Resilient Agility: A Necessary Condition for Employee and Organizational Sustainability

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Abstract: Resilient agility is a novel concept that refers to the combined resilience-agility capability that allows an actor to successfully perform in rapidly changing contexts. Change dynamics, at all levels, increase uncertainties and responsibilities for employees augmenting the need to strengthen the self via resilient agility. This study examines employee resilient agility as antecedent by supervisors’ safety, coworkers’ safety, workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, willingness to embrace organizational change, and creativity. Respondents are from multiple organizations, industries, and regions of the United States. Analyses were carried out utilizing PLS-SEM software. Findings indicate that supervisors’ safety, workplace belongingness, willingness to embrace organizational change, and creativity have substantial effects on explaining and understanding employees’ resilient agility. In contrast, the effects of coworkers’ safety were insignificant. This study (a) contributes to the nomological network of resilient agility by examining a set of its key antecedents and (b) suggests that drastic organizational restructuring (e.g., significant changes in the relative proportion of remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic) may negatively impact both relational-based constructs in organizations and employees’ ability to rapidly and effectively respond to change. Theoretical and practical implications as well as limitations and future research are discussed.

Keywords: resilient agility; creativity; supervisors’ safety; job satisfaction; workplace belongingness; willingness to embrace organizational change; organizational restructuring; relational-based constructs

1. Introduction

Socioecological change has accelerated at global, national, organizational, and individual levels. Although change is a question of degree, substantial change, the type that requires responses, seems to have become more frequent. Dislocations that require rapid and effective responses by social actors include, among others, economic crises [1–5], the COVID-19 pandemic [6–10], rapid and continuous technological change associated with digitalization and automation [11–15], increased labor force diversity and inclusion [16–18], net-zero and other transitions [19–21], and the need to integrate multiple levels, spaces, times, and interests.

Researchers, task forces, committees, and the media constantly provide information on global and national socioecological change [22–26]. At the organizational level, technological, environmental, political, social, cultural, and economic developments [27–33] increase turbulence in organizational environments [34–39]. Consequently, organizations and employees must minimize the adverse effects of shocks, setbacks, crises, and change and thrive despite (detrimental) change. Doing so requires speed and effectiveness. In this regard, Bauman [40] suggested that mobility characterizes our postmodern era. However, effective mobility for the employee has become both increasingly necessary and more challenging to achieve.

Adapting quickly and perseverance are necessary conditions for effectively dealing with the certainty of ecological and socioeconomic change. Likewise, the ability to sense,
respond to, and rapidly recover from disturbances is crucial for dealing with the sustainability of the self and that of the firm and society. Because of rapid technological and socioeconomic change, government regulations, an accelerating pace of change, and decreased support from social institutions and firms [11], employees must constantly update their skills and competencies to remain employable while job security and response time fall [11,41–45]. Furthermore, job precarity and time compression diminish effective mobility because employees must internalize increased uncertainties and responsibilities [11,40,45]. Similarly, workplace restructuring (e.g., augmented remote work) increases the importance of individual self-reliance.

Although socioecological and organizational change is undoubtedly a collective issue, successful sustainability changes will rely heavily on the individual’s appropriate evolution and sustainability in terms of power, health, self-drive, autonomy, intrinsic motivation, self-influence, control, self-developing capacity, self-management, self-efficacy, human capital, and social capital, as well as copower and positive productive relationships. As a result, the importance of the individual employee as their most important resource for self-development [46] has increased. Thus, resilient agility, understood as the combined resilience-agility capability that enables an actor to successfully perform in volatile conditions [47], is fundamental to the creatively effective selves that individual, organizational, and societal sustainability needs.

There is extensive management literature on agility [48–55] and on resilience [56–61]. However, most of the extant research has treated agility and resilience separately [62–67], even though both capabilities and capacities are jointly required.

Lotfi and Sodhi [68] and Gölgeci et al. [47] conducted two of the few studies examining agility and resilience not only together but also as resilient agility. Gölgeci et al. [47] defined resilient agility as “an ambidextrous capability consisting of resilience and agility, which enables firms to withstand turbulence and successfully navigate volatile economies” [47] p. 3. However, their research focused on firms operating at the national level. Since resilient agility is a general capacity and capability, that is, it helps to over time deal with change at all scales, it is necessary to further examine it at all levels. As suggested above, it is fundamental to understand resilient agility at the individual level despite acknowledging that the most pressing problems (e.g., sustainability transitions) require collective solutions [40]. In other words, a resilient agile individual is necessary for creating collective solutions.

In sum, change dynamics, at all levels, increase uncertainties and responsibilities for individuals, increasing the need to strengthen the self via resilient agility. However, resilience and agility have been separately studied and mostly at the organizational level. It is necessary to study them as an integrated capability, to help individual employees successfully deal with change.

This study examines a novel construct, that is, employee resilient agility, as anteceded by supervisors’ safety, coworkers’ safety, workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, willingness to embrace organizational change, and creativity. These constructs reflect the degree to which employees perceive themselves as willing and able to rapidly and successfully contribute to organizational change. Attention to safety in the workplace stems from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Further details on the rationale for selecting the constructs studied are provided in Section 3.1. The set of studied constructs encompasses some of the conditions that will enhance employees’ ability to act as required.

This study makes two theoretical contributions. First, we postulate a novel construct, namely resilient agility, and apply it at the employee level in a sample with respondents from various organizations, industries, states, and regions of the United States. We contribute to the nomological network of resilient agility by examining a set of its key antecedents. The findings indicate that supervisors’ safety, workplace belongingness, willingness to embrace organizational change, and creativity have substantial effects on explaining and understanding employees’ resilient agility. These findings further the ongoing multilevel, multidimensional discussion on employee and organizational sus-
tainability [69–75]. Second, the results raise questions about the boundary conditions of resilient agility’s nomological network. The study findings investigate the generality of knowledge obtained under significantly different conditions (e.g., pre-COVID-19 pandemic versus COVID-19 pandemic). In this regard, the study suggests that drastic organizational restructuring (e.g., that prompted by changes in the relative proportion of remote work), which negatively impacts relational-based constructs in organizations (e.g., workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, willingness to embrace change, and creativity) may have implications for individual employees’ capability to rapidly and effectively respond to organizational change. Similarly, the results indicate that decreased interaction richness, resulting from increased remote work, exacerbates the challenge of achieving constructs constitutive of the organizational dynamics needed to deal with increased change and complexity (e.g., loyalty, commitment, identity/identification, and learning).

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

Figure 1 depicts the study’s conceptual model. This study draws from social exchange theory [76], perceived organizational support theory [77], and spill-over theory [78,79]. The rationale is that in everyday or drastically changed situations, which may be conjointly determined by the self, the organization, and the larger environment, employees may be willing to creatively and effectively change such conditions if they perceive themselves to be safe, respected, and appreciated. What follows provides a synthesis of the relevant literature and the hypotheses.

![Conceptual model](image_url)

**Figure 1.** Conceptual model.

**Notes:** SUPSAF = supervisors’ safety; COSAF = coworkers’ safety; WEC = willingness to embrace change; BEL = workplace belongingness; JOBSAT = job satisfaction; CREATIV = creativity; RESAGI = resilient agility.

2.1. Relationships between Supervisors’ Safety, Willingness to Embrace Organizational Change, Workplace Belongingness, Job Satisfaction, Creativity, and Resilient Agility

Employees in today’s dynamic and competitive workplaces must be agile and adaptable. The increasing pace of change in business and the resulting need to adapt to new conditions may cause employees anxiety and stress. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic was a shocking event for employees worldwide.

Working in an organization constitutes one of the most important aspects of employees’ lives. Thus, work partly shapes the individual. In organizations, supervisors have the
responsibility, and the power, to bring about workplace safety. Therefore, supervisors may play an essential role in making employees feel safe. In addition, employees who feel that supervisors are concerned about their safety in the workplace are more likely to be open to embracing change [80–82].

Work restructuring and lack of safety prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic have shaken employee relationships and their outcomes [83]. Supervisors play a central function in the organization. For example, supervisors may formulate and implement safety and protective measures at work to increase employees’ sense of belonging to the organization and their willingness to work for the organization [84–87]. Consequently, if employees feel that supervisors are concerned about their safety, keep them informed about workplace safety rules, and act accordingly, they may be motivated to bring their whole self to work because they perceive that they belong to the organization [83,88–90].

Supervisors play a crucial role in making employees understand and accept that change is constant and that adapting to it is crucial for organizational survival and thriving. Supervisors’ praising of safe work behaviors and enforcement of safety rules are essential aspects of employee creativity because creativity usually requires a serene and peaceful environment [91–94]. Thus, when supervisors work to keep the work environment safe, employees are more likely to innovate [95–98].

Employees must be agile to reap the benefits of organizational change [99,100]. For example, when employees perceive that supervisors encourage safe behaviors and are concerned about their safety, they do not give up; instead, they use multiple strategies to promptly and appropriately adapt to change [100–102].

Workplace belongingness requires stable relationships between employees and the organization [103]. When employees feel that they do belong in the organization, their risk-taking propensity for creating something new or generating new ideas increases [104–106]. Moreover, employees with a strong sense of workplace belongingness are more ready to adapt to change [107–109].

Interactions among creativity, workplace belongingness, and passion contribute to resilient agility. For instance, being enthusiastic about work is essential to thinking creatively and adapting to change [110–112]. When employees feel that they belong in the organization, their enthusiasm increases, which helps them to adjust to environmental change [113–115]. Consequently, willingness to embrace change antecedes the employee’s ability to think creatively and respond quickly to change in the workplace [116–119].

Moreover, supervisors’ praising of safe work behaviors likely affects employees’ positive affection toward their job because they perceive that workplace safety is prioritized [120,121]. Employees who perceive that their supervisor is concerned about workplace safety are more likely to recognize that the organization cares about and values their safety and general well-being [122–125]. This assessment, in turn, positively reflects on employees’ emotional attachment to the organization and increases job satisfaction, which helps them to develop the ability to respond to threats and opportunities to adapt to change [126–128]. In other words, feeling valued, accepted, and satisfied at work contributes to employees’ speed and effectiveness in creating new solutions [129–131].

Belongingness is an emotional response when people feel deeply a part of, connected to, and embraced by, the people of a group or social unit [132–134]. As a result, workplace belongingness positively relates to employees’ acceptance of changes in the workplace because they feel that they are part of the system [108,135–138].

An employee’s propensity to proactively devote time, effort, and expertise to creative work may be enhanced by job satisfaction, a critical psychological motivator [139,140]. Thus, job satisfaction contributes to employees’ creative-thinking ability, potentially improving their response to change.

Considering the extant literature, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H1.** The association between supervisors’ safety and resilient agility is mediated by a willingness to embrace change, workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, and creativity.
2.2. Relationships between Coworkers’ Safety, Willingness to Embrace Change, Workplace Belongingness, Job Satisfaction, Creativity, and Resilient Agility

Every employee should try to make the workplace safe for others. Coworkers’ safety is crucial because it reduces uncertainty, stress, and risks [141,142]; increases morale; and reduces costs associated with employee injuries [141,143]. Furthermore, in safe workplaces, employees feel comfortable, which increases their proclivity to be more disciplined and to improve performance [144]. Similarly, workplace safety augments employees’ willingness to comply with ongoing change in the workplace [145–147] and to show a positive attitude toward embracing change [144,148,149].

Workplace safety stemming from coworkers’ actions is a critical component of a work environment that motivates employees to generate new ideas and encourages them to take risks and be creative [80,95,150–153].

Coworkers’ safety concerns make others feel that they are part of the group or organization. Similarly, coworkers’ safety enhances employees’ sense of belonging to the organization [154–156]. Likewise, coworkers’ positive attitudes toward workplace safety (e.g., workplace cleanliness and following safety rules) can lead employees to perceive that they work in a safe environment. Research shows that employees’ positive perceptions of the work environment enhance their sense of belonging to the organization [157–159].

Appreciative perceptions of peers contribute to employees’ job satisfaction through the following: (a) employees’ concern for coworkers’ safety [160–162], (b) employees’ attitude toward keeping themselves and coworkers safe [160,163–165], (c) obeying safety regulations [166], and (d) protecting coworkers from accidents [167–169]. In turn, job satisfaction helps employees to achieve good positioning in the organization by enhancing their ability to adapt, quickly respond to change, and implement actions to control threats and to seize opportunities [128,170–172]. With fewer constraints, satisfied employees are more prone to focus on details, exercise critical thinking, and look for alternative solutions to complex problems [140,173–175]. Thus, job satisfaction antecedes employees’ creativity and employees’ response effectiveness in addressing problems.

Considering the above literature, we hypothesize the following:

**H2. The positive association of coworkers’ safety with resilient agility is mediated by a willingness to embrace organizational change, workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, and creativity.**

3. Method

3.1. Model Constructs Rationale

Our rationale for selecting the studied constructs follows. This research was designed during the intense phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, safety was a fundamental construct to include in the study. Likewise, remote work was one of the critical structural work changes. Safety-related issues from remote work included a relative increase in the importance of the immediate supervisor and a substantial decrease in expressive components of work, particularly those stemming from coworkers. Consequently, we decided to study supervisors’ safety and coworkers’ safety. In addition to safety, to properly function in an agile and resilient manner, employees require what we termed a “feeling good component”. As part of such a component, we included the constructs belongingness at work and job satisfaction. Safety and the “feeling good component” provide the basis for potentially successful action, a necessary component from which the employee may act.

Additionally, there is the need to have the ability to act. Sudden changes such as those brought about or intensified by the pandemic need creativity to figure out solutions, do different things, or do the same things differently; to produce insights; and to increase the likelihood of acting successfully. In a few words, the above is the reasoning for selecting supervisors’ safety, coworkers’ safety, workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, willingness to embrace organizational change, and creativity as antecedents of resilient agility. Our outcome variable, resilient agility, is essential because, among others, it resonates with the requirements of drastic change. It is also necessary for, among others, employee and orga-
nizational survival, engagement, collaboration, improving productivity and performance, sensing and seizing, creating new opportunities, and competitive advantage. Nonetheless, we recognize that this set of constructs is limited. Further studies may expand on our perspective and consider additional, different constructs to incrementally augment our understanding of resilient agility.

3.2. Data Collection

Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) was used to collect data. Data were obtained during spring 2022. A survey was posted asking working adults to complete it. The survey was in English. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured. Respondents received financial compensation for participation. The data collection procedure was as follows. First, data from 183 respondents were examined for missing values and patterns in answering. Then, data were obtained from 1000 more respondents in waves of 360, 315, and 325. Respondents’ waves allowed close verification of the quality of responses. After cleaning the data by considering the answers according to three check questions (e.g., “Please respond to this item with ‘Strongly disagree’”), a minimum response time of six seconds per question, and questionnaire completeness, we obtained 649 completed questionnaires.

Respondents worked in a diverse set of organizations and industries and lived in multiple locations. Participants were from 31 states in the United States. The states with the highest respondents were New York, Virginia, Texas, New Hampshire, Kansas, New Jersey, and Maryland. Consequently, respondents were quasirandomized. MTurk respondents appear to be more representative of a country’s population than respondents in studies based on samples drawn from one or a few organizations or from organizations located in only particular regions of a given country [176]. In addition, the worker-reputation mechanism implemented by the site seems to help to produce reasonable-quality responses [177].

3.3. Control Variables

Because previous research has found effects from age, gender, educational level, marital status, tenure, and industry on the constructs under research [52,178–181], the results of this study were adjusted for the effects of these variables.

3.4. Measures

Constructs were measured with scales with proven psychometric properties. Resilient agility was measured with 11 items developed by Braun et al., 2017 [61]. Sample items are: “I am able to shift focus and activities quickly in response to changing organizational priorities”; “At work, I continuously spend time thinking about how we can do things differently”; and “I quickly adapt to new ways of doing things and/or new work assignments”. Workplace belongingness was measured with three items developed by Malone et al. [103]. Sample items are: “When I am at work, I have a sense of belonging” and “I feel accepted when I am with my supervisor”. Willingness to embrace organizational change was measured with three items developed by Miller et al. [182]. Sample items are: “I would consider myself ‘open’ to change in my organization” and “I think that the implementation of the recent changes in my organization positively affects how I accomplish my work”. Job satisfaction was measured with an item proposed by Nagy [183]: “Taking everything into consideration, I feel satisfied about my job.” The item implicitly incorporates elements pertaining to decision making about work activities and employee relations with a supervisor, coworkers, and the organization [184,185]. Past research has shown that a single item has high validity [186,187]. Furthermore, a single item has the advantage of being easily understood by practitioners. Creativity was measured with eight items developed by Tierney et al. [188]. Sample items are: “I quickly adapt to new ways of doing things and or new work assignments” and “I generate novel but operable work-related ideas”. Supervisors’ safety was measured with nine items developed by Hayes et al. [189]. Sample items are: “My supervisor encourages safe behaviors” and “My supervisor trains workers to be safe”. Coworkers’ safety was measured with eight items developed by Hayes et al. [189].
Sample items are: “My coworkers pay attention to safety rules” and “My coworkers keep the work area clean.” All constructs were measured with Likert-type response options ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. All scales’ items appear in Table A1 in the Appendix A.

3.5. Sample Demographics

The respondent group consisted of 28% men, 71% women, and 1% another gender. Regarding educational level, 2% had completed high school or equivalent only, 3% had some college but no degree, 6% had an associate degree, 69% had a bachelor’s degree, and 20% had a graduate degree. Regarding race, 50% were White, 6% were Black, 3% were Native American or Alaskan Native, 39% were Asian, and 2% were other. Regarding marital status, 79% were married, 18% were unmarried, and 3% had another marital status. Regarding the workplace, 22% worked in banking and financial services; 22% in educational, professional, and scientific services; 16% in manufacturing, mining, and quarrying; 9% in accounting and consulting; 8% in construction and real estate; 4% in entertainment and recreation; and 21% in other industries. Regarding job tenure, 2% had less than 1 year, 33% had 1 to 4 years, 28% had more than 4 but less than 8 years, 31% had 8 to 12 years, and 6% had more than 12 years.

3.6. Model Assessment

Item loadings were higher than 0.5, and item cross-loadings were minor. Latent construct Cronbach’s alpha was 0.69, 0.83, 0.86, 0.91, 0.91, and 0.69 for workplace belongingness, creativity, resilient agility, coworkers’ safety, supervisors’ safety, and willingness to embrace organizational change, respectively. Reliability rho_a was 0.66, 0.83, 0.87, 0.92, 0.91, and 0.69 for workplace belongingness, creativity, resilient agility, coworkers’ safety, supervisors’ safety, and willingness to embrace organizational change, respectively. Reliability rho_c was 0.81, 0.73, 0.80, 0.93, 0.93, and 0.83 for workplace belongingness, creativity, resilient agility, coworkers’ safety, supervisors’ safety, and willingness to embrace organizational change, respectively. Constructs with Cronbach’s alpha equal to or higher than 0.70 were deemed acceptable [190]. Constructs with rho_a higher than 0.60 were deemed reliable [191]. Constructs with rho_c between 0.70 to 0.90 were considered “satisfactory to good,” whereas values above 0.90 indicated redundancy [192]. Overall, reliability values were above acceptable thresholds. Although rho_c values for supervisors’ safety and coworkers’ safety suggested redundancy, the other reliabilities seemed acceptable. Given our interest in differentiating between supervisors’ safety and coworkers’ safety, including the two constructs was justified. The contrasting results between these two constructs (see results) reaffirmed this rationale. From 10,000 subsamples, we calculated the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio criterion [193] to assess the discriminant validity. Out of 21 binary construct combinations, only the HTMT value between creativity and resilient agility (1.16) was above the threshold. HTMT values lower than 1 are considered acceptable for discriminant validity [193]. However, although related, creativity and resilient ability have different content validity values. Furthermore, creativity may be viewed as a critical contributor to effective resilient agility. Variance inflation factors were below three. Thus, multicollinearity was not a severe problem [194,195].

Although normality is not a requirement for using PLS, we assessed Mardia’s multivariate normality (https://webpower.psychstat.org/models/kurtosis/, accessed on 23 November 2022). Results for skewness and kurtosis were statistically significant (p < 0.001), indicating that the data were not multivariate normal. Thus, we calculated path coefficients and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals on the basis of 10,000 bootstrapping subsamples.

Average path coefficients were 0.227 (p < 0.001), 0.465 (p < 0.001), 0.126 (p < 0.001), −0.030 (p > 0.05), 0.442 (p < 0.001), and 0.346 (p < 0.001) for workplace belongingness, creativity, job satisfaction, coworkers’ safety, supervisors’ safety, and willingness to embrace organizational change, respectively. All but one of the 95% bias-corrected intervals
involving coworkers’ safety relationships included zero. Adjusted coefficient of determination was 0.31, 0.64, 0.25, 0.78, 0.78, and 0.41 for workplace belongingness, creativity, job satisfaction, resilient agility, coworkers’ safety, and willingness to embrace organizational change, respectively. The model’s standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was 0.088. A value less than 0.10 is considered a good fit [196]. The measurement and structural models were acceptable.

3.7. Common Method Bias

One factor explains 37.18% of the variance in Harman’s single-factor test [197] of the data. We undertook the correlation marker technique [198]. Bivariate correlations among the constructs and control variables indicated that the lowest correlation, −0.001, was between age and creativity. Following Lindell and Whitney [198], we used such a correlation to adjust the original correlations. Significance tests between the original and the adjusted correlations indicate nonsignificant differences (p > 0.05). Although other techniques have been proposed in dealing with common method bias, we agree with [199] and [200] that ex post, it is extremely difficult to identify and separate substantive sources of common method bias. The best path to minimize common method bias resides in the study’s design.

The design measures included randomized items, the use of three check questions to verify that respondents were paying due attention to read the items, the use of a minimum response time per item of 6 seconds, and a relatively short questionnaire to minimize fatigue in answering. Together with the results from Harman’s single-factor test, the findings from the correlation marker technique and the reliability and validity measures suggest that common method bias was not a severe problem.

4. Results

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the constructs studied. Supervisors’ safety, workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, willingness to embrace organizational change, and creativity were either moderately or highly correlated with resilient agility. In contrast, coworkers’ safety correlations with mediators and resilient agility were lower than supervisors’ safety correlations.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>BEL</th>
<th>CREATIV</th>
<th>JOBSAT</th>
<th>RESAGI</th>
<th>COSAF</th>
<th>SUPSAF</th>
<th>WEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEL</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREATIV</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.683 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOBSAT</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.455 ***</td>
<td>0.487 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESAGI</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.712 ***</td>
<td>0.837 ***</td>
<td>0.496 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSAF</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.461 ***</td>
<td>0.494 ***</td>
<td>0.346 ***</td>
<td>0.502 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPSAF</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.551 ***</td>
<td>0.550 ***</td>
<td>0.432 ***</td>
<td>0.564 ***</td>
<td>0.885 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEC</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.615 ***</td>
<td>0.710 ***</td>
<td>0.338 ***</td>
<td>0.754 ***</td>
<td>0.442 ***</td>
<td>0.491 ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: N = 649; BEL = workplace belongingness, CREATIV = creativity, JOBSAT = job satisfaction, RESAGI = resilient agility, COSAF = coworkers’ safety, SUPSAF = supervisors’ safety, WEC = willingness to embrace organizational change; *** p < 0.001.

Although only education and tenure, among the control variables, were positively related to both creativity (β = 0.142, p = 0.007; β = 0.159, p = 0.002, respectively) and resilient agility (β = 0.147, p = 0.005; β = 0.143, p = 0.003, respectively), all analyses were adjusted by all control variables.

Table 2 presents path coefficients, total effects, and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. The relationships’ path coefficients of supervisors’ safety with workplace belongingness (β = 0.660, p < 0.001), job satisfaction (β = 0.375, p < 0.001), and willingness to embrace organizational change (β = 0.128, p < 0.001) were moderate to low. Supervisors’ safety was not directly associated with creativity or with resilient agility. However,
supervisors’ safety total effects on creativity (0.551) and resilient agility (0.565) were highly significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that supervisors’ safety effects on these constructs are indirect ones.

Table 2. Path coefficients, 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals, and total effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Path Coefficient</th>
<th>95% Bias-Corrected CI</th>
<th>Total Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEL &gt; CREATIV</td>
<td>0.288 ***</td>
<td>0.194−0.363</td>
<td>0.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEL &gt; JOBSAT</td>
<td>0.307 ***</td>
<td>0.204−0.405</td>
<td>0.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEL &gt; RESAGI</td>
<td>0.164 ***</td>
<td>0.083−0.241</td>
<td>0.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEL &gt; WEC</td>
<td>0.499 ***</td>
<td>0.420−0.571</td>
<td>0.499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREA &gt; RESAGI</td>
<td>0.466 ***</td>
<td>0.355−0.572</td>
<td>0.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOBSAT &gt; CREATIV</td>
<td>0.167 ***</td>
<td>0.099−0.241</td>
<td>0.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOBSAT &gt; RESAGI</td>
<td>0.084 **</td>
<td>0.024−0.148</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSAF &gt; BEL</td>
<td>−0.123 n.s.</td>
<td>−0.272−0.025</td>
<td>−0.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSAF &gt; CREATIV</td>
<td>0.080 n.s.</td>
<td>−0.044−0.223</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSAF &gt; JOBSAT</td>
<td>−0.128 n.s.</td>
<td>−0.277−0.038</td>
<td>−0.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSAF &gt; RESAGI</td>
<td>0.023 n.s.</td>
<td>−0.061−0.112</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSAF &gt; WEC</td>
<td>0.099 n.s.</td>
<td>−0.059−0.258</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPSAF &gt; BEL</td>
<td>0.660 ***</td>
<td>0.504−0.811</td>
<td>0.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPSAF &gt; CREATIV</td>
<td>0.042 n.s.</td>
<td>−0.105−0.174</td>
<td>0.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPSAF &gt; JOBSAT</td>
<td>0.375 ***</td>
<td>0.200−0.535</td>
<td>0.431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPSAF &gt; RESAGI</td>
<td>0.028 n.s.</td>
<td>−0.074−0.125</td>
<td>0.565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPSAF &gt; COSAF</td>
<td>0.885 ***</td>
<td>0.858−0.905</td>
<td>0.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPSAF &gt; WEC</td>
<td>0.128 ***</td>
<td>−0.030−0.288</td>
<td>0.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEC &gt; CREA</td>
<td>0.420 ***</td>
<td>0.358−0.480</td>
<td>0.421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEC &gt; RESAGI</td>
<td>0.270 ***</td>
<td>0.196−0.333</td>
<td>0.468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: $N = 649$; BEL = workplace belongingness, CREATIV = creativity, JOBSAT = job satisfaction, RESAGI = resilient agility, COSAF = coworkers’ safety, SUPSAF = supervisors’ safety, WEC = willingness to embrace organizational change; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, n.s. $p > 0.05$.

Despite moderate correlations, all but one of the coworkers’ safety path coefficients and total effects were insignificant. Similarly, all but one of the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals involving coworkers’ safety included zero; the exception was the supervisors’ safety–coworkers’ safety relationship.

Supervisors’ safety was strongly related to coworkers’ safety ($\beta = 0.885, p < 0.001$). However, the relationships’ path coefficients of these two constructs had very different values. We expand on this below.

The path coefficients of the relationships of workplace belongingness with creativity ($\beta = 0.288, p < 0.001$), job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.307, p < 0.001$), willingness to embrace organizational change ($\beta = 0.499, p < 0.0001$), and resilient agility ($\beta = 0.164, p < 0.001$) were moderate to low.

Job satisfaction’s relationships with creativity ($\beta = 0.167, p < 0.001$) and resilient agility ($\beta = 0.084, p < 0.01$) were weak. Willingness to embrace organizational change was moderately associated with creativity ($\beta = 0.420, p < 0.001$) and with resilient agility ($\beta = 0.270, p < 0.001$). Similarly, creativity related moderately to resilient agility ($\beta = 0.466, p < 0.001$).

Nine of the 12 significant path coefficients had medium to large values, and three had small values. These results show the mediating effects of workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, willingness to embrace organizational change, and creativity on the supervisors’ safety–resilient agility relationship. Both total effects and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals were in line with the results for the path coefficients. Likewise, 15 of 20 total effects had medium to large values (Table 2). The total effects were highest for supervisors’ safety, workplace belongingness, and willingness to embrace organizational change.

Figure 2 shows the results of the importance-performance map analysis. According to Ringle and Sarstedt [201] and focusing on high-importance and low-performance constructs, supervisors’ safety was the construct prioritized the most for improvement, followed by willingness to embrace organizational change and creativity. As noted above, the constructs with the highest total effects were supervisors’ safety, workplace belongingness,
supervisor’s safety, willingness to embrace organizational change, and creativity. Thus, the difference between these two result sets is the inclusion of workplace belongingness in the case of total effects but not in the case of the importance-performance map analysis.

![Importance-performance map analysis](image)

**Notes**: BEL = workplace belongingness, CREATIV = creativity, JOBSAT = job satisfaction, COSAF = coworkers’ safety, SUPSAF = supervisors’ safety, WEC = willingness to embrace organizational change.

In sum, the results reinforced our expectation that the supervisors’ safety–resilient agility relationship is mediated by a willingness to embrace organizational change, workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, and creativity. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported by the data. In contrast, a similar expectation regarding coworkers’ safety was not held. Consequently, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

### 5. Discussion

The employee’s mindset, by and large, determines how the employee will behave [202,203]. Such a mindset is a function of multiple factors. Understanding the relationships between supervisors’ safety and coworkers’ safety with resilient agility as mediated by workplace belongingness, willingness to embrace organizational change, job satisfaction, and creativity requires considering a comprehensive view of some factors that may contribute to employees’ agility in crisis times. Below is a discussion of the results within this encompassing perspective.

The results between supervisors’ safety and coworkers’ safety are contrasting. The different nature of the model’s multiple relationships may explain the nonsignificance of the path coefficients pertaining to coworkers’ safety relationships.

Extant research has reported positive relationships between coworkers’ safety and workplace belongingness [204–206], willingness to embrace organizational change [207–209], job
satisfaction [210,211], and creativity [95,212,213]. The difference between previous research and the current findings may reflect the unique conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This variation questions whether knowledge obtained pre-COVID-19 is valid for COVID-19 times. The data for this study were obtained during spring 2022. As a result, data manifest the accumulated effects of the more intense phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the research work cited in the literature review and elsewhere was carried out during non-COVID-19 times. The strange context of the COVID-19 pandemic may have produced different relationships, in type and intensity, than those examined during non-COVID-19 times. Consequently, equally named constructs may have different meanings in other (time) contexts, mainly when the context differences are drastic. For instance, in this study, respondents may have been partly, or totally, working at home and therefore had infrequent face-to-face interactions with coworkers. The uncertainty and anxiety derived from the pandemic resulted, at times, in unruly behaviors [214–217]. Thus, employees who were not working at home may have faced a larger-than-usual diversity of coworkers’ behaviors. Consequently, relatively few interactions with coworkers and the high variability of such interactions may have led to no significance in the results for coworkers’ safety relationships.

Because the employee–supervisor relationship is perhaps the most important one in the workplace [218–221], the sharp increase in remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic may have heightened the importance of the supervisor for employees [222–225], because face-to-face interactions with coworkers decreased or ceased. In other words, for the employee, the missing or weaker relationships with coworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic may have been compensated by a stronger relationship with the supervisor. Below, we discuss mechanisms to explain the model’s mediating effects.

Belongingness, that is, the feeling of being part of something, contributes to employee identity, makes employees feel happy, and reduces stress [226]. Workplace belongingness entails openness and confidence that others will not punish an employee for speaking out [227,228]. In contrast, being excluded is painful and might threaten basic human needs [229,230]. For example, physical health and mental health suffer when the part of the brain that assesses social status perceives that one is at risk of exclusion or marginalization from a group, team, or any desirable collective [229,231]. Consequently, lack of face-to-face interactions with peers during the COVID-19 pandemic may have created a sense of alienation and marginalization among employees.

Workplace belongingness contributes to employees feeling accepted and respected; in turn, such feelings elicit employees’ proactiveness in terms of giving and receiving, acting and responding, questioning and answering, and analyzing and solving problems [232]. In contrast, not feeling respected and accepted may be viewed as a vulnerability, because a lack of workplace belongingness limits employee agility [232,233]. To be more agile in dynamic environments, employees want to be in a safe situation, which may not cause harm if new thinking, experimentation, or flexibility are exercised [234,235]. Because expressive relationships decreased drastically during the intense phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, employees’ approval from their coworkers diminished or was lacking.

For employees to be listened to and valued, coworkers must appreciate and legitimize their new ideas and activities. If the working environment discourages or lacks such behaviors, as in the intense phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, employees may be disappointed, and they may perceive the workplace as insecure and unstable [236–241]. Research shows that sharing ideas, knowledge, and experiences; listening; and appreciating others foster creativity when employees feel respected, trusted, and at ease in their working environments [212,242]. During the intense phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased remote work augmented the centrality of the supervisor in providing these experiences, while it decreased coworkers’ contributions to them.

Job satisfaction may derive from employees’ perception of legitimate acceptance in the workplace. During the severe phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, legitimacy in the workplace may have derived more from the supervisor than from coworkers. In
addition, the perception of high risk in work environments may have manifested in low job satisfaction [243,244]. The weak job-satisfaction relationships in the results of this study may be explained by the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have led to perceptions of the workplace as risky and to employees’ disengagement. Work environments where employees feel valued, accepted, and trusted enable employees to feel safe and to express their proactivity by sharing ideas and resources, speaking out, and challenging the status quo [245–247]. Acceptance by, and trust in, coworkers probably decreased during the severe phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the supervisor was the employee’s most important source of acceptance and trust in the workplace.

Organizations are currently more dynamic than before. The COVID-19 pandemic is an example of a drastic change. However, change, in various degrees, is continuous. Consequently, embracing change is a requirement for survival and thriving. Research shows that the more employees feel at ease in the workplace, the more they will embrace change [208,248,249]. Business organizations must build corporate culture traits that are most likely to encourage and influence workers’ participation in change initiatives to address the emerging challenges of workplace dynamism [250–253]. In order for an organization to engage all of its workers in initiating and accepting change, it is crucial that corporate culture retain safety, broadly understood, across time [254–256]. Safety, viewed comprehensively, constitutes an essential basis from which to strongly, quickly, and effectively respond to change.

The difference in contributions to resilient agility between the total effects and the importance-performance map analysis derives from the inclusion of workplace belongingness in the former but not in the latter. The above discussion reaffirms the crucial role of workplace belongingness in employees’ resilient agility.

6. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The purpose of this research was to study supervisors’ safety, coworkers’ safety, workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, willingness to embrace organizational change, and creativity as antecedents of employees’ resilient agility. All relationships were positive and significant except those involving coworkers’ safety, which, except one, were not significant. These results have several implications for future research, as well as for practitioners.

This study makes two theoretical contributions. First, it examines the novel concept of resilient agility, at the employee level, as dependent on the employee’s perceptions of safety, respect, appreciation, and conditions facilitating creativity. The findings suggest that supervisors’ safety, workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, willingness to embrace organizational change, and creativity are constructs suitable for explaining, and understanding, employee resilient agility. Second, this research raises questions about the construct set’s boundary conditions. It queries the generality of knowledge obtained under significantly different circumstances (e.g., pre-COVID-19 pandemic versus COVID-19 pandemic). The findings suggest that drastic change (e.g., notably switching the relative proportion of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic) in relational-based constructs in organizations may have implications not only for the constructs examined in this study (workplace belongingness, job satisfaction, supervisor’s safety, willingness to embrace change, creativity, and resilient agility) but also for other crucial relational-based organizational constructs, such as identity/identification, commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, and loyalty.

Work restructuring (e.g., increased remote work) may negatively impact the richness of expressive communication in organizations precisely when such richness is increasingly needed for knowledge-based, team-based, and creative work. Decreased workplace face-to-face interactions may also negatively affect the employee self, adding to already-harmful effects of increased job precarity, thereby weakening the basis from which both organizational and societal organizing depend: the employee.
The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated workplace changes, some of which will remain and increase. For instance, the results of this study suggest that practitioners should appreciate the centrality of managers, particularly immediate supervisors, because remote work is likely to increase, thereby highlighting to a greater extent the supervisors’ importance. Increased work virtuality suggests the need to use new criteria and processes in the future selection and development of leaders. Given the changing working conditions, managers will need to develop new, and probably more difficult, leadership styles. For example, decreasing expressive communication in organizations owing to increasing remote work suggests that managers may need to devise more-comprehensive managerial models. To increase the likelihood of employee success, such models may include multiple organizational relationships and relationships involving employees’ off-work factors. Our findings and subsequent discussion suggest that in considering safety, practitioners may need to move away from a narrow conceptualization, one based primarily on the biophysical domain, by expanding it to incorporate the psychological domain.

7. Limitations and Future Research

As with any study, this research has limitations. Owing to pragmatic reasons, only a limited number of constructs was studied. Future research could explore multiple relationships between other employee and organizational constructs and employee resilient agility. For example, future studies could examine constructs such as intrinsic motivation, self-drive, self-influence control, self-developing capacity, self-management, and self-efficacy within an employee–organization framework. Similarly, future studies may examine relationships among the individual self and relational-based constructs such as loyalty, identity/identification, organizational citizenship behaviors, and commitment. Such studies could strengthen employees’ resilient agility and organizational capabilities for sustainability. Moreover, the data pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic may not be generalizable. However, this type of study highlights the need to increase the number of studies of the effects of various types and degrees of shocking events on resilient agility.

The present study looked at antecedents of employee resilient agility, implicitly prioritizing the organization. Future research could study ways that the individual employee may increase individual strength and self-reliance (e.g., looking at technologies of the self) [46] within the organizational context. Consideration of employees’ multiple selves within the work context may become more critical for future organizational studies. The set of constructs that was studied in this research implies a broad sense of safety encompassing both the biophysical domain, usually prioritized, and elements of the psychological domain, as manifested, for example, in workplace belongingness and creativity. These results imply that employees’ psychological states relate to many of the most critical constructs of organizational behavior. Consequently, a multiple and more comprehensive view of what may prompt employees to rapidly and effectively react to change will be needed.

8. Conclusions

On the basis of social exchange theory, perceived organizational support theory, and spill-over theory, this study examined the relationships among supervisors’ safety, coworkers’ safety, workplace belongingness, willingness to embrace organizational change, job satisfaction, creativity, and resilient agility. The relationships were positive and significant, except for those involving coworkers’ safety. The results highlighted the importance of employees’ perceptions about safety, respect, appreciation, and conditions facilitating creativity on employee resilient agility. Further research may identify additional mediators, and moderators, that are associated with employee resilient agility. Such research could enhance the individual employee’s sustainability in the organization and in personal life. Further studies could advance understandings of employee resilient agility.
Author Contributions: L.P.: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, resources, data curation, writing—original draft, writing—review and editing, supervision, and project administration. M.F.T.: methodology, formal analysis, writing—original draft, writing—review and editing, data curation, and visualization. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Data supporting reported results can be found in the following repository: https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdataverse.tdl.org%2Fdataverse%2Ftamiu&data=05%7C01%7Cmfdaridhossaintalukd%40dusty.tamiu.edu%7C00b52e5f08fd479936e088dad420d0d%7C0%7C0%7C0%7C1%7C0%7C0%7C638055534879483535%7CUnkown%7CCTWfpbGZsb3d8eyjWjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCjQljo2VuMzliLCjB1I6I1haWwiLCjXVCi6Mn%300%7C%7C%7C%7C%7C%7C&sdata=pLKo1mMKMh8CgjQd%2Bu%2BwEpDD3FV9xWH1Q6GtByY%3D&reserved=0 (accessed on 27 November 2022).

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. Questionnaire items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct/Item from Questionnaire</th>
<th>Adapted from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resilient Agility</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I quickly adapt to new ways of doing things and/or new work assignments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I easily change course when needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I find it easy to adapt to changing situations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I am able to shift focus and activities quickly in response to changing organizational priorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I bounce back quickly when confronted with setbacks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. At work, I continuously spend time thinking about how we can do things differently.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am always thinking about what we need to do differently to meet upcoming change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I push others/my team to continuously make changes based on what is happening in the company.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. In the past 12 months, I proposed a change about our work to my leader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I continuously work to understand what is going on in other areas of my work to see if I need to make changes in what I’m doing</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When I am at work, I have a sense of belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel accepted when I am with my supervisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have close bonds with my coworkers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A1. Cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct/Item from Questionnaire</th>
<th>Adapted from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would consider myself “open” to change in my organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I think that the implementation of the recent changes in my organization positively affects how I accomplish my work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. From my perspective, changes in my organization are for the better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Taking everything into consideration, I feel satisfied about my job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I demonstrate originality in my work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I take risks in terms of producing new ideas in doing my job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I found new uses for existing methods or equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I solved problems that had caused other difficulty.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I try out new ideas and approaches to problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have identified opportunities for new products/processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I generate novel, but operable work-related ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I serve as a good role model for creativity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My supervisor praises safe work behaviors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My supervisor encourages safe behaviors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. My supervisor keeps workers informed of safety rules</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. My supervisor rewards safe behaviors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. My supervisor involves workers in setting safety goals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. My supervisor discusses safety issues with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My supervisor trains workers to be safe</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. My supervisor enforces safety rules</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. My supervisor acts on safety suggestions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coworkers’ safety</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My coworkers pay attention to safety rules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My coworkers follow safety rules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My coworkers look out for others’ safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My coworkers encourage others to be safe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My coworkers do not take chances with safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My coworkers keep their work areas clean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My coworkers are safety oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My coworkers care about others’ safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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