



Psychological safety climate and professional drivers' well-being: The mediating role of time pressure



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ABSTRACT

Professional drivers are at risk of poor well-being, thus, research on how to prevent this status has valuable practical implications. Psychological safety climate, individual perceptions of the safety climate, and time pressure are relevant antecedents of drivers' well-being. Psychological safety climate acts as a frame of reference for professional drivers because they are remote/lone workers. Time pressure also becomes crucial among drivers who reported higher quantitative job demands and work intensification than employees in other industrial sectors. In addition, several theoretical frameworks suggest that psychological safety climate would minimize time pressure demands, which, in turn, would mediate the relationship between psychological safety climate and drivers' well-being. Psychological safety climate would diminish time pressure demands because they could be detrimental to safety, in turn, low time pressure demands would be accompanied by an improvement in drivers' well-being. To date, research on these issues is scarce.

This study examines the mediating role of time pressure on the psychological safety climate and drivers' well-being (general health and lack of burnout) relationship. The sample was composed of 367 professional drivers, and structural equation modeling was used to test two competing models: full and partial mediation. Findings showed that psychological safety climate was negatively associated with time pressure and positively with drivers' general health and burnout. Time pressure was detrimental to drivers' well-being, and it partially mediated the relationship between psychological safety climate and drivers' well-being.

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1. Introduction

Employees in the transport sector reported that work affects their health negatively more likely than employees from other sectors (Sixth European Working Conditions Survey) (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions -Eurofound-, 2016). Thus, research on how to promote professional drivers' well-being has relevant practical implications for policymakers across Europe.

Psychological safety climate and time pressure are relevant antecedents of drivers well-being. The psychological safety climate acts as a relevant frame of reference for lone/remote workers, such as drivers (Huang et al., 2013a), because they work alone and without in-person direct supervision or support from others (Huang et al., 2013b). With respect to time

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pressure, it is a crucial stressor among drivers (e.g., Cœugnet, Naveteur, Antoine, & Anceaux, 2013; Dorn, Stephen, af Wählberg, & Gandolfi, 2010; Naveteur, Cœugnet, Charron, Dorn, & Anceaux, 2013; Paillé, 2011); indeed, employees in the transport sector reported higher quantitative job demands related to time pressure (working at very high speed, working to tight deadlines, frequent disruptive interruptions, and not having enough time to do the job) than those pertaining to other sectors (Eurofound, 2016).

Burnout and general health were selected as indicators of drivers' well-being at work. Several meta-analyses (Alarcon, 2011; Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010) have evidenced that burnout increases due to high job demands, which are typical of professional drivers. Likewise, general health was selected to reflect the effect of those job demands on overall health.

This study examines the relationship between psychological safety climate and drivers' general health and burnout and the mediating role of time pressure in these relationships. The study has been conducted with a sample of professional drivers—remote/lone workers—dedicated to the transportation of either goods or passengers. In contrast to traditional work settings, in remote working environments, interaction with coworkers and supervisors is limited because they do not share the same work location throughout the day (e.g., professional drivers, utility/electrical workers) (Huang, Lee, McFadden, Rineer, & Robertson, 2017).

This study extends previous research in several ways. First, research on the antecedents of drivers' well-being is less developed as compared to research on driving performance both in the field of safety climate research (Amponsah-Tawiah & Mensah, 2016; Huang et al., 2017; Naveh & Katz-Navon, 2015; Öz & Lajunen, 2014; Zohar, Huang, Lee, & Robertson, 2015; Zohar & Lee, 2016) and in the stress field (Cœugnet et al., 2013; Ge et al., 2014; Qu, Zhang, Zhao, Zhang, & Ge, 2016; Rendon-Velez et al., 2016; Rowden, Matthews, Watson, & Biggs, 2011).

Second, the mechanisms underlying the linkage between psychological safety climate and individuals' well-being remain unexplored. Third, previous research has focused on the effect of composite measures of job demands on well-being (e.g., Alarcon, 2011; Consiglio, Borgogni, Alessandri, & Schaufeli, 2013), neglecting the single effect of specific demands, such as time pressure, which are critical among professional drivers. Finally, research conducted in remote working environments is scarce and should be encouraged (Huang et al., 2014).

1.1. Psychological safety climate correlates: time pressure and professional drivers' well-being

Psychological safety climate refers to individual perceptions (James & James, 1989) of policies, practices, and procedures focused on safety (Christian, Bradley, Wallace, & Burke, 2009; Zohar, 2010) and their interrelationship with those related to other competing goals (e.g., productivity or efficiency) that establish the relative priority of safety (Zohar, 2003). This study focuses on psychological safety climate rather than group safety climate—shared perceptions among employees in a particular work environment—in accordance with other studies based on remote/lone workers (Amponsah-Tawiah & Mensah, 2016; Huang et al., 2013a, 2017; Zohar et al., 2015). Remote/lone workers, due to their limited interaction with coworkers and supervisors, do not have many opportunities to reconcile their individual perceptions with their coworker's perceptions, which makes the emergence of shared safety climate perceptions difficult (Huang et al., 2017; Zohar et al., 2015).

Several theoretical arguments suggest that psychological safety climate may diminish time pressure. Organizational climates have been featured as an antecedent of job demands (Hemingway & Smith, 1999; Morgeson, Dierdorff, & Hmurovic, 2010; Wilson, Dejoy, Vandenberg, Richardson, & Mcgrath, 2004) that enable or constrain the ultimate form job demands might take. Organizational climates shape which job demands become relevant at work, their meaning, and their salience (Morgeson et al., 2010). For instance, safety climate policies and practices will guide managers and employees to value safety against other organizational goals, such as production, and to make time pressure manageable. Seemingly, according to social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), psychological safety climate would make any information related to safety more prominent and would set lower expectations of time pressure to prevent safety degradation due to pressure toward cost-effectiveness (Rasmussen, 1997, 2000).

Even though these theoretical arguments support the linkage between psychological safety climate and time pressure, this relationship remains unexplored. Additionally, research on the influence of other facet-specific aspects of organizational climate on different job-specific demands is inconclusive (e.g., Idris, Dollard, Coward, & Dormann, 2012). Several authors (Dollard et al., 2012) have provided longitudinal evidence on the cross-level positive effect of climate for psychological well-being on workload (Dollard et al., 2012), work pressure (Dollard & Bakker, 2010), and emotional demands (Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Idris, Dollard, & Yulita, 2014). However, Idris et al. (2012) showed partial support for the influence of team climate for psychological well-being on workload, psychological (e.g., work pace), and emotional demands. Moreover, unexpectedly, none of the other climate measures included in this study (team psychological climate and climate for physical safety) were associated with job demands. Thus, more research is needed about the relationship between facet-specific organizational climates and job-specific demands.

To respond to this research lacuna, this study examines the relationship between psychological safety climate and time pressure. Based on the above-mentioned theoretical arguments and previous inconclusive findings, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1. Psychological safety climate will be negatively associated with time pressure.

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