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Investigating the Relationship Between Prosocial Rule Breaking and Quality of Life with the Mediating Role of Psychological Safety Among Women Employed in Government Offices in Ahvaz

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between prosocial rule breaking and quality of life with the mediating role of psychological safety among women employed in governmental offices in Ahvaz.

Methods and Materials: This study was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlational in terms of methodology using structural equation modeling (SEM). The statistical population consisted of women employed in governmental offices in Ahvaz, from whom 385 participants were selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Prosocial Rule Breaking Questionnaire developed by Vardaman et al. (2014), the World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire–Short Form (WHOQOL-BREF), and Edmondson's Psychological Safety Questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 and AMOS version 25. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients, and structural equation modeling were employed to examine the relationships among the research variables and test the conceptual model.

Findings: The results revealed significant positive relationships among prosocial rule breaking, psychological safety, and quality of life. Prosocial rule breaking had a positive and significant effect on psychological safety (β = .580). Psychological safety also demonstrated a positive and significant effect on quality of life (β = .390). In addition, the direct effect of prosocial rule breaking on quality of life was positive and significant (β = .230). The indirect effect of prosocial rule breaking on quality of life through psychological safety was confirmed (β = .226), indicating the mediating role of psychological safety in this relationship. The structural model demonstrated a desirable fit with the data (χ^2/df = 2.38, CFI = .951, RMSEA = .060). Furthermore, prosocial rule breaking explained 33.6% of the variance in psychological safety, while prosocial rule breaking and psychological safety together explained 41.2% of the variance in quality of life.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that prosocial rule breaking, when occurring within psychologically safe organizational environments, can contribute positively to employees' quality of life. Psychological safety plays a significant mediating role by reducing fear of negative consequences and encouraging constructive organizational behaviors. Therefore, creating supportive and psychologically secure workplace climates may enhance employees' well-being, organizational participation, and adaptive performance among women employed in governmental organizations.

Keywords: *Prosocial rule breaking, quality of life, psychological safety, employed women.*

1. Introduction

In contemporary organizational environments, employees' quality of life has become one of the most important indicators of organizational effectiveness and sustainable human resource development. Organizations increasingly recognize that employee well-being is not limited to financial compensation or physical working conditions, but also encompasses psychological, emotional, and social dimensions that influence individual and organizational outcomes. Quality of life reflects employees' perceptions of their physical health, psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, and environmental conditions, all of which can affect job satisfaction, productivity, organizational commitment, and adaptive functioning (Giahi et al., 2021; Nedjat et al., 2008). In governmental organizations, where employees are often exposed to bureaucratic structures, formal regulations, and administrative constraints, maintaining an acceptable quality of life becomes particularly important because these institutions rely heavily on employees' motivation, responsibility, and service-oriented behaviors to achieve organizational goals (Jalilvand et al., 2025).

In recent years, organizational scholars have increasingly emphasized the importance of behavioral and psychological factors that contribute to employees' quality of life. One of the emerging constructs in organizational behavior literature is prosocial rule breaking. Morrison (2006) conceptualized prosocial rule breaking as intentional violations of formal organizational rules conducted with the purpose of benefiting the organization, coworkers, or clients (Morrison, 2006). Unlike destructive or deviant workplace behaviors, prosocial rule breaking is motivated by constructive intentions and often occurs when employees perceive that strict adherence to organizational regulations may hinder efficiency, responsiveness, or service quality. This form of behavior reflects employees' initiative, flexibility, and concern for organizational effectiveness, particularly in situations where formal procedures are perceived as inadequate or restrictive (Vardaman et al., 2014).

Prosocial rule breaking has attracted growing scholarly attention because modern organizations increasingly operate in dynamic and uncertain environments where rigid adherence to rules may not always produce desirable outcomes. Employees working in service-oriented and governmental sectors frequently encounter situations that require rapid decision-making and adaptive responses. In such contexts, employees may intentionally bypass certain formal procedures in order to solve problems, support colleagues, or improve client satisfaction (John & Shafi, 2020). Research has shown that prosocial rule breaking can enhance service quality, innovation, responsiveness, and organizational performance when it is guided by ethical intentions and supported by organizational values (Shum et al., 2019; Tu & Luo, 2020).

Nevertheless, prosocial rule breaking remains a complex phenomenon because violating organizational rules may also create uncertainty, ambiguity, and potential risks for employees. Employees who engage in such behaviors may fear punishment, blame, criticism, or negative evaluations from supervisors and colleagues. Consequently, the organizational environment and psychological climate play a crucial role in determining whether employees feel comfortable engaging in constructive extra-role behaviors (Wang & Shi, 2021). One of the most important contextual variables associated with such behaviors is psychological safety. Edmondson (1999) defined psychological safety as an individual's perception that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking and that employees can express ideas, concerns, and behaviors without fear of humiliation or punishment (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety enables employees to communicate openly, share innovative ideas, admit mistakes, and engage in proactive behaviors that contribute to organizational learning and effectiveness.

The concept of psychological safety has become increasingly important in organizational psychology because

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it directly influences employee engagement, innovation, teamwork, and performance. Employees who experience psychological safety are more likely to participate actively in organizational processes, voice constructive suggestions, and demonstrate adaptive and innovative behaviors (Sun & Huang, 2019). Moreover, psychological safety strengthens employees' trust in their organizations and leaders, thereby reducing anxiety and increasing emotional well-being (Fyhn et al., 2023). In psychologically safe environments, employees perceive that organizational leaders value their opinions and support their initiatives, which encourages constructive risk-taking and collaborative problem-solving (Gerlach & Gockel, 2022).

Recent studies have highlighted the significant relationship between psychological safety and employee well-being. Psychological safety contributes to reduced stress, improved interpersonal relationships, increased job satisfaction, and higher levels of psychological adjustment (Lintanga & Rathakrishnan, 2024). Employees who feel psychologically secure are less likely to experience emotional exhaustion and work-related anxiety because they perceive the workplace as supportive and trustworthy. This supportive climate can positively influence employees' quality of life by promoting emotional stability, social connectedness, and occupational satisfaction (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Furthermore, psychologically safe environments encourage employees to utilize their capabilities and express their authentic selves without fear of negative consequences, thereby improving both personal and professional functioning (Eldor et al., 2023).

The relationship between prosocial rule breaking and psychological safety has also received considerable empirical support. Research suggests that employees are more willing to engage in constructive rule-breaking behaviors when they perceive their work environment as psychologically safe (Wang & Shi, 2021). Psychological safety reduces fear of sanctions and creates conditions in which employees can prioritize organizational effectiveness over rigid procedural compliance. Inclusive and supportive leadership styles further reinforce this relationship by encouraging communication, trust, and knowledge sharing among employees (Iqbal et al., 2025). Similarly, ethical organizational climates characterized by openness and support have been shown to facilitate prosocial rule-breaking behaviors intended to benefit organizations and clients (Vardaman et al., 2014).

Studies examining antecedents of prosocial rule breaking have identified several important psychological and organizational variables. Abbasi et al. (2016) reported that individual characteristics, such as responsibility, organizational commitment, and ethical orientation, significantly influence employees' tendencies toward prosocial rule breaking (Abbasi et al., 2016). Likewise, Sabet et al. (2020) found that psychological factors, including motivation, emotional stability, and perceived support, contribute to the development of benevolent rule-breaking behaviors among employees (Sabet et al., 2020). Leadership styles and organizational structures also appear to influence such behaviors. Research indicates that supportive and inclusive leadership increases employees' confidence to engage in adaptive rule-breaking behaviors aimed at improving organizational outcomes (John & Shafi, 2020; Tu & Luo, 2020).

Another important issue concerns the role of organizational trust and social support in shaping employees' workplace experiences. Hosseini Maram and Mehdad (2023) demonstrated that organizational trust mediates the relationship between servant leadership and positive organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, and adaptive performance (Hosseini Maram & Mehdad, 2023). Trust-based relationships within organizations can foster psychological safety by encouraging employees to communicate openly and participate actively in organizational activities. Such environments may also facilitate prosocial rule-breaking behaviors because employees perceive that their constructive intentions will be understood and appreciated rather than punished.

Quality of life among employees has become especially significant for women working in governmental organizations. Women frequently experience multiple occupational and social demands, including balancing work responsibilities with family obligations and navigating organizational structures that may limit advancement opportunities (Mousa et al., 2021). These pressures can affect psychological well-being, occupational satisfaction, and overall quality of life. Consequently, identifying psychological and organizational factors that improve women employees' quality of life is essential for enhancing workforce sustainability and organizational effectiveness. Research has shown that supportive organizational climates, psychological security, and positive interpersonal relationships significantly improve women's occupational experiences and well-being (Barazandeh et al., 2023).

The importance of quality of work life has also been emphasized in relation to employee performance and

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organizational productivity. Employees who experience higher levels of well-being and life satisfaction demonstrate stronger motivation, greater commitment, and more effective job performance (Giahi et al., 2021). Similarly, interventions aimed at improving work quality of life have been associated with reductions in work-family conflict and increases in self-actualization and optimism among employees (Barazandeh et al., 2023). These findings indicate that psychological and organizational support mechanisms may significantly contribute to employees' personal and professional development.

Despite the growing literature on prosocial rule breaking, psychological safety, and quality of life, several research gaps remain. First, most existing studies have focused primarily on organizational performance, innovation, or leadership outcomes rather than employees' quality of life. Second, although previous research has demonstrated relationships among prosocial rule breaking, psychological safety, and workplace outcomes, limited attention has been paid to the mediating role of psychological safety in the relationship between prosocial rule breaking and quality of life. Third, relatively few studies have examined these variables among women employed in governmental organizations, particularly within Iranian cultural and organizational contexts. Considering the unique administrative structures and social conditions governing public organizations in Iran, understanding these relationships may provide valuable insights for organizational management and employee well-being policies (Jalilvand et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the nonlinear and context-dependent nature of psychological safety suggests that its effectiveness may vary depending on organizational conditions and interpersonal dynamics (Eldor et al., 2023). Therefore, examining how psychological safety mediates the effects of prosocial rule breaking on quality of life can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of employee behavior and well-being in organizational settings. Such investigations may also help managers identify strategies for fostering constructive behaviors while maintaining supportive and psychologically secure work environments.

Given the significance of employees' quality of life, the increasing relevance of prosocial rule-breaking behaviors in modern organizations, and the critical role of psychological safety in facilitating constructive workplace interactions, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between prosocial rule breaking and quality of life with the mediating role of psychological safety among women employed in governmental offices in Ahvaz.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study design and Participant

The present study was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlational in terms of data collection method, employing structural equation modeling (SEM). In this study, the relationship between prosocial rule breaking and quality of life with the mediating role of psychological safety was investigated.

The statistical population of the study consisted of all women employed in government offices in Ahvaz. Considering the correlational nature of the study and the necessity of accessing female employees working in governmental organizations, convenience sampling was employed. After coordination with the selected governmental offices and obtaining the required permissions, the questionnaires were distributed among female employees who met the inclusion criteria and expressed willingness to participate in the study. Ultimately, data from 385 employed women were collected and analyzed.

The inclusion criteria included being female, employment in one of the governmental offices in Ahvaz, having at least one year of work experience, providing informed consent to participate in the study, and fully completing the questionnaires. The exclusion criteria included unwillingness to continue participation, incomplete completion of the questionnaires, and providing distorted responses or unrealistic response patterns. Prior to the implementation of the study, the objectives of the research were explained to the participants, and they were assured that the collected information would remain confidential and would only be used in the form of overall research findings.

2.2. Measures

Prosocial Rule Breaking Questionnaire: To assess prosocial rule breaking among employees, the Prosocial Rule Breaking Questionnaire developed by Vardaman et al. (2014) was used. This questionnaire consists of 8 items and is scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree = 5 to strongly disagree = 1, with a total score range from 8 to 40. A score closer to 8 indicates a lower level of prosocial rule breaking, whereas a score closer to 40 reflects a higher level of prosocial rule breaking. In the study

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conducted by Vardaman et al. (2014), the content validity of the instrument was confirmed by experts, and its reliability was reported using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .90. In the study by Houshyarbakhsh (2020), the questionnaire underwent construct validity assessment through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The model fit indices, including $\chi^2/df = 2.17$, RMSEA = .056, CFI = .93, and TLI = .91, all indicated an acceptable model fit. Furthermore, the convergent validity index (AVE) was calculated as .58 and the discriminant validity index (MSV) as .39, both of which met acceptable psychometric standards. The reliability of the instrument was also reported using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .81, indicating desirable internal consistency.

World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire – Short Form (WHOQOL-BREF): The WHOQOL-BREF is one of the standard instruments for assessing quality of life and has been widely used in recent domestic studies. This questionnaire consists of 26 items and evaluates quality of life across four dimensions: physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environmental health (Nasiri et al., 2022; Jafari et al., 2023).

Recent studies have demonstrated that this instrument possesses satisfactory validity and reliability among Iranian populations, and its internal consistency coefficients have generally been reported above .70 in most studies (Mohammadi & Rezaei, 2022). Moreover, this questionnaire has shown adequate capability in assessing individual differences in quality of life and examining the effects of occupational and psychological factors on it (Karimi et al., 2022). In the present study, the reliability and validity coefficients of the questionnaire were obtained as .75.

Psychological Safety Questionnaire: To assess the variable of psychological safety, the questionnaire developed by Amy Edmondson (1999) was used. This questionnaire consists of 7 items designed to measure psychological safety. The questionnaire is based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from never = 1 to always = 5. The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed in Edmondson's (1999) study. The reliability coefficient reported by Edmondson (1999) was .93. In the study conducted by Ghanbari et al. (2016), in addition to assessing reliability through Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .73, the construct validity of the questionnaire was examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The model fit indices were all within acceptable ranges, indicating appropriate construct validity of the questionnaire in the Iranian sample. Furthermore, the convergent validity index (AVE) was reported as .57 and the discriminant validity index (MSV) as .41, confirming the instrument's compliance with psychometric standards.

2.3. Data Analysis

After collecting the questionnaires, the data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 and AMOS version 25. In the descriptive statistics section, the mean, standard deviation, minimum score, and maximum score of the variables were reported. In the inferential statistics section, Pearson correlation matrices were first calculated to examine the preliminary relationships among the variables. Subsequently, structural equation modeling was employed to test the conceptual model of the study and to examine the direct and indirect effects of the variables.

3. Findings and Results

The highest age frequency belonged to the 30–40-year age group, accounting for 43.6% of the participants. In terms of educational level, the highest frequency was related to participants holding a bachelor's degree (49.9%). Furthermore, regarding years of service, the highest frequency was associated with the group having 11 to 15 years of work experience (33.0%).

In this section, the research data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical indices. First, the descriptive statistics of the main research variables, including quality of life, prosocial rule breaking, and psychological safety, were reported. Subsequently, the relationships among the variables and the fit of the structural model were examined. The descriptive statistics of the research variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Quality of Life	385	42.00	98.00	71.35	9.84
Prosocial Rule Breaking	385	18.00	40.00	33.80	4.46
Psychological Safety	385	14.00	35.00	29.44	3.41

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As shown in Table 1, the mean score of quality of life was 71.35 with a standard deviation of 9.84, indicating a relatively favorable level of quality of life among the participants. In addition, the mean score of prosocial rule breaking was 33.80 with a standard deviation of 4.46, reflecting a relatively high tendency toward prosocial rule-breaking behaviors among the respondents. Furthermore, the mean score of psychological safety was 29.44 with a standard deviation of 3.41, suggesting that psychological safety was also at a relatively desirable level.

To examine the relationships among the research variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. The results of the correlation matrix among quality of life, psychological safety, and prosocial rule breaking are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Matrix Among the Research Variables

Variable	1	2	3
1. Quality of Life	1		
2. Prosocial Rule Breaking	.58**	1	
3. Psychological Safety	.46**	.52**	1

As shown in Table 2, there was a positive and significant relationship between quality of life and psychological safety. This finding indicates that with an increase in quality of life, employees' psychological safety also increases. Moreover, a positive and significant relationship was observed between quality of life and prosocial rule breaking, suggesting that employees with a higher quality of life are more likely to engage in prosocial rule-breaking behaviors aimed at helping the organization, colleagues, or clients. In addition, the relationship between psychological safety and prosocial rule breaking was also positive and significant. Accordingly, the more employees experience psychological safety in the workplace, the more likely they are to demonstrate constructive and prosocial behaviors beyond the formal organizational rules.

Following the examination of the preliminary relationships among the research variables, the structural model of the study was tested using AMOS software. In this model, prosocial rule breaking was considered the predictor variable, quality of life the criterion variable, and psychological safety the mediating variable. To evaluate the model fit with the collected data, fit indices including the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio, Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were used. The results of the structural model fit indices are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Fit Indices of the Structural Model

Index	Obtained Value	Acceptable Value
χ^2/df	2.38	Less than 3
GFI	.924	Greater than .90
AGFI	.906	Greater than .90
CFI	.951	Greater than .90
NFI	.934	Greater than .90
RMSEA	.060	Less than .08

As shown in Table 3, the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio was 2.38, which is lower than the criterion value of 3, indicating an acceptable model fit. Furthermore, the Goodness-of-Fit Index was .924, the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index was .906, the Comparative Fit Index was .951, and the Normed Fit Index was .934, all of which exceeded the acceptable threshold of .90. In addition, the RMSEA value was .060, which is lower than .08, indicating an acceptable estimation error in the model. Therefore, it can be concluded that the structural model demonstrated a desirable fit and that the research data supported the proposed conceptual model.

After evaluating the model fit indices, the direct and indirect paths among the research variables were tested within the structural model. In this model, prosocial rule

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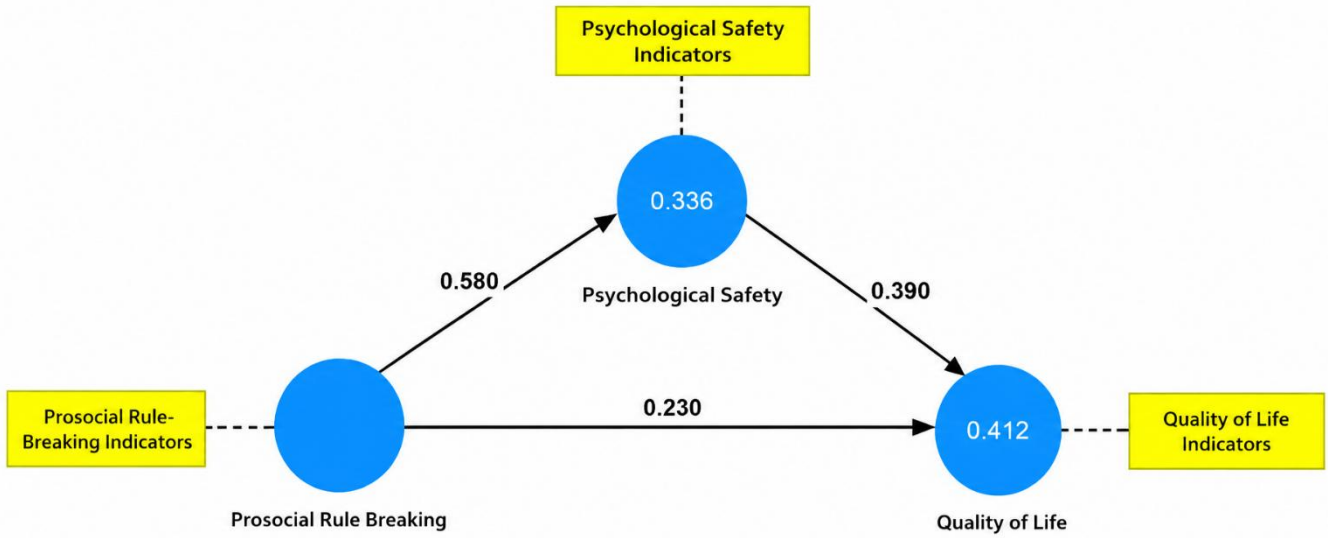
breaking was considered the predictor variable, quality of life the criterion variable, and psychological safety the mediating variable. The aim of the model testing was to determine whether prosocial rule breaking, in addition to its direct effect on quality of life, could also affect quality of life indirectly through increasing psychological safety. The standardized research model along with the path coefficients is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Standardized Research Model



As shown in Figure 1, the direct path coefficient from prosocial rule breaking to psychological safety was .580, indicating a positive effect of this variable on psychological safety. Moreover, the path coefficient from psychological safety to quality of life was .390, demonstrating a positive effect of psychological safety on quality of life. In addition, the direct path from prosocial rule breaking to quality of life was also positive, with a coefficient of .230. Accordingly, the results of the model indicate that prosocial rule breaking is associated with quality of life both directly and indirectly through psychological safety.

Furthermore, the numerical value reported inside the psychological safety circle was .336, meaning that prosocial rule breaking explained 33.6% of the variance in psychological safety. The numerical value reported inside the quality of life circle was .412, indicating that prosocial rule breaking and psychological safety together explained 41.2% of the variance in quality of life. These values demonstrate that the research model had an acceptable explanatory power.

Considering the significance of the direct paths, the indirect effect of prosocial rule breaking on quality of life through psychological safety was also examined. The product of the path from prosocial rule breaking to psychological safety and the path from psychological safety to quality of life indicated that the indirect effect was .226. Therefore, it can be concluded that psychological safety plays a mediating role in the relationship between prosocial rule breaking and quality of life. Since the direct path from prosocial rule breaking to quality of life remained positive and significant, the type of mediation was evaluated as partial mediation.

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between prosocial rule breaking and quality of life with the mediating role of psychological safety among women employed in governmental offices in Ahvaz. The findings demonstrated that prosocial rule breaking had a positive and significant effect on psychological safety. In addition, psychological safety showed a positive and significant relationship with quality of life, and prosocial rule breaking also exerted a direct positive effect on quality of life. Furthermore, the indirect effect of prosocial rule breaking on quality of life through psychological safety was confirmed, indicating that psychological safety partially mediates the relationship between prosocial rule breaking and quality of

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life. Overall, the findings suggest that when employees perceive their workplace as psychologically safe and supportive, constructive and benevolent behaviors beyond formal organizational rules can contribute positively to their well-being and quality of life.

One of the important findings of the present study was the positive relationship between prosocial rule breaking and psychological safety. This finding indicates that employees who engage in benevolent and constructive rule-breaking behaviors are more likely to perceive greater psychological safety within the workplace. This result is consistent with the findings of Wang and Shi (2021), who demonstrated that inclusive leadership and psychological safety significantly contribute to employees' willingness to engage in prosocial rule-breaking behaviors (Wang & Shi, 2021). Similarly, Tu and Luo (2020) reported that leadership support and psychological empowerment increase the likelihood of prosocial rule breaking among employees (Tu & Luo, 2020). In psychologically safe environments, employees feel less threatened by potential punishment or criticism and therefore become more willing to adopt flexible and adaptive behaviors intended to improve organizational functioning.

This finding can also be interpreted within the framework proposed by Edmondson (1999), who emphasized that psychological safety creates a climate in which employees feel comfortable expressing opinions, taking interpersonal risks, and engaging in innovative or unconventional behaviors without fear of negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999). Prosocial rule breaking often requires employees to deviate from formal procedures in order to provide better services, solve organizational problems, or support colleagues. Such behaviors are unlikely to emerge in rigid and punitive environments where employees fear blame or sanctions. Therefore, psychological safety appears to function as an essential contextual condition facilitating employees' constructive initiatives and adaptive organizational behaviors.

Another important finding of the present study was the positive relationship between psychological safety and quality of life. This finding suggests that employees who experience higher levels of psychological safety report more favorable perceptions of their physical, psychological, and social well-being. This result is aligned with previous studies indicating that psychologically safe work environments positively influence employees' satisfaction, emotional stability, and occupational well-being (Fyhn et al., 2023; Lintanga & Rathakrishnan, 2024). Employees who perceive their workplace as supportive and non-threatening are less likely to experience stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and interpersonal tension. Consequently, they may experience greater life satisfaction and psychological adjustment.

The findings are also consistent with the results reported by Zhenjing et al. (2022), who found that workplace environmental factors significantly affect employees' performance and well-being through multiple psychological mechanisms (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Psychological safety contributes to positive interpersonal interactions, trust development, and emotional comfort within organizations. Employees who feel psychologically secure can express concerns, share ideas, and seek support without fear of humiliation or exclusion, thereby improving their emotional functioning and overall quality of life. Likewise, Sun and Huang (2019) demonstrated that psychological safety mediates the relationship between psychological capital and innovative behavior (Sun & Huang, 2019), suggesting that psychological safety not only promotes performance outcomes but also contributes to employees' psychological growth and well-being.

The direct positive relationship between prosocial rule breaking and quality of life was another significant finding of the present study. This result indicates that employees who engage in benevolent rule-breaking behaviors may experience greater levels of occupational satisfaction, psychological fulfillment, and perceived well-being. This finding is compatible with the theoretical perspective proposed by Morrison (2006), who argued that prosocial rule breaking reflects employees' efforts to perform their jobs effectively and ethically in situations where formal organizational procedures may hinder service quality or efficiency (Morrison, 2006). Employees who perceive themselves as capable of helping others, solving problems, and contributing positively to organizational functioning may experience greater meaning and satisfaction in their professional roles, which can positively influence their quality of life.

This finding is also consistent with the results reported by Shum et al. (2019), who found that prosocial rule breaking enhances service performance and organizational responsiveness (Shum et al., 2019). Employees who engage in constructive extra-role behaviors may develop stronger interpersonal relationships with colleagues and clients, leading to increased social support and occupational fulfillment. Furthermore, benevolent organizational behaviors may strengthen employees' sense of competence,

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usefulness, and self-worth, thereby contributing to improved psychological well-being and life satisfaction.

The findings may further be explained by the role of ethical organizational climates and supportive leadership structures. Vardaman et al. (2014) emphasized that ethical organizational climates encourage employees to engage in prosocial rule breaking when such behaviors are perceived as beneficial to organizational goals (Vardaman et al., 2014). Similarly, John and Shafi (2020) demonstrated that organizational structure and social support significantly influence employees' tendencies toward prosocial rule-breaking behaviors (John & Shafi, 2020). In supportive work environments, employees may perceive that their constructive initiatives are valued and appreciated, which can positively affect their emotional and psychological experiences within the workplace.

Another important result of the study was the mediating role of psychological safety in the relationship between prosocial rule breaking and quality of life. This finding indicates that prosocial rule breaking contributes to employees' quality of life partly through increasing their perceptions of psychological safety. In other words, employees who engage in constructive rule-breaking behaviors may experience greater psychological security, which subsequently enhances their well-being and life satisfaction. This finding expands the existing literature by demonstrating that psychological safety serves not only as an antecedent of adaptive behaviors but also as an important explanatory mechanism linking organizational behavior and employee well-being.

The mediating role of psychological safety can be understood through organizational trust and communication processes. Iqbal et al. (2025) reported that benevolent leadership enhances organizational learning through communication, trust, and knowledge sharing (Iqbal et al., 2025). Employees who perceive trust and support within their organizations may interpret prosocial rule-breaking behaviors as legitimate and constructive rather than risky or inappropriate. Consequently, psychological safety may reduce emotional strain associated with rule deviation and transform such behaviors into positive occupational experiences that improve employees' quality of life.

The findings are also consistent with studies emphasizing the importance of supportive and human-centered organizational climates. Hosseini Maram and Mehdad (2023) found that organizational trust mediates the relationship between servant leadership and positive organizational outcomes such as adaptive performance and job satisfaction (Hosseini Maram & Mehdad, 2023). Psychological safety and organizational trust appear to operate jointly in creating conditions where employees can engage in constructive behaviors while maintaining emotional comfort and occupational satisfaction. Such conditions may be especially important for women employed in governmental organizations who often face multiple occupational and social demands.

The results of the present study are particularly meaningful in the context of women's employment in governmental organizations. Women employees frequently experience challenges associated with work-family balance, organizational hierarchies, and role expectations, which can affect their psychological well-being and quality of life (Mousa et al., 2021). Supportive organizational climates characterized by trust, openness, and psychological safety may help reduce these pressures and create opportunities for women to express their capabilities and participate actively in organizational processes. Consequently, encouraging psychologically safe environments may contribute not only to organizational effectiveness but also to women employees' psychological empowerment and occupational well-being.

The findings also highlight the importance of organizational flexibility and adaptive management practices in governmental institutions. Rigid bureaucratic systems may discourage employees from demonstrating initiative or engaging in constructive problem-solving behaviors. However, psychologically supportive environments may encourage employees to act creatively and responsibly in situations requiring flexibility and responsiveness. Gerlach and Gockel (2022) emphasized that psychological safety develops gradually through interpersonal interactions and organizational experiences (Gerlach & Gockel, 2022). Therefore, managers and organizational leaders play a central role in shaping climates that support constructive communication, employee participation, and adaptive behaviors.

At the same time, the findings should be interpreted cautiously because excessive or poorly managed psychological safety may not always produce positive outcomes. Eldor et al. (2023) argued that psychological safety demonstrates nonlinear relationships with performance and may become less effective if not accompanied by accountability and organizational structure (Eldor et al., 2023). Thus, organizations should balance flexibility and supportive climates with clear ethical guidelines and professional responsibilities to ensure that

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prosocial rule breaking remains constructive and aligned with organizational objectives.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the findings of the present study emphasize that employees' quality of life is influenced not only by structural and economic conditions but also by psychological and interpersonal factors within organizations. Prosocial rule breaking, when occurring within psychologically safe environments, may function as a constructive organizational behavior that enhances employee well-being, interpersonal trust, and occupational satisfaction. Consequently, organizations seeking to improve employees' quality of life should focus on creating supportive environments characterized by trust, participation, psychological safety, and constructive leadership practices.

6. Limitations and Suggestions

One of the limitations of the present study was the use of a correlational research design, which limits the ability to draw definitive causal conclusions among the variables. In addition, the data were collected using self-report questionnaires, which may have increased the likelihood of response bias and social desirability effects. Another limitation concerns the sampling method, as the participants were selected through convenience sampling from governmental offices in Ahvaz, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other occupational groups or cultural contexts. Furthermore, the study focused exclusively on women employees, and therefore the findings may not necessarily apply to male employees or mixed organizational populations.

Future studies are recommended to use longitudinal and experimental research designs to examine causal relationships among prosocial rule breaking, psychological safety, and quality of life more precisely. Researchers may also investigate the moderating role of variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, emotional intelligence, and work-family conflict in these relationships. Comparative studies across private and public organizations or across different occupational sectors may provide a broader understanding of the factors influencing employees' quality of life. Additionally, qualitative approaches could help explore employees' lived experiences regarding prosocial rule breaking and psychological safety in greater depth.

From a practical perspective, organizational managers and policymakers should prioritize the development of psychologically safe work environments in which employees feel comfortable expressing ideas, taking initiative, and engaging in constructive problem-solving behaviors. Training programs focusing on supportive leadership, interpersonal communication, and organizational trust may help strengthen psychological safety among employees. Managers should also encourage flexible and adaptive organizational practices while maintaining ethical and professional standards. Creating opportunities for employee participation, reducing fear of negative consequences, and recognizing constructive extra-role behaviors may contribute significantly to improving employees' quality of life and organizational effectiveness.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

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Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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