-Aceves & Mojarro-Duran 2021). Furthermore, the organization's involvement in CSR activities for external stakeholders and the environment also increases the psychological safety of employees (Kim, Kim & Kim 2021). This is because, as community members, employees will perceive their organization as ethical, thereby increasing their trust in the organization and level of psychological safety (Mulki, Jaramillo & Locander 2009).

Mittal & Dhar (2015) proposed that transformational leaders are capable of influencing their followers to regard them as role models. According to Yin et al. (2020), transformational leaders who exhibit individualized consideration always support and care for every one of their followers, thereby prompting trust and perception of low personal risk and enhancing their psychological safety. This is supported by Zhou & Pan (2015) who argued

that transformational leaders exhibit individualized consideration, inducing the followers to respect individual differences and building a work environment with low levels of risk for self-expression and taking initiatives. Hu, Erdogan, Jiang, Bauer & Liu (2018) postulated that leaders' perceptions of risk-taking is an antecedent to psychological safety in the work environment, which is essential for employees to believe that it is acceptable to take risks and make mistakes. Liu et al. (2016) also corroborated the study where they argued that leaders' behaviors play a significant part in building interpersonal trust among the followers, subsequently affecting the followers' perception of safety, appropriate behavior and judgement.

Kim et al. (2018) postulated that when employees perceive greater organizational support, their psychological and social needs are fulfilled thus, increasing their sense of belongingness to the organization. This statement is supported by Riggle, Edmondson & Hansen (2009) who proposed that employees perceive their organization as supportive when the organization cares about employees' social-emotional needs and takes employees' well-being as the primary consideration. Perceived support offered by the organization will contribute to the employees' mental and psychological attachment (Ahmed, Nawaz, Ali & Islam, 2015) and high engagement (Pearsall & Ellis 2011) to the organization. In addition, trust and support from management and other organizational members will contribute to psychological safety in the organization (Adil, Hamid & Waqas, 2020; Frazier et al., 2017).

H₁: CSR is positively related to psychological safety.

H₂: Transformational leadership is positively related to psychological safety.

H₃: Perceived organizational support is positively related to psychological safety.

According to Grant & Berry (2011), prosocial motivation theory postulates that prosocially motivated employees tend to develop novel ideas that benefit others, such as customers and coworkers. This is supported by Liu, Jiang, Shalley, Keem & Zhou (2016) who argued that prosocial motivation inspires people to take into consideration others' needs and explore new ideas that will bring benefits to others. Zhang, Xie & Morrison (2021) posit CSR can bring consequences to organisations at the macro and micro levels. At a micro-level, a study by Wang, Hu, & Zhang (2020) also revealed that employee perception of their organisations' CSR fundamentally impacts the employees' job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour, job engagement and job commitment. In addition, studies on the responses of stakeholders to corporate social responsibility unfolded that employee play a

decisive role in turning an organisation's investments in corporate social responsibility into business and social value (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams & Ganapathi 2007; Aguinis & Glavas 2012; De Roeck & Farooq 2018). Reverte, Gómez-Melero & Cegarra-Navarro (2016) revealed that economic, environmental and social dimensions of corporate social responsibility have a significant impact on employee innovation. Furthermore, Hur, Moon & Ko (2018) suggest that employees exhibit higher creativity when they are motivated by their organisations to think outside the box and contribute toward organisational and societal improvement. A research study by Abdelmotaleb, Metwally & Saha (2018) also revealed employees' perception of organisational CSR can induce positive affect; thus, employees will be more engaged in creative processes and behaviours.

Suifan, Abdallah & Janini (2018) propose that transformational leadership motivates followers to share ideas and take part in the decision-making process. This leadership style postulates that leaders should act as motivators and providers of support for their followers, thereby promoting the development and success of the followers. Zaman et al. (2020) assert that transformational leaders bring a transforming effect on the followers and even the whole organisation. In this regard, transformational leaders always propose changes, generate new visions and strategies, and show commitment to achieving the objectives, thereby contributing to the organisation's transformation (Munyeki & Were 2017). Chaubey, Sahoo & Khatri (2019) further contended that transformational leadership is a creativity-enhancing force that inspires followers to view problems from different perspectives to search for new and unconventional solutions to address the issues. Liang et al. (2017) also proposed that transformational leaders provide them with a buffer against uncertainty arising from challenging the status quo.

Opoku, Apenteng & Boakye (2022) asserted that a supportive organisational environment is critical for employee creativity. As posited by Sabir, Ali, Majid, Sabir, Mehmood, Rehman & Nawaz (2020), employees who perceive greater organisational support normally show more effort in performing their jobs, thereby improving in-role performance and extra-role performance that are beneficial to the organisation. Dai et al. (2018) postulate that when employees perceive higher organisational support, they will actively promote the organisational objectives due to their sense of obligation to the organisation. This is supported by Suifan, Abdallah & Janini (2018) who suggest that employees perform better and exhibit positive behaviours to achieve organisational goals when they feel cared for and supported by the organisation. Maden (2015) also proposes that when employees receive socio-emotional resources such as organisational support, they tend to feel obligated to

reciprocate these benefits and give back to the organisation by exhibiting positive attitudes and behaviours. Akgunduz, Alkan & Gok (2018) point out that perceived organisational support brings a positive effect on employees' meaning of work and creativity at work.

H₄: CSR is positively associated with employee creativity.

H₅: Transformational leadership style is positively associated with employee creativity.

H₆: Perceived organisational support is positively associated with employee creativity.

Edmondson (1999) admonished that psychological safety plays a major part in encouraging learning within an organisation at the individual and group levels, whereas Zaman & Abbasi (2020) concur that psychological safety provides a supporting and healthy climate that stimulates innovation and creativity within a team. In this regard, it is important to highlight that the proposal and implementation of novel ideas are associated with high risk due to unconventional ways of performing tasks (Rahimizhian & Irani 2021). Therefore, the employees' perceptions of the safety climate and the consequences of taking risks in the work environment are antecedents of their creativity (Wang, Liu & Zhu 2018, George, 2007). Chen et al. (2020) postulated that for employees to be creative, they must believe that it is safe to take initiatives and risks without any negative repercussions. If employees perceive psychological safety, they are more likely to develop innovative ideas and attempt creative solutions (Wong, Tjosvold & Liu 2009). This is aligned with a meta-analysis conducted by Frazier et al. (2017) testifying that psychological safety promotes creativity. Psychological safety motivates employees to share their concerns, provide support and cooperate with others in their creative efforts albeit interpersonal challenges (Chen et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2016). In contrast, when employees feel threatened and unsafe, they will act defensively and will not be creative at work (Liu et al. 2016). This is because creativity involves challenging the status quo, and thus the level of uncertainty is high (Chen et al. 2020).

H₇: There is a positive relationship between psychological safety and employee creativity.

Leal, Rego & Cunha (2015) propose that organisations' engagement in corporate social responsibility makes the employees feel that their organisations contribute to community betterment, enhancing their sense of purpose and sense of meaningful work. Employees feel proud to work for socially responsible companies that care for the stakeholders (Akdogan, Arslan & Demirtas 2016). As posited by Chaudhary & Akhouri (2018), the image and reputation of an organisation will be improved when an organisation is involved in corporate social responsibility, hence enhancing the employees' sense of pride and self-esteem. As

employees perceive that their work environment is psychologically safe and meaningful, they tend to come up with innovative ideas and are more willing to try out new things to improve the products, services and organisational processes and even solve social problems (Chaudhary & Akhouri 2018). Pandey & Gupta (2008) state that employees are more likely to develop creative ideas that will benefit others when motivated by an organisational climate that shows generosity, social consciousness and concern toward others.

H₈: Psychological safety mediates the relationship between corporate social responsibility and employee creativity.

Choi et al. (2016) revealed that transformational leadership plays a key part in affecting employees' behaviours by instilling the employees' perceptions of the work environment, including psychological safety. A study by Men & Stacks (2013) also found that transformational leadership brings a positive influence on employee empowerment. According to Brown, Trevino & Harrison (2005), the intrinsic motivation of employees increases when the workplace has the characteristics of autonomy, freedom and empowerment, hence they will exhibit higher engagement and creativity. Interestingly, Chaudhary & Akhouri (2018) discovered insecurity can discourage employees from taking risks and produce innovative ideas to solve problems, resulting in low creativity.. As posited by Yin et al. (2020), transformational leaders are likely to exhibit high ethical standards, such as giving equal treatment to followers, encouraging followers, and emphasising collective interests rather than self-interests. Therefore, transformational leaders are capable of developing trust among their followers as they feel safe and fearless to voice their opinions (Schaubroeck, Lam & Peng 2011). In this regard, the employees feel psychologically safe as they believe other team members will not damage their interests (Yin et al. 2020). In such an environment with psychological safety, employees are more likely to interact and communicate, exchange ideas and have brainstorming sessions which may stimulate creative behaviours or ideas (Mehmood, Jian, Akram, Akram & Tanveer 2021).

H₉: The relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity is mediated by psychological safety.

Pan, Shang & Malika (2021) viewed that perceived organisational support for creativity refers to the degree to which employees deem they will be encouraged, respected, rewarded and recognised by the organisation for their creativity. Adil, Hamid & Waqas (2020) propose that the trust and support from management and other organisational members will lead to

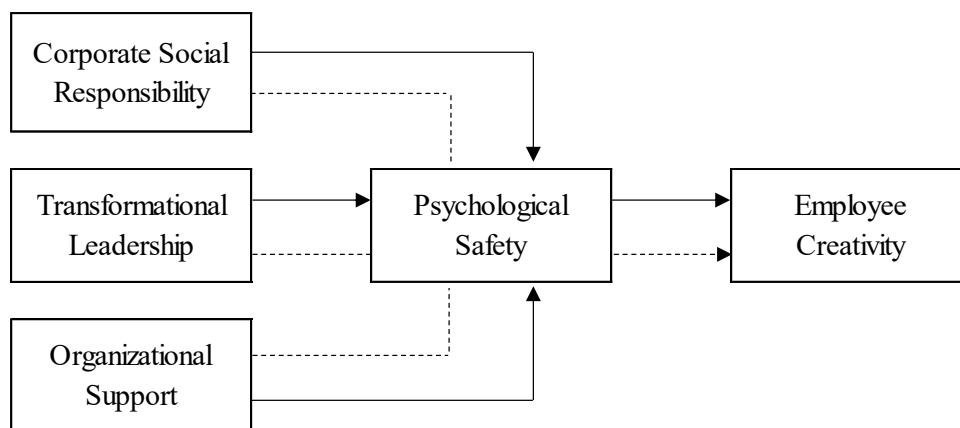
psychological safety at the workplace, and the climate of psychological safety will induce employees to put in more effort in performing their jobs. This is because employees who perceive psychological safety are more likely to take risks and try out new things without concerns about the consequences (Chen et al. 2020). Furthermore, as creativity requires employees to think outside the box and develop novel proposals, psychological safety will boost their confidence without fear, even if the attempts may lead to failures (Rahimizhian & Irani 2021). In this regard, Adil, Hamid & Waqas (2020) suggest that support from the organisation, such as loosening control over employees, will inculcate psychological safety among employees as they are given more opportunities to explore new things.

H₁₀: Psychological safety mediates the relationship between perceived organisational support and employee creativity.

Methods

In this study, we used positivist study followed by a descriptive cross-sectional study employing a primary data collection method. Cross-sectional analysis is useful to identify the latest judgement of the respondents on the factors affecting employee creativity during the COVID-19 pandemic (Setia 2016). As the study intends to collect specific information from respondents regarding factors affecting employee creativity in Malaysia during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as corporate social responsibility, transformational leadership, perceived organisational support and psychological safety, the collection of first-hand data would be more suitable (Kumar 2014; Sekaran & Bougie 2016). Furthermore, using questionnaires to collect primary data from respondents helps to ensure standardisation and coherence of data for analysis (Roopa & Rani 2012). More specifically, the technique adopted in this research is an electronic-based questionnaire. The questionnaire items were keyed into Google Form with the link to access the questionnaire shared via email and social media, including WhatsApp and Facebook, to reach the targeted respondents. An electronic questionnaire is handy to get more respondents in a time-saving and cost-efficient way (Trochim, Donnelly & Arora 2016). With the help of advanced features of electronic questionnaires, we avoided missing answers from respondents and reduced data processing errors. Moreover, electronic questionnaires offer greater flexibility and convenience as the respondents can take their time to answer the questionnaire (Evans & Mathur 2005). This is important as the responses given by the respondents may be impaired with errors or bias if they are not in the suitable condition to answer the questionnaires (Evans & Mathur 2005).

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework



Furthermore, in this study, a questionnaire is used as a tool to achieve the research objectives by collecting responses from a sizable sample of employees from various sectors in Malaysia. As such, a structured questionnaire has been designed for respondents to answer. This research adopts the Likert scale to examine respondents' degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016). Compared to the five-point Likert scale, the seven-point Likert scale enables respondents to provide more accurate and true responses since respondents are discouraged from selecting the midpoint (Finstad 2010). Churchill & Peter (1984) also state that the seven-point Likert scale helps increase the reliability of the scales. Therefore, all items representing the constructs in this research are measured on seven-point Likert scales, where "1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Somewhat disagree, 4=Neither agree or disagree, 5=Somewhat agree, 6=Agree, and 7=Strongly agree". The questionnaire consists of seven pages, including a front cover outlining the survey's objectives, descriptions and instructions, a definite guarantee of voluntary participation, and the anonymity of the respondents. The questionnaire is split into two sections, particularly Section A and Section B. The first section of the questionnaire (Section A) is related to the demographic profile of respondents, comprising four close-ended questions, namely gender, age, highest educational level and working experience. The second section of the questionnaire (Section B) comprises forty questions for the five constructs measured in this study. Each construct is measured by multiple items adapted from different sources. Figure 1 shows our proposed framework of the study.

Multicollinearity Analysis

As stated by Sekaran & Bougie (2016), the issue of multicollinearity could adversely impact the accuracy of the significance of regression coefficients and the assessment of

relationship among constructs. This research tests Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Collinearity Tolerance Value (CT-value) to detect multicollinearity issues. According to Allen, Bennett & Heritage (2019), a VIF value of less than 5 is acceptable, where a VIF of more than 5 indicates that a multicollinearity issue possibly exists among the independent variables. Furthermore, Field (2018) suggests that a CT-value of below 0.1 indicates a potential multicollinearity problem. Table 1 exhibits the statistical results of multicollinearity analysis in this research. The findings of the multiple regressions in relation to the multicollinearity indicate that all independent variables have no detrimental correlations with each other, as all CT-values are more than 0.1 and VIF values are lower than 5.

Table 1. Multicollinearity Result

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	Outer Weight	
		Collinearity Tolerance	VIF
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	TL	0.566	1.766
	POS	0.738	1.356
	PS	0.537	1.863
	EC	0.532	1.879
Transformational Leadership (TL)	CSR	0.517	1.935
	POS	0.735	1.360
	PS	0.558	1.791
	EC	0.504	1.983
Organizational Support (POS)	CSR	0.439	2.279
	TL	0.479	2.087
	PS	0.556	1.799
	EC	0.503	1.987
Psychological Safety (PS)	CSR	0.447	2.239
	TL	0.509	1.964
	POS	0.778	1.286
	EC	0.501	1.995
Employee Creativity (EC)	CSR	0.479	2.087
	TL	0.498	2.010
	POS	0.762	1.313
	PS	0.542	1.844

Figure 2. First-Order Measurement Model

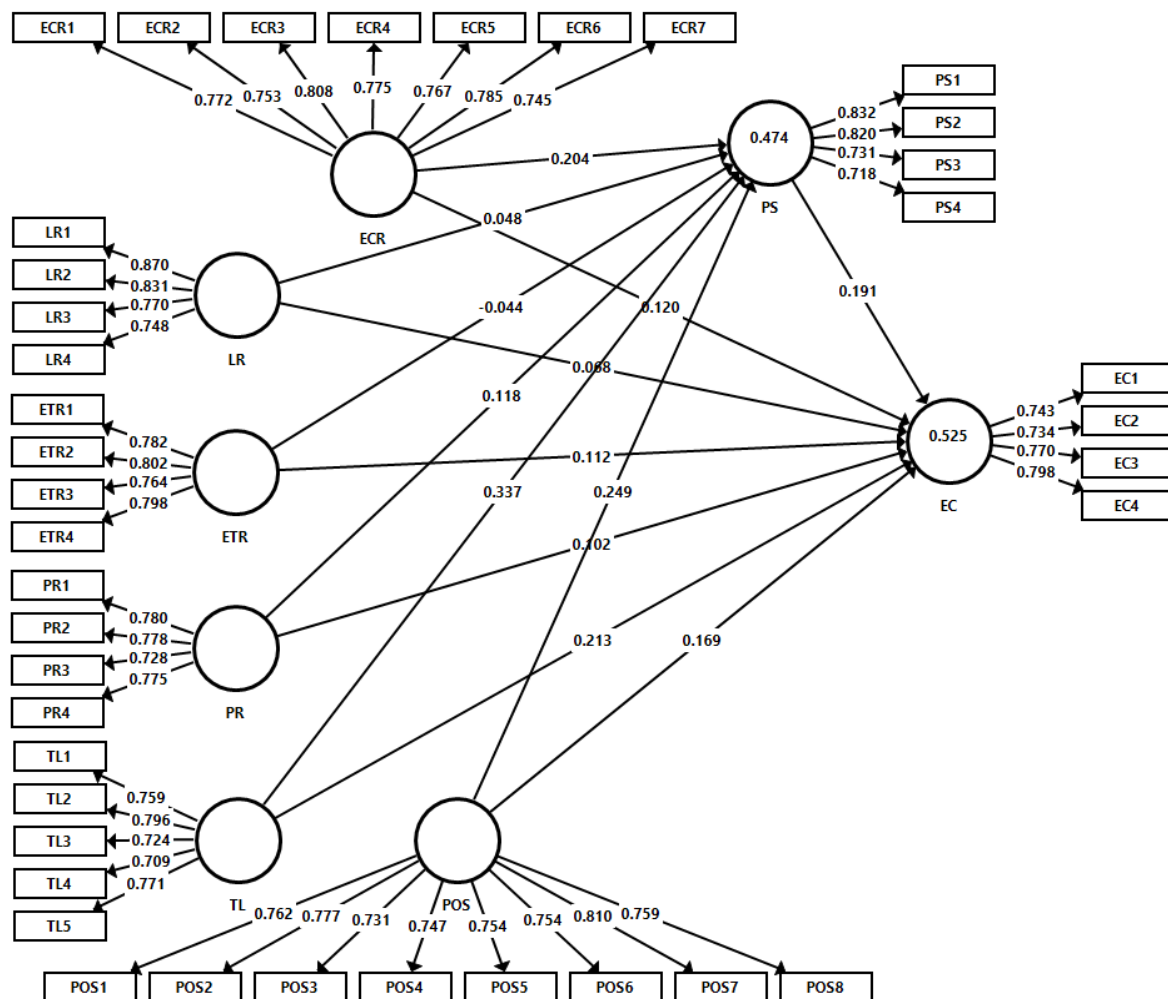


Table 2. Composite Reliability and Dijkstra-Henseler's Rho Reliability Coefficient

	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	Dijkstra-Henseler's Rho (ρ_A)
Economic Responsibility (ECR)	0.888	0.912	0.890
Legal Responsibility (LR)	0.821	0.881	0.833
Ethical Responsibility (ETR)	0.795	0.867	0.796
Philanthropic Responsibility (PR)	0.765	0.850	0.768
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	0.825	0.884	0.824
Transformational Leadership (TL)	0.808	0.867	0.810
Organizational Support (POS)	0.897	0.917	0.900
Psychological Safety (PS)	0.780	0.858	0.784
Employee Creativity (EC)	0.759	0.847	0.765

Table 3. Convergent Validity of First-Order Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	AVE
Economic Responsibility (ECR)	ECR1	0.772	0.597
	ECR2	0.753	
	ECR3	0.808	
	ECR4	0.775	
	ECR5	0.767	
	ECR6	0.785	
	ECR7	0.745	
Legal Responsibility (LR)	LR1	0.870	0.650
	LR2	0.831	
	LR3	0.770	
	LR4	0.748	
Ethical Responsibility (ETR)	ETR1	0.782	0.619
	ETR2	0.802	
	ETR3	0.764	
	ETR4	0.798	
Philanthropic Responsibility (PR)	PR1	0.780	0.586
	PR2	0.778	
	PR3	0.728	
	PR4	0.775	
Transformational Leadership (TL)	TL1	0.759	0.567
	TL2	0.796	
	TL3	0.724	
	TL4	0.709	
	TL5	0.771	
Psychological Safety (PS)	PS1	0.832	0.604
	PS2	0.820	
	PS3	0.731	
	PS4	0.718	
Organizational Support (POS)	POS1	0.762	0.581
	POS2	0.777	
	POS3	0.731	
	POS4	0.747	
	POS5	0.754	
	POS6	0.754	
	POS7	0.810	
	POS8	0.759	
Employee Creativity (EC)	EC1	0.743	0.580
	EC2	0.734	
	EC3	0.770	
	EC4	0.798	

Reliability Test

Table 2 presents the reliability coefficients for various constructs measured in the study, including Cronbach's Alpha (α), Composite Reliability (ρ_c), and Dijkstra-Henseler's Rho (ρ_A). These metrics are used to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the constructs. The constructs evaluated are Economic Responsibility (ECR), Legal Responsibility (LR), Ethical Responsibility (ETR), Philanthropic Responsibility (PR), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Transformational Leadership (TL), Organizational Support (POS), Psychological Safety (PS), and Employee Creativity (EC). All constructs have reliability coefficients well above the generally accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating good to excellent internal consistency. Specifically, the Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.759 to 0.897, Composite Reliability values range from 0.847 to 0.917, and Dijkstra-Henseler's Rho values range from 0.765 to 0.900. These results suggest that the measures used for each construct are reliable, demonstrating strong internal consistency across the board. Consequently, it can be concluded that the constructs of Economic Responsibility, Legal Responsibility, Ethical Responsibility, Philanthropic Responsibility, Corporate Social Responsibility, Transformational Leadership, Organizational Support, Psychological Safety, and Employee Creativity are all reliably measured in this study.

First-Order Measurement Model

A first-order measurement model is a type of measurement model used in structural equation modeling (SEM) where observed variables (indicators) are reflective of their underlying latent constructs. In other words, the constructs are thought to cause the measured variables, and changes in the latent variable are expected to be reflected in changes in the observed indicators. Each indicator is assumed to be a function of the latent construct plus error, suggesting that the indicators are interchangeable and that each one provides redundant information about the construct. The importance of the first-order measurement model lies in its ability to validate the constructs being measured. By confirming that the observed variables accurately reflect the underlying constructs, researchers can ensure that their theoretical constructs are being measured reliably and validly. This is crucial for the integrity of the study, as reliable and valid measurements are fundamental to drawing accurate and meaningful conclusions from the data.

Figure 2 displays all indicators for each construct, namely ECR, LR, ETR, PR, TL, POS, PS, and EC. In this study, the first-order measurement model validates the constructs of ECR, LR, ETR, PR, TL, POS, PS, and EC, ensuring that each construct is accurately represented by

its indicators. This validation is critical for understanding the mediating role of psychological safety in the relationship between organizational antecedents and employee creativity.

Validity Test – Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The research employed a two-stage approach comprising a first-order measurement model and a second-order measurement models, therefore, convergent validity and discriminant validity are analyzed in both stages.

Convergent Validity

Hair et al. (2010) defined convergent validity as the extent to which a high proportion of variance is commonly shared by indicators of a specific construct. In accordance with the suggestion by Hair et al. (2017), this research assesses the factor loadings and AVE of constructs to examine convergent validity. Table 3 exhibits the results of factor loadings and AVE for each construct. The factor loadings for all the items of ECR, LR, ETR, PR, TL, POS, PS and EC are more than the rule of thumb of 0.708, as suggested by Hair et al. (2017). Furthermore, all of the AVE values of the constructs exceed the threshold of 0.50, ranging from 0.567 to 0.650 (Hair et al. 2017). As such, all the constructs in this research achieve the requirements for convergent validity at the first-order stage.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity indicates that a construct represents the phenomena of interest not captured by other constructs (Hair et al. 2010). In accordance with the suggestion by Ramayah et al. (2018), this research assesses discriminant validity based on three criteria, particularly Fornell-Larcker's criterion, cross-loading criterion, and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. Table 4 exhibits that all indicators have high loadings on their constructs but low loadings on the other constructs (Ramayah et al. 2018). Hence, this signifies that the constructs meet the cross-loading criterion and achieve discriminant validity as the constructs are distinct from each other. Moreover, the validity result based on Fornell-Larcker's in Table 5 exhibits that all of the constructs meet the criterion as the square root of each construct's AVE (on the diagonal) is larger than its correlations (off-diagonal) for all reflective constructs (Fornell & Larcker 1981). As such, discriminant validity is established under this criterion. For the HTMT criterion, the result in Table 6 exhibits that all of the HTMT values are lower than 0.85, ranging from 0.320 to 0.772 (Kline 2016). Thus, discriminant validity is achieved under this criterion.

Table 4. Cross-Loading

	ECR	LR	ETR	PR	TL	POS	PS	EC
ECR1	0.772	0.322	0.464	0.348	0.385	0.323	0.377	0.421
ECR2	0.753	0.358	0.376	0.325	0.370	0.249	0.364	0.375
ECR3	0.808	0.418	0.441	0.389	0.407	0.310	0.479	0.461
ECR4	0.775	0.334	0.400	0.323	0.351	0.287	0.374	0.388
ECR5	0.767	0.431	0.406	0.420	0.394	0.225	0.356	0.429
ECR6	0.785	0.400	0.446	0.341	0.363	0.285	0.409	0.411
ECR7	0.745	0.320	0.405	0.323	0.394	0.326	0.418	0.355
LR1	0.337	0.870	0.517	0.478	0.430	0.195	0.376	0.400
LR2	0.466	0.831	0.564	0.493	0.479	0.259	0.448	0.467
LR3	0.329	0.770	0.471	0.512	0.470	0.176	0.287	0.385
LR4	0.397	0.748	0.461	0.472	0.457	0.258	0.316	0.387
ETR1	0.383	0.455	0.782	0.419	0.366	0.283	0.309	0.433
ETR2	0.489	0.509	0.802	0.450	0.471	0.284	0.350	0.421
ETR3	0.378	0.488	0.764	0.385	0.516	0.159	0.343	0.403
ETR4	0.460	0.525	0.798	0.413	0.463	0.326	0.374	0.435
PR1	0.316	0.453	0.412	0.780	0.378	0.227	0.346	0.411
PR2	0.329	0.464	0.342	0.778	0.462	0.256	0.392	0.420
PR3	0.321	0.472	0.400	0.728	0.377	0.155	0.306	0.350
PR4	0.432	0.465	0.471	0.775	0.436	0.270	0.402	0.390
TL1	0.424	0.383	0.426	0.451	0.759	0.276	0.430	0.486
TL2	0.341	0.435	0.425	0.440	0.796	0.203	0.471	0.425
TL3	0.408	0.424	0.478	0.386	0.724	0.265	0.394	0.500
TL4	0.403	0.430	0.467	0.355	0.709	0.198	0.451	0.363
TL5	0.281	0.469	0.379	0.402	0.771	0.203	0.439	0.451
POS1	0.323	0.266	0.255	0.323	0.286	0.762	0.344	0.333
POS2	0.261	0.225	0.278	0.247	0.190	0.777	0.326	0.353
POS3	0.227	0.176	0.276	0.198	0.235	0.731	0.363	0.291
POS4	0.283	0.186	0.244	0.203	0.266	0.747	0.361	0.370
POS5	0.285	0.149	0.220	0.189	0.132	0.754	0.314	0.288
POS6	0.322	0.214	0.275	0.221	0.253	0.754	0.352	0.354
POS7	0.305	0.231	0.262	0.296	0.249	0.810	0.414	0.427
POS8	0.252	0.237	0.234	0.133	0.234	0.759	0.325	0.324
PS1	0.368	0.277	0.262	0.344	0.402	0.369	0.832	0.407
PS2	0.404	0.420	0.387	0.437	0.537	0.339	0.820	0.523
PS3	0.447	0.355	0.400	0.368	0.429	0.379	0.731	0.458
PS4	0.376	0.328	0.289	0.309	0.415	0.347	0.718	0.403
EC1	0.347	0.385	0.371	0.338	0.412	0.336	0.384	0.743
EC2	0.387	0.339	0.415	0.391	0.449	0.363	0.435	0.734
EC3	0.395	0.369	0.374	0.342	0.439	0.317	0.439	0.770
EC4	0.464	0.457	0.467	0.480	0.499	0.364	0.506	0.798

Table 5. Discriminant Validity by Fornell-Larcker's

	EC	ECR	ETR	LR	POS	PR	PS	TL
EC	0.762							
ECR	0.527	0.773						
ETR	0.538	0.544	0.787					
LR	0.512	0.479	0.628	0.807				
POS	0.454	0.371	0.336	0.277	0.762			
PR	0.515	0.458	0.530	0.604	0.300	0.765		
PS	0.583	0.516	0.438	0.450	0.462	0.475	0.777	
TL	0.593	0.493	0.577	0.568	0.305	0.542	0.580	0.753

Table 6. Discriminant Validity by HTMT

	EC	ECR	ETR	LR	POS	PR	PS	TL
EC								
ECR	0.635							
ETR	0.687	0.645						
LR	0.640	0.554	0.772					
POS	0.544	0.414	0.395	0.320				
PR	0.666	0.553	0.681	0.767	0.354			
PS	0.745	0.614	0.547	0.546	0.550	0.605		
TL	0.751	0.582	0.721	0.700	0.355	0.685	0.725	

In conclusion, the first-order measurement model possesses a good level of construct validity as it meets the threshold for both convergent validity (factor loading and AVE) and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker's criterion, cross-loading criterion, and HTMT criterion). Therefore, the CSR construct of the study in the second-order measurement

Second-Order Measurement Model

A second-order measurement model is an advanced type of measurement model in structural equation modeling (SEM) where first-order latent constructs (measured by observed indicators) serve as indicators for a higher-order latent construct. In this model, the higher-order construct is not directly measured by observed variables but rather inferred from

the relationships among the first-order constructs. Essentially, the second-order measurement model posits that the first-order constructs are reflective indicators of the overarching higher-order construct. A second-order measurement model involves multiple layers of constructs. The first layer consists of first-order constructs that are directly measured by observed indicators. The second layer comprises a higher-order construct, which is conceptualized as influencing the first-order constructs. This model suggests that the higher-order construct explains the correlations among the first-order constructs, implying that the higher-order construct captures the commonality among the first-order constructs.

In the context of the study, suppose the constructs Economic Responsibility (ECR), Legal Responsibility (LR), Ethical Responsibility (ETR), and Philanthropic Responsibility (PR) are considered first-order constructs that collectively form the higher-order construct of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Here, CSR is not measured directly by observed indicators but is inferred from its relationship with ECR, LR, ETR, and PR. there are seven path coefficients: three direct paths from CSR, TL, and POS to PS, and four direct paths from CSR, TL, POS, and PS to EC.

Figure 3. Second-Order Measurement Model

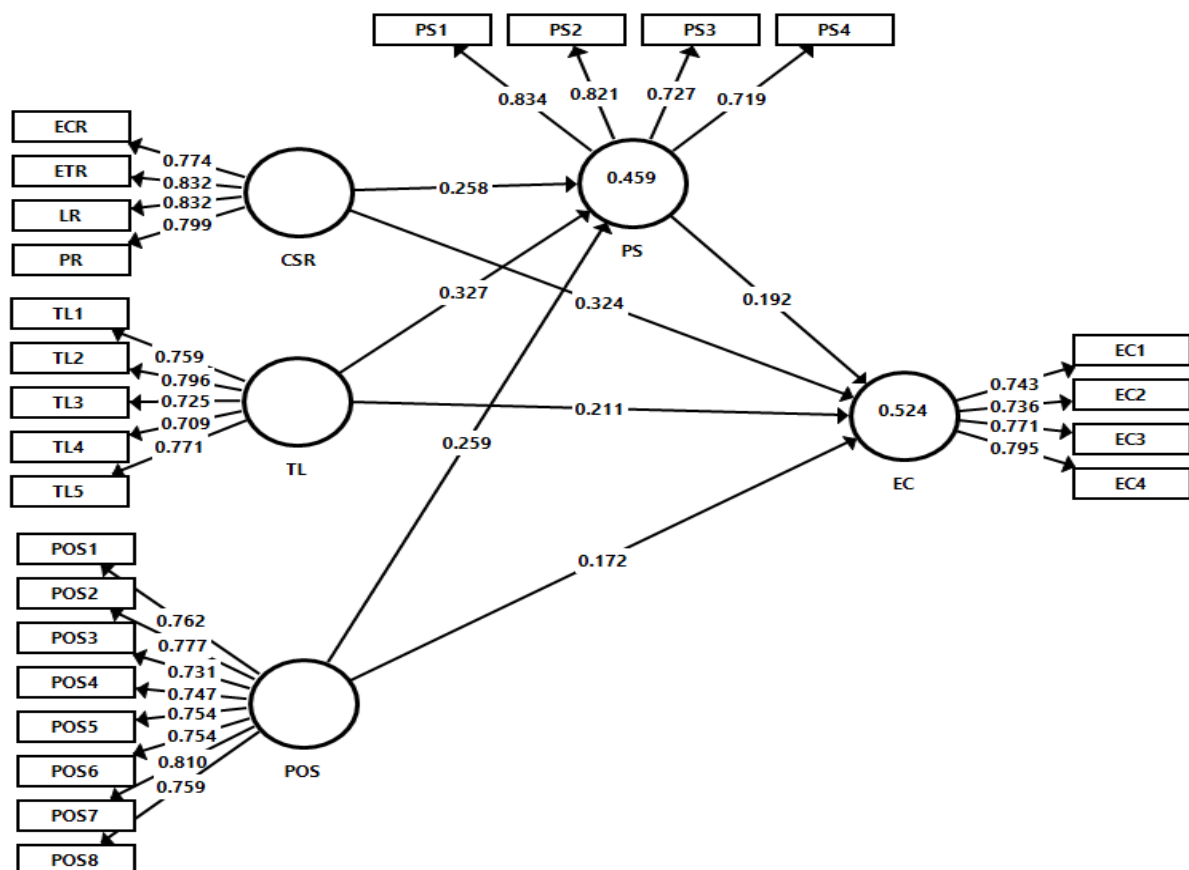


Table 7. Convergent Validity of Second-Order Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	AVE
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	ECR	0.774	0.656
	LR	0.832	
	ETR	0.832	
	PR	0.799	
Transformational Leadership (TL)	TL1	0.759	0.567
	TL2	0.796	
	TL3	0.725	
	TL4	0.709	
	TL5	0.771	
Psychological Safety (PS)	PS1	0.834	0.604
	PS2	0.821	
	PS3	0.727	
	PS4	0.719	
Organizational Support (POS)	POS1	0.762	0.581
	POS2	0.777	
	POS3	0.731	
	POS4	0.747	
	POS5	0.754	
	POS6	0.754	
	POS7	0.810	
	POS8	0.759	
Employee Creativity (EC)	EC1	0.743	0.580
	EC2	0.736	
	EC3	0.771	
	EC4	0.795	

Table 8. Discriminant Validity by Fornell-Larcker's for Second-Order Measurement Model

	CSR	EC	POS	PR	TL
CSR	0.810				
EC	0.646	0.762			
POS	0.398	0.454	0.762		
PS	0.581	0.582	0.461	0.777	
TL	0.673	0.593	0.305	0.580	0.753

Table 9. Cross-Loading for Second-Order Measurement Model

	CSR	TL	POS	PS	EC
ECR	0.774	0.493	0.371	0.516	0.527
LR	0.832	0.568	0.277	0.450	0.511
ETR	0.832	0.577	0.336	0.437	0.537
PR	0.799	0.542	0.300	0.475	0.514
TL1	0.521	0.759	0.276	0.429	0.486
TL2	0.506	0.796	0.203	0.471	0.424
TL3	0.524	0.725	0.265	0.394	0.500
TL4	0.511	0.709	0.198	0.451	0.363
TL5	0.471	0.771	0.203	0.439	0.451
POS1	0.361	0.286	0.762	0.344	0.333
POS2	0.313	0.190	0.777	0.326	0.353
POS3	0.271	0.235	0.731	0.363	0.291
POS4	0.284	0.266	0.747	0.360	0.370
POS5	0.262	0.132	0.754	0.313	0.289
POS6	0.320	0.253	0.754	0.352	0.354
POS7	0.339	0.249	0.810	0.414	0.427
POS8	0.265	0.234	0.759	0.325	0.324
PS1	0.388	0.402	0.369	0.834	0.408
PS2	0.509	0.537	0.339	0.821	0.522
PS3	0.486	0.429	0.379	0.727	0.458
PS4	0.403	0.415	0.347	0.719	0.403
EC1	0.445	0.412	0.336	0.383	0.743
EC2	0.474	0.449	0.363	0.434	0.736
EC3	0.458	0.439	0.317	0.438	0.771
EC4	0.577	0.499	0.364	0.506	0.795

Table 10. Discriminant Validity by HTMT for Second-Order Measurement Model

	CSR	EC	POS	PR	TL
CSR					
EC	0.809				
POS	0.459	0.544			
PS	0.716	0.745	0.550		
TL	0.825	0.751	0.355	0.725	

Convergent Validity

Table 7 shows the factor loadings and AVE for each construct in the second-order measurement model. The factor loadings for all the items of CSR, TL, POS, PS and EC are

more than the cut-off point of 0.708, as suggested by Hair et al. (2017). Furthermore, the AVE of all the constructs exceed the threshold of 0.50, ranging from 0.567 to 0.656 (Hair et al. 2017). As such, all the constructs in this research achieve the requirements for convergent validity at the second-order stage.

Discriminant Validity

The results in Table 8 denote that all constructs meet the Fornell-Larcker's criterion as the square root of each construct's AVE (on the diagonal) is larger than its correlations (off-diagonal) for all reflective constructs. As such, discriminant validity is established under the Fornell-Larcker's criterion. Moreover, Table 9 shows that all indicators have high loadings on their constructs but low loadings on the other constructs. This denotes that the second-order measurement model has achieved discriminant validity under the cross-loading criterion as the constructs are distinct from each other. Lastly, Table 11 exhibits that all HTMT values are lower than 0.85, ranging from 0.355 to 0.825. Thus, discriminant validity is achieved as it meets the criterion.

Result and Discussion

Table 11. Demographic Profiles

Profiles		Frequency	Profiles		Frequency
Gender	Male	73	Working	< 1 years	73
	Female	147	Experiences	1-2 years	48
Age	18-20	9		3-4 years	39
	21-30	157		5-6 years	11
	31-40	40		7-8 years	11
	40-50	13		> 8 years	38
	>51	1			
Education	Certificate	22			
	Diploma	18			
	Adv.	7			
	Diploma				
	Bachelor	168			
	Postgraduate	5			

Table 12. Results of Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Error	t-value	Decision
H1: CSR -> PS	0.258	0.066	3.915**	Supported
H2: TL -> PS	0.327	0.064	5.114**	Supported
H3: POS -> PS	0.259	0.060	4.301**	Supported
H4: CSR -> EC	0.324	0.081	4.013**	Supported
H5: TL -> EC	0.211	0.073	2.888**	Supported
H6: POS -> EC	0.172	0.047	3.685**	Supported
H7: PS -> EC	0.192	0.066	2.911**	Supported

Note: **p-value (<0.05)

Table 11 presents the demographic profiles of the study participants, including their gender, age, working experiences, and education levels. The sample comprises 220 individuals, with a gender distribution of 73 males and 147 females. Regarding age, the majority of participants are between 21-30 years old (157), followed by those aged 31-40 years (40), 40-50 years (13), 18-20 years (9), and one participant over 51 years old. In terms of working experience, the largest group has less than one year of experience (73), followed by those with 1-2 years (48), 3-4 years (39), more than 8 years (38), and equal numbers of participants with 5-6 years and 7-8 years of experience (11 each). Regarding educational qualifications, the majority hold a Bachelor's degree (168), followed by certificate holders (22), diploma holders (18), advanced diploma holders (7), and postgraduate degree holders (5). In conclusion, the demographic profile analysis reveals a diverse sample with a higher representation of females and individuals aged 21-30 years. Most participants have relatively short working experiences, with the majority having less than one year of experience. In terms of education, the predominant qualification is a Bachelor's degree.

The results in Table 12 show that all seven direct relationships have t-values greater than 1.645 (one-tailed), indicating they are significant at the 0.05 level. Specifically, CSR ($\beta = 0.258$, $t = 3.915$, $p < 0.05$), TL ($\beta = 0.327$, $t = 5.114$, $p < 0.05$), and POS ($\beta = 0.259$, $t = 4.301$, $p < 0.05$) are positively related to PS, supporting hypotheses H1, H2, and H3. These findings align with previous studies. For instance, prior research has shown that CSR is positively related to psychological safety (Rupp et al., 2013; Chaudhary, 2019; Mulki, Jaramillo & Locander, 2009). Additionally, studies by Walumbwa & Schaubroeck (2009) and Yin et al. (2020) confirmed that transformational leaders are likely to foster psychological

safety among their followers. Zhou & Pan (2015) also found that transformational leaders who show individualized consideration create a work environment with low risk for self-expression, enhancing psychological safety. Our result further testified that POS has a positive impact on psychological safety which to a large extent aligned with prior studies (Guchait, Pasamehmetoglu & Dawson 2014; Frazier et al. 2017; Adil, Hamid & Waqas 2020; Kin et al., 2018). Furthermore, CSR ($\beta = 0.324$, $t = 4.013$, $p < 0.05$), TL ($\beta = 0.211$, $t = 2.888$, $p < 0.05$), POS ($\beta = 0.172$, $t = 3.685$, $p < 0.05$) and PS ($\beta = 0.192$, $t = 2.911$, $p < 0.05$) are found to have a significant positive direct effect on EC, indicating that H4, H5, H6 and H7 are supported.

This study supports previous research by Abdelmotaleb, Metwally, and Saha (2018) and Reverte, Gómez-Melero, and Cegarra-Navarro (2016), indicating that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) positively impacts employee creativity. Researchers have found that employees play a key role in transforming an organization's CSR investments into business and social value (Aguilera et al., 2007; Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; De Roeck & Farooq, 2018). When organizations engage in CSR, employees are motivated to think creatively and contribute to both organizational and societal improvement (Hur, Moon & Ko, 2018). This research confirms the vital role of CSR in fostering employee creativity. Additionally, the results reaffirm the impact of transformational leadership on employee creativity, showing a significant positive relationship. This finding aligns with previous studies suggesting that transformational leadership promotes critical thinking and motivates followers to generate and express their ideas (Rao, 2014; Chaubey, Sahoo & Khatri, 2019; Schweitzer, 2014). Transformational leaders inspire and encourage participation in decision-making, highlighting the importance of this leadership style in enhancing creativity (Suifan, Abdallah & Janini, 2018). Furthermore, the study finds that perceived organizational support (POS) significantly influences employee creativity ($\beta = 0.172$, $t = 3.685$, $p < 0.05$), hypothesis 6 supported, corroborating previous research (Akgunduz, Alkan & Gok, 2018; Opoku, Apenteng & Boakye, 2022; Zhou & Hoever, 2014). Employees who perceive strong organizational support feel compelled to reciprocate with positive attitudes and creative contributions (Maden, 2015). Hypothesis 7 confirms that psychological safety positively impacts employee creativity ($\beta = 0.192$, $t = 2.911$, $p < 0.05$), consistent with prior studies (Zaman & Abbasi, 2020; Frazier et al., 2017). Psychological safety encourages employees to share concerns, provide support, and collaborate on creative efforts without fear of interpersonal issues (Chen et al., 2020).

Table 13. Results of Mediation Relationship and Hypothesis Testing

Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Error	t-value	Confidence Interval (BC)		Decision
				LL	UL	
H8: CSR -> PS -> EC	0.050	0.020	2.440**	0.016	0.098	Supported
H9: TL -> PS -> EC	0.063	0.025	2.559**	0.023	0.116	Supported
H10: POS -> PS -> EC	0.050	0.023	2.191**	0.013	0.105	Supported

Note: **p< 0.05, BC = Bias Corrected, UL = Upper Level, LL = Lower Level

Table 13 presents the hypotheses testing results for the mediation effects of Psychological Safety (PS) on the relationships between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Transformational Leadership (TL), Perceived Organizational Support (POS), and Employee Creativity (EC). The analysis uses the bootstrapping method with 5000 samples to determine the significance of the indirect effects. The results show that all three mediation hypotheses (H8, H9, and H10) are supported. Specifically, for hypothesis H8, the indirect effect of CSR on EC through PS is significant with a standardized beta (β) of 0.050, a standard error of 0.020, and a t-value of 2.440. The 95% Bias Corrected Confidence Interval (CI) ranges from 0.016 to 0.098, which does not include zero, indicating a significant mediation effect. This result indicates that corporate social responsibility will promote psychological safety, subsequently stimulating employee creativity. Concurring with Hur, Moon & Ko (2018), the researchers assert that when an organisation engages in corporate social responsibility, a caring and supportive climate emerges, and employees are motivated to develop creative ideas that promote the common good.

Similarly, hypothesis H9 demonstrates that the indirect effect of TL on EC through PS is significant with a β of 0.063, a standard error of 0.025, and a t-value of 2.559. The 95% CI ranges from 0.023 to 0.116, also excluding zero, confirming the mediation effect. This result suggests that transformational leadership will foster psychological safety, which subsequently encourages employee creativity. This finding is in line with Schaubroeck, Lam & Peng (2011), where the researchers found that transformational leaders are capable of developing trust among their followers, making them feel safe and fearless to voice their opinions. Lastly, for hypothesis H10, the indirect effect of POS on EC through PS is significant with a β of 0.050, a standard error of 0.023, and a t-value of 2.191. The 95% CI ranges from 0.013 to 0.105, further supporting the mediation effect. This result shows that perceived organizational support (POS) helps create a sense of psychological safety among employees,

which in turn boosts their creativity. This finding is in line with Tang et al. (2017), who found that when employees feel supported by their organization, they are more likely to trust and feel confident, making them more willing to share creative ideas and opinions. Our study builds on these previous studies by offering a more comprehensive model that explains how CSR, transformational leadership, and organizational support, through the mediation of psychological safety, can significantly enhance employee creativity.

The current study makes several contributions to the literature on employee creativity. Firstly, there has been limited empirical research on the factors influencing employee creativity during the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, Mohammed, Ferraris, and Troise (2021) examined the impact of CSR practices on the creativity of hotel employees in Saudi Arabia, with a focus on the mediating role of affective commitment. Meanwhile, Li, Lu, and Eliason (2021) and Tang et al. (2020) studied factors affecting employee creativity in China during the pandemic. However, no prior research has explored this domain in Malaysia. Therefore, our findings add to the existing theory by incorporating CSR (organizational commitment to stakeholders' welfare beyond economic and legal obligations), transformational leadership (a leadership style that emphasizes followers' needs and shared values), and perceived organizational support (employees' perceptions of organizational appreciation for their contributions and well-being) as key antecedents of employee creativity in Malaysia during these uncertain times.

Previous studies have focused on the impact of CSR on macro-level organizational outcomes, emphasizing external stakeholders such as shareholders and customers (Cho, Chung & Young, 2019; Ruiz & García, 2021; Calveras & Ganuza, 2018). However, there is a scarcity of research on the impact of CSR on micro-level outcomes like employee creativity and its mediating mechanisms (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Kim, Kim & Kim, 2021). This study addresses this gap by focusing on employees as internal stakeholders affected by CSR practices. Lastly, despite the growing body of research on employee creativity, most studies view it from an organizational perspective (Guo et al., 2021). There is still insufficient exploration of the underlying reasons that motivate employees to engage in creative behaviors. This research integrates the role of psychological safety (the common belief among team members that it is safe to take interpersonal risks at work without negative consequences to their status and self-image) and examines how psychological safety mediates the relationship between CSR, transformational leadership, perceived organizational support, and employee creativity.

For practical implications, our current findings serve as a valuable guide for organizations aiming to stimulate employee creativity, especially when facing unpredictable external crises like the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Employees, as members of the community, value their organization's investments in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). These investments are likely to be transformed into business and social value, as emphasized by prior researchers (Aguilera et al., 2007; Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; De Roeck & Farooq, 2018). When an organization is dedicated to enhancing stakeholders' welfare beyond merely fulfilling economic goals and legal obligations, employees are motivated to exhibit higher creativity, contributing to both organizational and societal improvement (Hur, Moon & Ko, 2018). Therefore, this research raises managerial awareness that it is timely to review CSR policies to foster employee creativity and add value to society.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of the leadership style adopted by leaders and managers. As posited by Rao (2014), transformational leaders who reinforce values among followers and motivate them encourage change and creativity in organizations. Our findings suggest that managers should adopt a transformational leadership style to inspire employees to contribute novel ideas. To reinforce this effect, managers should motivate employees to think outside the box and ensure they are not criticized even if their new ideas are not workable in the end (Herrmann & Felfe, 2014). Providing employees with psychological assurance that it is safe to take risks, even under uncertain circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic, is crucial.

Additionally, this research underscores the impact of employees' perception of organizational support on their creativity. When employees perceive greater organizational support, they tend to reciprocate with positive work attitudes that benefit the organization. Thus, organizations should offer more support to employees, such as recognizing their contributions and providing sufficient resources to tackle challenges arising from implementing new ideas (Yew, 2011). Furthermore, organizations should regularly organize training programs for employees to foster constant development in their mindset, thereby improving their extra-role performance, such as engaging in creative behaviors (Sabir et al., 2020).

Conclusion and Suggestion

Our findings reveal that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), transformational leadership, and perceived organizational support play significant roles in fostering psychological safety among employees. When organizations actively engage in CSR

activities, employees feel a greater sense of commitment and trust towards their organization, which enhances their psychological safety. Transformational leadership, characterized by leaders who inspire, motivate, and value their employees, also contributes significantly to creating a safe and supportive work environment. Additionally, when employees perceive that their organization values their contributions and well-being, they are more likely to experience psychological safety, feeling secure and supported in their roles.

Furthermore, our study shows that CSR, transformational leadership, perceived organizational support, and psychological safety collectively enhance employee creativity. Organizations that invest in CSR and demonstrate a commitment to ethical and philanthropic practices encourage employees to think creatively and innovate. Transformational leaders, by motivating and empowering their teams, further stimulate creative thinking and the generation of novel ideas. Perceived organizational support also fosters a positive work atmosphere where employees feel valued and are thus more willing to engage in creative activities. Psychological safety acts as a critical factor, providing employees with the confidence to express their ideas and take risks without fear of negative consequences, thereby promoting creativity.

Lastly, our research confirms that psychological safety mediates the relationships between CSR, transformational leadership, perceived organizational support, and employee creativity. This mediation effect underscores the importance of creating a psychologically safe environment as a conduit through which the positive influences of CSR, transformational leadership, and organizational support can be fully realized. Employees who feel psychologically safe are more likely to leverage the supportive and ethical climate fostered by their organization and leaders to engage in creative processes, leading to higher levels of innovation and creative output.

However, this study also finds limitations. The data were collected from employees in Malaysia across various industries and job positions, making the findings quite general and not specific to any one industry. While creativity is essential in industries like hospitality, design, advertising, and film, it may be less crucial in sectors with standard operating procedures such as financial services and manufacturing. Additionally, the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic varied across industries, affecting the levels of creativity required from employees differently. Although the sample may represent the overall Malaysian workforce, the results might not apply to all industries. Future research should focus on specific sectors to obtain more detailed insights. This study also examined external factors affecting

employee creativity, such as CSR practices, transformational leadership, and perceived organizational support, which employees might not fully understand. Other factors like personality traits and stress-coping abilities could also influence creativity. Future studies could use qualitative methods and consider personality-related factors like self-esteem and risk preference to provide deeper insights. Conducting post-pandemic research would also be valuable as countries move towards endemicity.

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