Psychological Safety of NEUST-SIC Employees

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Abstract- *This study aimed to determine the Psychological safety of faculty and non-teaching personnel at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology San Isidro Campus. The descriptive method was utilized using the Psychological Safety instrument " developed by Edmondson (2018). In determining the profiles of demographic variables (age, gender, educational attainment, years of service, position) and Psychological safety, Frequencies-Percentage was used. Descriptive statistics was also utilized to describe and determine the respondents in terms of their level of psychological safety. The research is consisted of 53 respondents , faculty and non-teaching personnel presently employed at NEUST San Isidro campus. According to research findings, the majority of the respondents have some psychological safety but could increase, and only a few have a good amount of psychological safety. Finally, the findings suggest that the administration should sustain its rapport among the faculty and staff members by continuously breaking the barriers that exist between the members and leader, keeping the doors open for new ideas and innovations, and providing a larger space for improvements..*

Key Words: *faculty, Psychological safety, Non- teaching personnel*

1.INTRODUCTION

Psychological safety is the belief that one can speak up without fear of punishment or humiliation. It has long been recognized as a critical driver of high-quality decision making, healthy group dynamics and interpersonal relationships, more significant innovation, and more effective organizational execution (Edmondson & Mortensen, 2021). Amy Edmondson, a professor at Harvard Business School, coined the term psychological safety. She defines it as "a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking." Creating a psychologically safe environment allows people to speak up and share their ideas.

Edmondson emphasized psychological safety as an important factor for high-performing teams. Recently, Google's (2019) research on the characteristics of high-performing teams identified psychological safety as the top indicator of a team's performance. Teams with strong psychological safety are less afraid of the negative consequences that may result from taking smart risks; making mistakes; sharing their opinions within their team; being candid with one another. As a result, these teams are more likely to share their perspectives when they differ from one another (e.g., avoid groupthink) and to take the initiative when it matters the most (Bosler, 2021).

In the education setting, 2020 has pushed the limits of psychological safety in every possible way. There are plenty of things demanding administrators take a more active role in creating safe spaces for their institution, from regular face to face classes to synchronous and asynchronous methods; to a pandemic that plunged us into an economic crisis, turning homes into both offices and schools overnight. As one institution, open communication and transparency are crucial in planning, designing, and implementing new rules and regulations. Everyone's contribution matters as it manifests respect to one another. Respect is an important component in any workplace because it motivates employees to work hard because their efforts are

recog nized (Khan, 2020), and their perspectives are valued without being dismissed or misconstrued.

Organizations that feel empowered to share their perspectives with one another, especially when their opinions differ from the rest of the group, are better able to leverage the knowledge and talent that each member brings to the organization. These groups are more likely to take the initiative and look at the big picture in each situation. As a result, the organization is able to innovate and find effective solutions. Thus, Psychological safety is critical to an organization's ability to give and receive candid, respectful feedback. More importantly, for an organization to build a stronger feedback culture, take a look at employee perceptions of psychological safety as a starting point (Bosler, 2021).

1.1 Objectives :

This study determines the Psychological Safety of NEUST as perceived by the faculty and staff members. Specifically, it will provide significant answers to achieve the following objectives: Determine the profile of the respondents in terms of Gender, Age, Designation or position, Educational qualifications, Employment status, and years of service. It also aims to Identify the psychological safety of the respondents according to their profile, the overall psychological safety of NEUST-SIC employees and the implications of the study to the NEUST-SIC administration.

1.2 Methodology

. A descriptive research design was used to determine the Psychological safety at NEUST San Isidro campus.. Purposive Sampling was used in this study. Faculty and non-teaching personnel at NEUST San Isidro campus were the respondents of the study. 53 respondents (fifty-three) from NEUST-SIC voluntarily participated in the study. The survey questionnaire consists of two major parts. The first part comprised questions regarding socio-demographic status(Age, Gender, position, length of service, educational attainment, employment status). The second part is Psychological safety instrument

developed by Edmondson (2018). The scale consists of 5 questions .The gathering of data was done using online Google form as the questionnaire and were sent using the respondent's email or through FB messenger.

The researcher asked permission to conduct the study from the Campus Director of the University. Before the respondents answers the survey questionnaire, the researcher gave informed consent to the respondents.

The data from the Google Form were entered in Microsoft Excel and were analyzed . Percentage, frequency and average were also used.
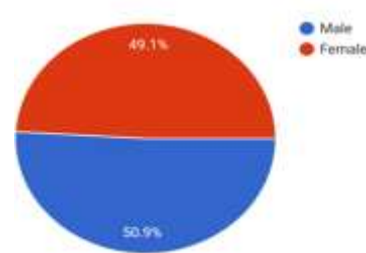
2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Chart -1: Gender

The data shows that 50.9% of the respondents are female, while 49.1% are male. This information is consistent with the gender distribution reported in studies on psychological safety. (Meredith, 2020; Workhuman, 2024).

A study investigating sex differences in psychological stress responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in China found significant differences between males and females (Yan et al., 2021). Another study explored the relationship between psychological safety and team effectiveness, finding a positive correlation between psychological safety and individual satisfaction as well as task performance (Mogård et al., 2022).
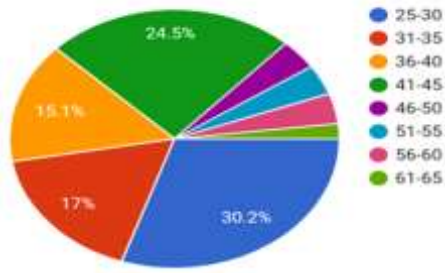
teaching personnel, which could include administrative staff, researchers, or other support roles (Sage Publications, n.d.). This distribution highlights the importance of considering the diverse roles within an academic institution when examining psychological research and data analysis (Azusa Pacific University, n.d.).

Chart -2: Age

Chart 2 depicts the age distribution of the respondents. The majority of respondents, or 30%, are between the ages of 25 and 30, while 24.5 percent are between 41 and 45. Only 17% are between the ages of 31 and 35, while 15% are between 36 and 40.

The findings suggest that participants are in the early to mid-career stage, with the largest proportion falling within the 25-30 age range. This demographic distribution is consistent with the findings of other studies on psychological safety, which have reported that age can impact perceptions of psychological safety (Latessa et al., 2023; Thyness et al., 2023)
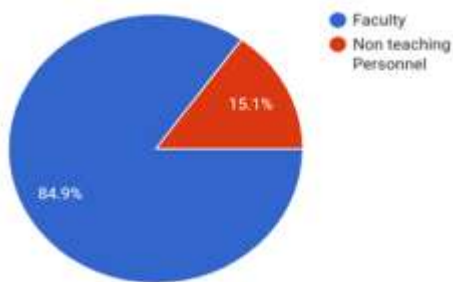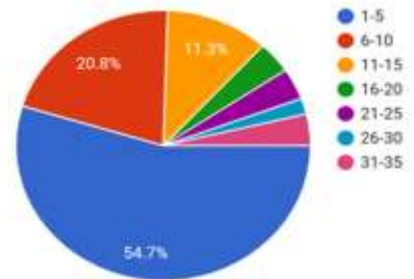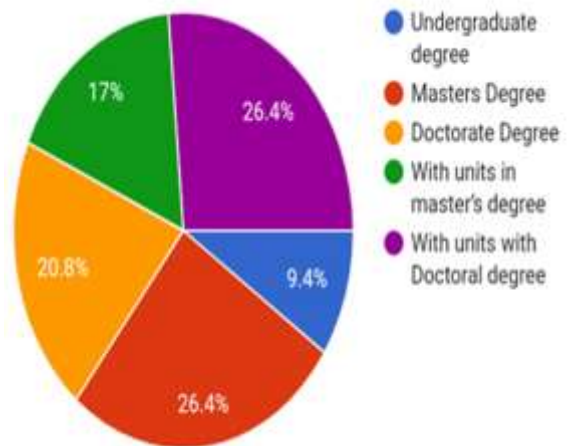
Chart -4: Years in Service

As can be gleaned from Chart 4, most respondents have 1-5 years of service in the university, indicating a relatively young workforce or high turnover rate (Christopher, n.d.). Additionally, 20.8% have 6-10 years of service, suggesting a moderate level of experience and stability within the institution (Psychology, O. S. U., n.d.). However, only 11.3% have 11-15 years of service, implying that long-term employees are a minority in the university's workforce (Sage Publications, n.d.). This distribution of service years highlights the need for strategies to retain experienced personnel and foster a balanced mix of new and seasoned employees to maintain institutional knowledge and continuity (Azusa Pacific University, n.d.).

Chart-3: Position /Designation

The data reveals that the majority of the respondents, 84.9.%, are faculty members, indicating a significant presence of academic professionals in the study (Christopher, n.d.). This suggests that the study is likely focused on the perspectives and experiences of those directly involved in teaching and research (Psychology, O. S. U., n.d.). The remaining 15.1% of respondents are non-

Chart -
5 Educational Attainment

Chart 5 illustrates the percentage distribution of the respondents' educational attainment, revealing that 26% are master's degree holders, with a significant proportion of respondents also having earned units in a doctorate (Christopher, n.d.). Additionally, 20.8% of the respondents have completed a doctorate degree, indicating a strong emphasis on advanced education within the institution (Psychology, O. S. U., n.d.). Furthermore, only 17% have earned units in a master's degree, suggesting that the majority of respondents have achieved higher levels of education (Sage Publications, n.d.). This distribution highlights the importance of considering the educational background of respondents when examining their perspectives and experiences (Azusa Pacific University, n.d.).

psychological safety, but there is room for improvement (Newman et al., 2017).

PART 2 . **Psychological safety of the respondents according to their profile**

Table 1. Psychological Safety in terms of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Average	Description
Female	26	49.10	24.60	Has some Psychological safety but could increase it
Male	27	50.90	24.33	Has some Psychological safety But could increase it
Total	53	100	24.46	Has some Psychological safety but could increase it

The psychological safety scores for both male and female respondents are presented in Table 1 (Latessa et al., 2023). Although there is a slight difference in the average scores, with females having a higher average of 24.60 compared to males with an average of 24.33, both scores fall within the same description (Thyness & Edmondson, 2020). This suggests that both genders have some level of

Table 2. Psychological safety in terms of Age

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage	Average	Description
25-30	16	30.18	24.50	has some psychological safety but could increase it
31-35	9	16.98	25.44	has some psychological safety but could increase it
36-40	8	15.09	23.87	has some psychological safety but could increase it
41-45	13	24.52	24.15	has some psychological safety but could increase it
46-50	2	3.77	24.50	has some psychological safety but could increase it
51-55	2	3.77	23	has some psychological safety but could increase it
56-60	2	3.77	26.5	has some psychological safety but could increase it
61-65	1	1.88	22	has some psychological safety but could increase it
TOTAL	53	100	24.245	has some psychological safety but could increase it

Table
2 presents the psychological safety of the respondents in terms of age. The result revealed that respondents aged 56-60 have the highest average in psychological safety. Nevertheless, when grouped according to their ages, the average scores of all the respondents fit in the same description, which is having some psychological safety but could increase it. Psychological safety describes "a workplace where one feels that one's voice is welcome with bad news, questions, concerns, half-baked ideas and even mistakes. People should feel free to ask questions, express concerns, and pitch ideas without fear of repercussions (Stieg, 2020). One of the characteristics of psychological safety is that people feel comfortable expressing their opinions and are not afraid of being judged.

Table 3 . Frequency Distribution of Psychological Safety Scores of Faculty and Non-teaching

Score	Faculty	Non-teaching
16-30	42	8
31- Above	3	0
Total	45	8

Table 3 presents the frequency distribution of Psychological Safety of faculty and non-teaching. Among 45 faculty members, 42 of them scored 16-30, while only 3 respondents got a score of 31 and above. On the other hand, all non-teaching respondents scored 16-30 while none of them got a score of 31 and above.

The findings support Edmodson's (2018) study, which found that lower-status team members feel less safe than higher-status team members. Research also shows that we are constantly assessing our relative status, monitoring how we stack up against others, mostly subconsciously. Furthermore, those with lower-status hierarchies experience stress in the presence of those with higher status. Psychological safety has been found to differ significantly across groups even in some with famously strong corporate cultures. Edmonson's preliminary research also revealed that different groups have varying interpersonal experiences.

Table 4. Psychological Safety in terms of Position

Position	Frequency	Percentage	Average	Description
Faculty	45	84.905	24.78	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Non-teaching	8	15.094	22.62	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Total	53	100	23.70	has some psychological safety but could increase it

Table 4 shows the psychological safety of the respondents in terms of their positions. Faculty members got a higher average of 24.78%, compared to non-teaching, who got 22.62. Even so, both groups have the same psychological descriptions, which is having psychological safety but could increase it. A recent study conducted by Dramanu,et.al (2020) revealed that both psychological flexibility and perception of psychological safety were significant positive predictors of senior high school teachers' work engagement. Also, psychological flexibility significantly moderated the effect of psychological safety on work engagement. The study concluded that psychological safety is an essential determinant of both the perception of psychological safety and work engagement. School system leaders, including principals, have an ethical responsibility to develop and implement policies and programs that promote psychological safety in the workplace. Simply discussing a psychologically safe workplace will not

result

in its implementation. Leaders who are committed to maintaining a healthy/safe workplace must take deliberate action. It is critical to address psychological health and safety.

Table 5. Psychological Safety in terms of Employment Status

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Average	Description
Permanent	39	73.584	24.07	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Contractual	10	18.867	25.8	has some psychological safety but could increase it
probationary	2	3.773	23	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Others	2	3.773	22	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Total	53	100	23.7175	has some psychological safety but could increase it

Table 5 presents the psychological safety of the respondents in terms of employment status. Contractual employees got the highest psychological safety average of 24.07, followed by those under permanent positions with 24.07. Probationary and others got the average scores of 23 and 22, respectively. However, all respondents' psychological safety average has the same description, which has some psychological safety but could increase it. Psychological safety in the workplace is crucial because it fosters an inclusive workplace culture, making all team members feel included is more important than ever. It also improves employee engagement because when team members feel safe at work, they are more likely to participate in team meetings, solve problems, collaborate on projects, and interact with peers. Furthermore, safe teams encourage employees to be fully present at work rather than dozing off or counting the hours until the workday is done (Jimenez, 2021).

Table 6.Psychological safety in terms of Years in Service

Years in Service	Frequency	Percentage	Average	Description
1-5	29	54.716	24.06	has some psychological safety but could increase it
6-10	11	20.754	25.81	has some psychological safety but could increase it
11-15	6	11.320	24.16	has some psychological safety but could increase it
16-20	2	3.773	25.5	has some psychological safety but could increase it
21-25	2	3.773	25.5	has some psychological safety but could increase it
26-30	1	1.886	27	has some psychological safety but could increase it
31-35	2	3.773	24	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Total	53	100	25.15	has some psychological safety but could increase it

Table 6 shows that in terms of years in service, the respondents' psychological safety average scores have one common description which is having some psychological safety but could increase it. Respondent who is 26-30 years in service got the highest average of 27, while respondents with 31-35 years of service got the lowest average of 24. According to a recent study of People Management Report (2021), team members who feel psychologically safe at work are less likely to leave. Employees also feel more comfortable taking risks, asking for help from other team members, and easily discussing difficult problems and issues (Delizonna, 2017).

involving, reaching, and impacting every education professional in any school.

Table 7. Psychological Safety in terms of Educational attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage	Average	Description
Undergraduate degree	5	9.43	23.8	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Masters' degree	14	26.41	23.92	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Doctorate degree	11	20.75	22.18	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Units earned in MA/MS	9	16.98	26.11	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Units earned in Doctoral	14	26.41	24.07	has some psychological safety but could increase it
Total	53	100.00	24.016	has some psychological safety but could increase it

Table 7 presents the psychological safety of the respondents in terms of educational attainment. As gleaned on the table, employees who earned units in doctoral degrees got the highest psychological safety average of 26. 11, while employees with doctoral degrees got the lowest rank with a 22.18 psychological safety average. Nevertheless, when grouped according to educational attainment, the respondents' scores in psychological safety have the same interpretation, which is having some psychological safety but could increase it. Creating and maintaining psychological safety in the workplace is important, especially in environments where learning, knowledge sharing, and collaboration are essential. Error reporting and innovation are crucial components of any business, including schools, colleges, and universities (Edmondson, 2020). Creating and maintaining a psychological safety culture entails approaches and activities
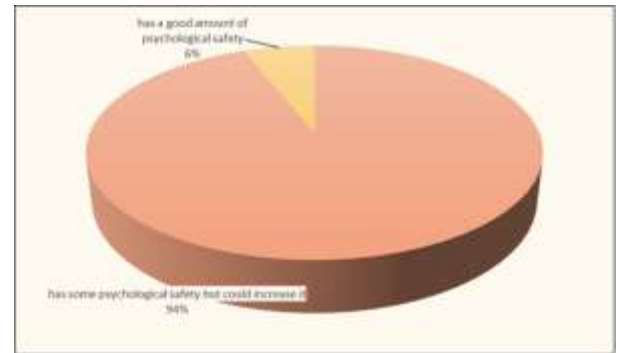

Chart-6 Psychological Safety

Chart-6 presents the over-all psychological safety of NEUST-SIC Employees According to the data, 94% of the respondents have some psychological safety but could increase it, while only 6 % have a good amount of psychological safety. Over-all, NEUST-SIC employees have some Psychological Safety but could increase it. This means that NEUST-SIC employees can ask questions about things they don't understand during meetings, raise difficult issues, concerns, and reservations about specific pieces of work without fear of being judged or rejected. Furthermore, it implies that NEUST –SIC provides its employees with a psychologically safe environment. When members of a team engage in learning behaviors such as asking for help, seeking feedback, admitting errors or lack of knowledge, trying something new, or voicing work-related dissenting views, they share the belief that they will not be exposed to interpersonal or social threats to their self or identity, status or standing, or career or employment within the team (Kaloudis, 2019). According to research, the absence of threats such as being labelled negatively as ignorant, incompetent, or disruptive is strongly associated with team members bringing their whole self to work, expressing their creativity, talents, and skills without self-censoring or self-silencing, and learning actively on the job to develop their capabilities and those of their team.

Part 4.
What are the implications of the study to the NEUST-SIC administration?

NEUST –SIC is a psychologically safe environment that welcomes all employees' suggestions or opinions without being rejected. The administration respects the employees, ensures everybody has a voice, and plays an essential role in the organization. Thus, the administration may sustain its rapport among the faculty and staff members by continuously breaking the barriers that exist between the members and leader, keeping the doors open for new ideas and innovations, and providing a larger space for improvements. As what Edmondson (2020) stated, workplace psychological safety necessitates effort. It's not typical. But the effort is worthwhile. Leaders who foster psychologically safe work environments have lower employee turnover on their teams. To keep top performers, companies must ensure psychological safety throughout the organization. Like any major initiative, it must begin at the top with executive support (Barnett, 2021).

3. CONCLUSION

1. NEUST-SIC employees, if grouped in terms of gender, age, designation/position, educational qualifications, employment status and years in service have some psychological safety but could increase it.

2. Majority of the respondents have some psychological safety but could increase it, while only 6 % have a good amount of psychological safety.

3. NEUST –SIC is a psychologically safe environment that welcomes all employees' suggestions or opinions without being rejected. The administration respects the employees, ensures everybody has a voice, and plays an essential role in the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The administration should sustain its rapport among the faculty and staff members by continuously breaking the barriers that exist between the members and leader, keeping the doors open for new ideas and innovations, and providing a larger space for improvements.

2. To increase the amount of employees' psychological safety, the administration should demonstrate engagement by letting the employees feel their leaders' presence and concern, and include all the employees in decision-making.

3. The same study should be conducted to the employees of NEUST in all satellite and extension campuses to further motivate both leaders and employees to work in a psychologically safe institution

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