

IMPACT OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP ON PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Okundalaiye, H.¹, Abiodun, O.², Iyobhebhe, I.³

ABSTRACT:

This study examines the impact of strategic leadership on psychological safety in a multicultural environment, with a focus on three key dimensions: visioning, focusing, and implementation. Grounded in Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, the research employed a descriptive, cross-sectional survey design targeting middle and top-level employees in a multinational conglomerate. Using validated instruments (Neumann and Neumann's (1999) strategic leadership scale and Edmondson's (1999) psychological safety scale), data were collected from a purposively selected sample across culturally diverse departments. Regression analysis revealed that all three strategic leadership dimensions significantly influence psychological safety. Visioning showed a moderate but significant impact ($R^2 = .106$, $p < .001$), implementation demonstrated a similarly significant effect ($R^2 = .127$, $p < .001$), while focusing emerged as the strongest predictor ($R^2 = .316$, $p < .001$). These findings led to the rejection of all null hypotheses and affirmed that strategic leadership, particularly the focusing component, plays a critical role in fostering psychological safety in multicultural contexts. The study recommends that organizations prioritize the development of strategic leadership capabilities, particularly in the areas of visioning, focusing, and implementation, to enhance psychological safety in multicultural settings. It also suggests integrating culturally adaptive leadership training to strengthen leader-member relationships and foster inclusive, psychologically safe workplaces.

Author's Affiliation:

¹Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Nigeria.

²Business and Management Department. Scholars School System in partnership with Leeds Trinity University, United Kingdom.

³Department of Business Administration, College of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences, Mountain Top University, Ogun State, Nigeria

Keywords:

Focusing, Implementation, Psychological Safety, Strategic Leadership, and Visioning.

Corresponding Mail:

henryokundalaiye@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has significantly altered the makeup of modern organizations by fostering more culturally diverse workplaces (Aftab, 2023). The expansion of international business, migration, and digital communication has created teams composed of individuals from different cultural, linguistic, and national backgrounds. Although cultural diversity leads to innovation, broader perspectives, and improved problem-solving, it also presents challenges such as communication barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and group fragmentation. Misaligned cultural values and assumptions may hinder trust and cooperation, which are vital for effective teamwork (Eyiah, Bondinuba, Adu-Gyamfi & Liphadzi, 2025). Therefore, managing cultural diversity effectively is essential to achieving optimal performance in globally integrated organizations.

Psychological safety refers to a shared belief among team members that it is safe to take interpersonal risks, such as voicing opinions or admitting mistakes, without fear of negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999; Newman, Donohue & Eva, 2017; Ghani & Taylor, 2023). According to Johnson, Keating and Molloy (2020), psychological safety is a critical element for team learning, innovation, and collaboration, especially in settings characterized by high diversity. When team members feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to contribute ideas and engage in meaningful discussions, regardless of cultural differences (O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). In contrast, a lack of psychological safety often leads to silence, disengagement, and reduced performance, particularly for members of underrepresented or marginalized groups (Hasan & Kashif, 2021; Almahri & Abd Wahab, 2023).

Strategic leadership involves the ability to anticipate, envision, and maintain flexibility while guiding others toward the achievement of long-term goals (Samimi et al., 2022; Ho, Lam & Law, 2023). Strategic leadership goes beyond operational tasks by aligning organizational strategies with changing internal and external environments. Strategic leaders create conditions that support adaptability, innovation, and inclusion across different levels of the organization (Kabetu & Iravo, 2018). In multicultural contexts, strategic leadership is particularly relevant because it shapes how cultural differences are navigated and integrated within teams (Eyiah et al., 2025). Effective strategic leadership is thus crucial not only for meeting business objectives but also for managing the interpersonal dynamics of diverse teams.

In multicultural teams, the ability of leaders to exhibit cultural intelligence and inclusive behaviour is essential for effective leadership (Kalsoom, ud Din & Hashmi, 2024). Leaders who understand

and appreciate cultural differences easily reduce friction and promote cooperation among diverse team members. Inclusive leadership fosters a sense of belonging, which is strongly associated with employee engagement, motivation, and satisfaction (Atiku, Itembu-Naunyango & Oladejo, 2024). Culturally intelligent leadership is not a luxury but a necessity in managing diverse workforces. According to Sivananthajothy, Adel, Afhami, Castrogiovanni, Osei-Tutu and Brown (2024), failure to acknowledge cultural differences or accommodate diverse viewpoints leads to feelings of exclusion and low morale.

Strategic leaders have a unique opportunity to influence psychological safety by modelling openness, encouraging feedback, and fostering inclusive norms. Specific behaviours such as soliciting input, recognizing contributions, and supporting team learning have been shown to build trust and safety in teams (Frazier et al., 2017; Chan, 2018; Stamevska & Stamevski, 2020). These behaviours are especially important in multicultural settings, where communication norms and perceptions of hierarchy may differ. However, existing literature tends to emphasize generic leadership styles without focusing on how strategic leadership in particular shapes psychological safety in culturally diverse environments (Saher & Ayub, 2020; Hayati, 2020). This oversight limits the understanding of how leaders can create truly inclusive and psychologically safe spaces. Despite the growing importance of psychological safety in diverse teams, there remains a lack of empirical research on how strategic leadership specifically contributes to fostering psychological safety in multicultural environments. Much of the current literature tends to generalize leadership influence without differentiating the strategic aspect of leadership that focuses on long-term vision and adaptive capacity (Zarei, Supphellen & Bagozzi, 2024; Alibašić, 2025; Masenya & Ngoepe, 2025). As a result, organizations and leaders are often left without clear frameworks or strategies for using strategic leadership to build psychological safety across cultural boundaries. Without clarity on this relationship, multicultural teams may continue to underperform due to unaddressed psychological safety concerns. This gap needs to be addressed to enhance inclusivity and performance in culturally diverse teams.

A further concern is that most existing studies on psychological safety and leadership have been conducted in culturally homogenous or Western settings, limiting their relevance in global organizations (Bernards, Schmidt & Groeneveld, 2024; Lee & Seo, 2024; Atkins, Emale & Bell, 2025). Cultural dimensions such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance influence how leadership behaviours are interpreted and how psychological

safety is experienced (Mehmood, Ullah, Usman, Abbas & Han, 2024). The lack of culturally nuanced research means that strategic leaders often rely on models that may not translate effectively into multicultural contexts. This misalignment results in poor team cohesion, reduced communication, and a lack of psychological safety. By focusing on strategic leadership rather than other leadership styles, the study provides insights into how long-term vision and strategic adaptability contribute to psychological safety in diverse teams. The study focuses on Neumann and Neumann's (1999) dimensions of strategic leadership which are visioning, focusing, and implementing, and how they impact psychological safety in a multicultural environment. The findings offer practical guidance for leaders and organizations seeking to improve collaboration and performance in multicultural settings.

The null hypotheses of this study are:

H₀₁: Visioning (Strategic leadership) has no significant impact on psychological safety.

H₀₂: Focusing (strategic leadership) has no significant impact on psychological safety.

H₀₃: Implementation (strategic leadership) does not significantly enhance psychological safety.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section covers the relevant literature that underpins this study, including conceptual insights into strategic leadership and psychological safety, the theoretical foundation provided by Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, and empirical findings that highlight practical evidence from previous research.

2.1 Conceptual Review

Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership is defined as the ability to envision, influence, and empower an organization to achieve long-term goals while navigating complex and evolving environments (Ho, Lam & Law, 2023). It involves a blend of foresight, decision-making, and interpersonal skills that enable leaders to align their teams with a clear vision and adapt to challenges effectively. Unlike traditional leadership, which may focus on operational efficiency or day-to-day management, strategic leadership emphasizes a broader perspective, such as anticipating trends, identifying opportunities, and positioning the organization for sustainable success (Luciano, Nahrgang & Shropshire, 2020). This type of leadership requires not only a deep understanding of the organization's mission but also the capacity to inspire others to embrace and contribute to that vision (Kabetu & Iravo, 2018).

Strategic leadership serves as the linchpin that ties planning to performance (Wanyama & Nyaga, 2019). It directly influences strategy execution by ensuring that resources, processes, and people are aligned with the overarching plan, turning ideas into measurable results. Strategic leaders collaborate closely with concepts like strategic planning, where goals are set, and strategic control, where progress is monitored and adjusted (Samimi et al., 2022). They also draw on competitive analysis to understand external threats and opportunities, integrating these insights into actionable steps. By fostering a cohesive link between formulation, implementation, and evaluation, strategic leadership ensures that the organization not only survives but thrives in a dynamic landscape (Samimi et al., 2022).

Neumann and Neumann (1999) outline three core elements of strategic leadership (visioning, focusing, and implementing) that collectively enable leaders to guide organizations toward long-term success. Visioning is the process of crafting a clear, compelling, and forward-looking picture of where the organization is headed (Luciano, Nahrgang & Shropshire, 2020). It requires leaders to anticipate future trends, understand the broader context, and articulate a purpose that inspires and unifies the team. This element is foundational, as it sets the direction and provides a sense of meaning, ensuring that all subsequent efforts align with a shared goal. According to Neumann and Neumann (1999), effective visioning is not just about imagination but about creating a realistic yet ambitious roadmap that stakeholders can rally behind.

Focusing, the second element, involves prioritizing and channelling resources, attention, and energy toward the most critical aspects of the vision. Strategic leaders must distil complex possibilities into a coherent set of objectives, avoiding distraction by less impactful pursuits (Stamevska & Stamevski, 2020). This requires a deep understanding of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, and external environment, as well as the discipline to say no to initiatives that dilute effort. Neumann and Neumann (1999) emphasize that focusing is about clarity and alignment. It is the bridge between abstract vision and tangible action, sharpening the organization's efforts for maximum impact (Stamevska & Stamevski, 2020).

Implementing, the final element, is the execution phase where the vision and focus are translated into reality. This involves mobilizing people, processes, and systems to achieve the defined goals, often in the face of obstacles or resistance (Kabetu & Iravo, 2018). Strategic leaders must be adept at problem-solving, motivating teams, and adjusting plans as circumstances evolve (Chan, 2018). Neumann and Neumann (1999) highlight that implementing is not a one-time event but an ongoing

commitment to driving results while maintaining flexibility. It ties visioning and focusing together by grounding them in practical outcomes, ensuring that the organization doesn't just plan strategically but performs strategically.

Psychological safety

Psychological safety is defined as a shared belief among individuals within a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking (Frazier, Fainshmidt, Klinger, Pezeshkan & Vracheva, 2017). This concept, first introduced by Amy Edmondson of Harvard Business School, emphasizes the importance of an environment where people feel comfortable speaking up without fear of humiliation or negative consequences (Frazier et al., 2017). Psychological safety involves the assurance that one will not be rejected or punished for expressing ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes (Newman, Donohue & Eva, 2017). Psychological safety does not mean the absence of conflict but rather the presence of respectful dialogue and trust (Johnson, Keating & Molloy, 2020). It forms the foundation for open communication, learning behaviours, and team collaboration in various organizational settings (Hasan & Kashif, 2021).

In several industries, psychological safety plays a crucial role in enhancing team and organizational outcomes. In healthcare, for example, medical professionals who experience psychological safety are more likely to report errors and participate in discussions that improve patient safety (O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). In the aviation industry, crew members who feel psychologically safe contribute more actively to safety protocols and procedures (Mansour, Nogues & Tremblay, 2022). Technology companies have associated high levels of innovation and creativity with psychologically safe environments, as employees feel free to propose bold ideas (Agarwal & Farndale, 2017). Manufacturing environments also benefit from psychological safety, where workers raise safety concerns and suggest process improvements without fear of retaliation (Newman, Donohue & Eva, 2017).

From the perspective of management and organizational behaviour, psychological safety connects closely with multiple key concepts. Psychological safety supports transformational leadership by encouraging leaders to create spaces where employees feel heard and valued (Hasan & Kashif, 2021). Psychological safety enhances team learning by fostering environments where knowledge-sharing and experimentation are welcomed (Johnson, Keating & Molloy, 2020). Psychological safety aligns with motivation theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where safety is a necessary condition for achieving higher levels of performance (Almahri & Abd Wahab, 2023).

Psychological safety strengthens organizational culture by promoting inclusivity, transparency, and a sense of belonging, all of which contribute to higher employee engagement and performance (Ghani & Taylor, 2023).

2.2 Theoretical Review

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory was developed by George Graen and his colleagues in the 1970s and later expanded by Graen and Uhl-Bien in 1995 (Martin, Thomas, Legood & Dello Russo, 2018). It originated from the Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL) theory, which emphasized the individualized nature of leader-subordinate relationships rather than viewing leadership as a uniform process (Martin et al., 2018). LMX theory proposes that leaders form distinct relationships with each team member, resulting in varied experiences within the same group (Uhl-Bien, Carsten, Huang & Maslyn, 2022). These relationships are based on trust, respect, and mutual obligation (Uhl-Bien et al., 2022). The theory moved the leadership conversation away from leader traits and behaviours alone and toward the dynamics of interpersonal exchanges within the organizational setting (Seo, Nahrgang, Carter & Hom, 2018).

A central assumption of LMX theory is that leaders do not treat all subordinates equally (Mascareño, Rietzschel & Wisse, 2020). Instead, leaders develop high-quality exchanges with some members, referred to as the "in-group," while others remain in the "out-group" with low-quality interactions (Cropanzano, Dasborough & Weiss, 2017). In-group members tend to receive more support, greater autonomy, and more opportunities, whereas out-group members experience more transactional and limited relationships (Cropanzano, Dasborough & Weiss, 2017). These differences significantly affect job satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Mascareño, Rietzschel & Wisse, 2020). The quality of these dyadic exchanges evolves through a process of testing and mutual role negotiation, depending on the actions and responses of both parties over time (Seo et al., 2018).

In the context of psychological safety and multicultural environments, LMX theory holds significant relevance. In diverse teams, members often bring different cultural norms, communication styles, and expectations, which may create barriers to inclusion and trust. Leaders who build high-quality LMX relationships with culturally diverse team members contribute to a sense of psychological safety by promoting mutual respect and open communication (Kalyar, Usta & Shafique, 2020). When employees feel accepted and valued regardless of their cultural background, they are more likely to speak up, contribute ideas, and take interpersonal risks without

fear (Omlion-Hodges & Baker, 2017). Thus, LMX theory provides a framework for understanding how inclusive leadership fosters psychological safety and enhances collaboration in multicultural teams.

2.3 Empirical Review

Yasin et al. (2023), using structural equation modeling, found that spiritual leadership significantly enhances psychological safety, which in turn promotes knowledge sharing and the development of intellectual capital within Pakistan's automobile sector. Similarly, Sjöblom et al. (2022), through hierarchical regression analysis, demonstrated that psychological safety and self-leadership strategies positively influence employee well-being and reduce burnout during remote work conditions. Ho et al. (2023), though a conceptual study, developed a strategic leadership-enhanced resilience framework tailored for the hospitality and tourism sector, emphasizing leadership actions needed in times of crisis. Complementing this, Bornay-Barrachina et al. (2025) empirically examined how transformational and transactional leadership mediate the relationship between organizational learning and the development of dynamic capabilities such as sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring in innovative firms.

Empirical evidence from recent studies underscores the critical role of psychological safety in enhancing organizational outcomes across diverse sectors. Negara et al. (2023) established that psychological safety fosters open communication, inclusivity, and collaboration within strategic management teams, thereby enhancing innovation, trust, and overall team performance. In the healthcare domain, Hunt et al. (2021) emphasized its significance in mental health services, detailing practical strategies for implementing psychological safety at individual, team, and organizational levels to ensure patient safety and effective care delivery. Edmondson and Bransby (2023) provided a comprehensive synthesis of the literature, identifying psychological safety as essential for learning behaviors, leadership effectiveness, and organizational adaptability in dynamic environments. Similarly, Weiner et al. (2021) highlighted the role of school principals during the COVID-19 pandemic, showing how organizational factors such as professional culture, leadership autonomy, and decision-making processes influenced the creation of psychologically safe environments that facilitated or hindered organizational learning.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey design to examine the impact of strategic leadership on psychological safety in a multicultural environment. A quantitative, cross-sectional approach was

adopted, enabling data collection at a single point in time from culturally diverse respondents across various departments. This design was appropriate for capturing current leadership dynamics and perceptions of psychological safety without the complexity of longitudinal analysis (Knight, Chidlow & Minbaeva, 2022). The target population comprised middle and top-level employees within a multinational conglomerate operating across Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and other emerging markets. A stratified purposive sampling technique was adopted, ensuring representation from both middle and senior management categories while focusing on individuals with relevant leadership exposure and cross-cultural experience. Using questionnaire administration, data were collected from 185 respondents whose insights provided valuable information aligned with the objectives of the study.

A structured questionnaire comprising two sections: demographic data (Section A) and variables related to strategic leadership and psychological safety (Section B) was developed. To measure the independent variable, Strategic Leadership, the study adopted Neumann and Neumann's (1999) three-dimensional scale, consisting of visioning, focusing, and implementing, each measured with 5 items. For the dependent variable, Psychological Safety, Edmondson's (1999) validated 7-item scale was used. The reliability of the instruments was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, with values ranging from 0.680 to 0.857, indicating acceptable to high internal consistency. Specifically, visioning ($\alpha = 0.680$), focusing ($\alpha = 0.692$), and implementing ($\alpha = 0.766$) were found to be reliable subscales of strategic leadership, while overall reliability for strategic leadership and psychological safety was 0.836 and 0.857, respectively. The use of these validated instruments ensured construct reliability and relevance in multicultural organizational contexts.

The collected data was analyzed using regression analysis to examine the relationship between strategic leadership (independent variable) and psychological safety (dependent variable). The study employed multiple regression analysis to determine the individual effects of visioning, focusing, and implementing aspects of strategic leadership on psychological safety. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 24 to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Hypothesis One

H₀: Visioning (Strategic leadership) has no significant impact on psychological safety.

Table 1: Regression Analysis between Visioning and Psychological Safety

R = .326 ^a			Adjusted R Square = .101			
R Square = .106			Std. Error of the Estimate = .51016			
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.653	1	5.653	21.721	.000 ^b
	Residual	47.629	183	.260		
	Total	53.282	184			
a. Dependent Variable: Psychological safety						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Visioning (strategic leadership)						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.552	.353		7.234	.000
	Visioning (strategic leadership)	.376	.081	.326	4.661	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Psychological safety						

The regression analysis (Table 1) between visioning (a dimension of strategic leadership) and psychological safety indicates a moderate positive relationship with an R-value of .326 and an R Square of .106, suggesting that visioning accounts for 10.6% of the variance in psychological safety. The ANOVA table shows a significant F-statistic of 21.721 with a corresponding p-value of .000, indicating that the model is statistically significant. Furthermore, the standardized beta coefficient for visioning is .326 with a t-value of 4.661, both statistically significant at the 0.05 level. These results provide sufficient statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) that visioning has no significant impact on psychological safety. Visioning is therefore a meaningful predictor of psychological safety within the context examined.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: Focusing (strategic leadership) has no significant impact on psychological safety.

Table 2: Regression Analysis between Focusing and Psychological Safety

R = .562 ^a				Adjusted R Square = .312		
R Square = .316				Std. Error of the Estimate = .44626		
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.837	1	16.837	84.544	.000 ^b

	Residual	36.445	183	.199		
	Total	53.282	184			
a. Dependent Variable: Psychological safety						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Focusing (strategic leadership)						
Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.130	.334		3.383	.001
	Focusing (strategic leadership)	.682	.074	.562	9.195	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Psychological safety						

Table 2 results between focusing and psychological safety demonstrate a stronger relationship, with an R-value of .562 and an R Square of .316. This indicates that 31.6% of the variability in psychological safety can be explained by focusing on strategic leadership behaviour. The model's F-value of 84.544 and significance level of .000 confirm that the relationship is statistically significant. The standardized beta coefficient of .562 and a t-value of 9.195 further affirm that focusing exerts a strong, statistically significant influence on psychological safety. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H_0) that focusing has no significant impact on psychological safety is rejected. Focusing contributes significantly to enhancing psychological safety.

Hypothesis Three

H_0 : Implementation (strategic leadership) does not significantly enhance psychological safety.

Table 3: Regression Analysis between Implementation and Psychological safety

R = .356 ^a				Adjusted R Square = .122		
R Square = .127				Std. Error of the Estimate = .50415		
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.769	1	6.769	26.634	.000 ^b
	Residual	46.512	183	.254		
	Total	53.282	184			
a. Dependent Variable: Psychological safety						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Implementation (strategic leadership)						

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.304	.367		6.281	.000
	Implementation (strategic leadership)	.423	.082	.356	5.161	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Psychological safety						

Table 3 assesses the effect of implementation on psychological safety and shows an R-value of .356 and a R Square of .127, indicating that implementation explains 12.7% of the variance in psychological safety. The ANOVA output reveals a statistically significant F-value of 26.634 with a p-value of .000. The beta coefficient of .356 and t-value of 5.161 indicate a statistically significant positive relationship. Given the statistical significance of the model and coefficients, the null hypothesis (H_0) that implementation does not significantly enhance psychological safety is rejected. Implementation, as a strategic leadership practice, significantly contributes to psychological safety in the organizational setting analyzed.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that visioning as a component of strategic leadership has a significant yet relatively modest impact on psychological safety. This supports the argument by Saher and Ayub (2020) that visionary leadership helps employees find meaning in their work, which contributes to a psychologically secure environment. Similarly, Hayati (2020) argue that when leaders articulate a compelling vision, they foster commitment and a sense of belonging among employees. However, the modest effect found in this study aligns with O'Donovan and McAuliffe (2020), who suggest that vision alone may not be sufficient to ensure psychological safety unless it is accompanied by open communication and consistent leader behaviour. While visioning sets a strategic direction, its influence on psychological safety appears limited without supportive

actions.

The second finding indicates that focusing has the strongest impact on psychological safety among the three components examined. This aligns with the work of Clarke et al (2025), who highlighted the importance of structured leadership in promoting an environment where employees feel safe to speak up and take interpersonal risks. Furthermore, clarity of focus in leadership, as emphasized by Alkuwari (2025), provides stability and reduces ambiguity, allowing employees to function confidently within well-defined expectations. Saleem, Isha and Awan (2024) also posited that psychological safety increases when employees perceive their leaders as attentive and consistent in their priorities. These studies collectively support the result that leadership with a strong focus enhances psychological safety by reinforcing expectations, reducing uncertainty, and encouraging engagement.

The third finding demonstrates that implementation, as a strategic leadership behaviour, has a moderate but significant effect on psychological safety. This is consistent with Nishii and Leroy (2022) who found that inclusive implementation strategies, such as leader coaching and participative decision-making, significantly enhance psychological safety. George (2024) similarly asserts that leadership behaviours that involve execution and follow-through help build trust and reliability, which are foundational to a psychologically safe environment. In addition, O'Donoghue and Van Der Werff (2022) argue that when leaders implement strategies that involve employee input and accountability, it creates a sense of empowerment and safety. Therefore, while implementation is not as influential as focusing, it remains a critical factor in fostering environments where employees feel secure, respected, and able to contribute without fear.

5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that strategic leadership has a significant and positive impact on psychological safety in multicultural organizational environments. Effective strategic leadership creates an atmosphere where employees from diverse cultural backgrounds feel secure to share their ideas, voice concerns, and collaborate without fear of judgment or exclusion. Psychological safety in such settings is critical for promoting open communication, mutual understanding, and respect among team members with varying perspectives. By fostering trust and inclusivity, strategic leadership helps to bridge cultural differences and supports the development of cohesive and high-performing teams. This highlights the essential role of strategic leadership in enabling organizations to harness the strengths of cultural diversity.

The findings also reveal that visioning, focusing, and implementation as key aspects of strategic leadership work together to enhance psychological safety in multicultural workplaces. Leaders who communicate goals, maintain focus on organizational priorities, and consistently execute strategies contribute to a supportive environment where all employees feel valued. This environment encourages greater engagement, creativity, and collaboration across cultural boundaries. Psychological safety in multicultural contexts allows organizations to benefit fully from diverse talents and perspectives. In conclusion, strategic leadership is fundamental to creating an inclusive workplace culture that promotes psychological safety and drives organizational effectiveness.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

1. Organizations should invest in leadership development programs that emphasize visioning skills to help leaders clearly articulate inclusive goals that resonate with diverse cultural groups. This will foster psychological safety by providing employees with a shared sense of purpose and direction.
2. Leaders must prioritize focused communication and goal alignment across multicultural teams to reduce misunderstandings and ensure that all members understand their roles and expectations. Clear focus strengthens trust and creates a safe environment for open dialogue.
3. Implementing consistent follow-through on strategic plans is essential; leaders should regularly monitor progress and address challenges promptly to maintain psychological safety. Reliable implementation reassures employees that leadership is committed to supporting a respectful and inclusive workplace.
4. Organizations should encourage leaders to engage in cultural competence training to better understand and appreciate the diverse backgrounds of their teams. Enhanced cultural awareness helps leaders create an environment where all employees feel respected and psychologically safe.
5. Establish structured feedback mechanisms that allow employees from different cultural backgrounds to voice concerns and provide suggestions without fear of reprisal. This practice promotes psychological safety by ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard and valued in decision-making processes.

References

- Aftab, A. (2023). Globalization and its impact on social structures: A management outlook. *Corpus Journal of Social Sciences & Management Review*, 1(02), 116-123.
- Agarwal, P., & Farndale, E. (2017). High-performance work systems and creativity implementation: the role of psychological capital and psychological safety. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 27(3), 440-458.
- Alibašić, H. (2025). Advancing disaster resilience: The ethical dimensions of adaptability and adaptive leadership in public service organizations. *Public Integrity*, 27(3), 209-221.
- Alkuwari, A. K. M. (2025). Impact of leadership practices on organizational work environments. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 4(1), 3410-3428.
- Almahri, K. S., & Abd Wahab, S. (2023). Effectiveness of psychological safety on employees productivity. *International Journal of Scientific and Management Research*, 6(10), 37-42.
- Atiku, S. O., Itembu-Naunyango, K. A., & Oladejo, O. M. (2024). Inclusive leadership and employee engagement as critical drivers of sustainability in telecommunication companies. *Administrative Sciences*, 14(6), 126.
- Atkins, R., Emale, J., & Bell, R. L. (2025). Is constructive discharge a metaphor for a "Boy Named Sue"? The remedial role of psychological safety when leadership is toxic. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics*, 22(1), 143-155.
- Bernards, B., Schmidt, E., & Groeneveld, S. (2024). Rebel with a cause: The effects of leadership encouragement and psychological safety on professionals' prosocial rulebreaking behavior. *Public Administration*, 102(4), 1323-1341.
- Bornay-Barrachina, M., López-Cabrales, Á., & Salas-Vallina, A. (2025). Sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring dynamic capabilities in innovative firms: Why does strategic leadership make a difference?. *BRQ Business Research Quarterly*, 28(2), 399-420.
- Chan, C. W. (2018). Leading today's kindergartens: Practices of strategic leadership in Hong Kong's early childhood education. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 46(4), 679-691.
- Clarke, E., Näswall, K., Masselot, A., & Malinen, S. (2025). Feeling safe to speak up: Leaders improving employee wellbeing through psychological safety. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 46(1), 152-176.
- Cortes, A. F., & Herrmann, P. (2021). Strategic leadership of innovation: a framework for future

- research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 23(2), 224-243.
- Cropanzano, R., Dasborough, M. T., & Weiss, H. M. (2017). Affective events and the development of leader-member exchange. *Academy of Management Review*, 42(2), 233-258.
- Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350-383.
- Edmondson, A. C., & Bransby, D. P. (2023). Psychological safety comes of age: Observed themes in an established literature. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10(1), 55-78.
- Eyiah, A. K., Bondinuba, F. K., Adu-Gyamfi, L., & Liphadzi, M. (2025). Promoting effective management of cultural diversity in multinational construction project teams. *Buildings*, 15(5), 659.
- Frazier, M. L., Fainshmidt, S., Klinger, R. L., Pezeshkan, A., & Vracheva, V. (2017). Psychological safety: A meta-analytic review and extension. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(1), 113-165.
- George, A. S. (2024). The symbiotic relationship between visionary and pragmatic leadership in propelling organizational success. *Partners Universal International Innovation Journal*, 2(3), 57-79.
- Ghani, U., & Taylor, J. (2023). The impact of organizational culture on employee engagement and performance. *The Management Science Letter*, 1(02), 171-181.
- Hasan, F., & Kashif, M. (2021). Psychological safety, meaningfulness and empowerment as predictors of employee well-being: a mediating role of promotive voice. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration*, 13(1), 40-59.
- Hayati, N. (2020). The influence of visionary leadership, talent management, employee engagement, and employee motivation to job satisfaction and its implications for employee performance all divisions of bank bjb head office. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 9(3), 120-135.
- Ho, G. K., Lam, C., & Law, R. (2023). Conceptual framework of strategic leadership and organizational resilience for the hospitality and tourism industry for coping with environmental uncertainty. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 6(2), 835-852.
- Hunt, D. F., Bailey, J., Lennox, B. R., Crofts, M., & Vincent, C. (2021). Enhancing psychological safety in mental health services. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, 15, 1-18.

- Jia, N., Luo, X., Fang, Z., & Liao, C. (2024). When and how artificial intelligence augments psychological safety. *Academy of Management Journal*, 67(1), 5-32.
- Johnson, C. E., Keating, J. L., & Molloy, E. K. (2020). Psychological safety in feedback: what does it look like and how can educators work with learners to foster it?. *Medical Education*, 54(6), 559-570.
- Kabetu, D. G., & Iravo, M. A. (2018). Influence of strategic leadership on performance of international humanitarian organizations in Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Innovation, Leadership and Entrepreneurship*, 2(2), 113-135.
- Kalsoom, N., ud Din, G. M., & Hashmi, I. A. S. (2024). Impact of inclusive leadership on innovative work behavior with mediating role of work engagement and moderating role of perceived job autonomy. *Journal of Asian Development Studies*, 13(4), 38-48.
- Kalyar, M. N., Usta, A., & Shafique, I. (2020). When ethical leadership and LMX are more effective in prompting creativity: The moderating role of psychological capital. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 15(1), 61-80.
- Knight, G., Chidlow, A., & Minbaeva, D. (2022). Methodological fit for empirical research in international business: A contingency framework. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 1-14.
- Lee, S. E., & Seo, J. K. (2024). Effects of nurse managers' inclusive leadership on nurses' psychological safety and innovative work behavior: The moderating role of collectivism. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 56(4), 554-562.
- Luciano, M. M., Nahrgang, J. D., & Shropshire, C. (2020). Strategic leadership systems: Viewing top management teams and boards of directors from a multiteam systems perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 45(3), 675-701.
- Mansour, S., Nogues, S., & Tremblay, D. G. (2022). Psychosocial safety climate as a mediator between high-performance work practices and service recovery performance: An international study in the airline industry. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 33(21), 4215-4250.
- Martin, R., Thomas, G., Legood, A., & Dello Russo, S. (2018). Leader–member exchange (LMX) differentiation and work outcomes: Conceptual clarification and critical review. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 39(2), 151-168.
- Mascareño, J., Rietzschel, E., & Wisse, B. (2020). Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and

- innovation: A test of competing hypotheses. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 29(3), 495-511.
- Masenya, J., & Ngoepe, M. (2025). Quitting leadership style? The influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles on librarians' retention in municipal libraries. *Library Management*, 46(1/2), 78-93.
- Mehmood, K., Ullah, U., Usman, M., Abbas, A., & Han, S. (2024). Despotism leadership and followers creativity: exploring the combined effects of power distance and psychological safety. *BMC psychology*, 12(1), 1-13.
- Negara, A. I. S., Helmi, M. F., Wijaya, A. T., & Madistriyatno, H. (2023). How important psychological safety is in supporting strategic management to achieve success: A narrative literature review. *Open Access Indonesia Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(5), 1083-1091.
- Neumann, Y., & Neumann, E. (1999). The president and the college bottom line: The role of strategic leadership styles. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 13(2), 73-79.
- Newman, A., Donohue, R., & Eva, N. (2017). Psychological safety: A systematic review of the literature. *Human Resource Management Review*, 27(3), 521-535.
- Nishii, L. H., & Leroy, H. (2022). A multi-level framework of inclusive leadership in organizations. *Group & Organization Management*, 47(4), 683-722.
- Nyimbili, F., & Nyimbili, L. (2024). Types of purposive sampling techniques with their examples and application in qualitative research studies. *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*, 5(1), 90-99.
- O'Donoghue, D., & Van Der Werff, L. (2022). Empowering leadership: balancing self-determination and accountability for motivation. *Personnel Review*, 51(4), 1205-1220.
- O'Donovan, R., & McAuliffe, E. (2020). A systematic review exploring the content and outcomes of interventions to improve psychological safety, speaking up and voice behaviour. *BMC Health Services Research*, 20, 1-11.
- Omilion-Hodges, L. M., & Baker, C. R. (2017). Communicating leader-member relationship quality: The development of leader communication exchange scales to measure relationship building and maintenance through the exchange of communication-based goods. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 54(2), 115-145.
- Saher, A., & Ayub, U. (2020). Visionary leadership and organizational change: Mediating role of

- trust in the leader. *Paradigms*, 14(2), 8-17.
- Saleem, M. S., Isha, A. S. N., & Awan, M. I. (2024). Exploring the pathways to enhanced task performance: the roles of supportive leadership, team psychological safety, and mindful organizing. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 7(5), 2560-2581.
- Samimi, M., Cortes, A. F., Anderson, M. H., & Herrmann, P. (2022). What is strategic leadership? Developing a framework for future research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 33(3), 101353.
- Seo, J. J., Nahrgang, J. D., Carter, M. Z., & Hom, P. W. (2018). Not all differentiation is the same: Examining the moderating effects of leader-member exchange (LMX) configurations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 103(5), 478.
- Shafi, M., Lei, Z., Song, X., & Sarker, M. N. I. (2020). The effects of transformational leadership on psychological safety: Moderating role of intrinsic motivation. *Asia Pacific Management Review*, 25(3), 166-176.
- Shafique, I., Ahmad, B., & Kalyar, M. N. (2020). How ethical leadership influences creativity and organizational innovation: Examining the underlying mechanisms. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 23(1), 114-133.
- Sivananthajothy, P., Adel, A., Afhami, S., Castrogiovanni, N., Osei-Tutu, K., & Brown, A. (2024). Equity, diversity, and... exclusion? A national mixed methods study of “belonging” in Canadian undergraduate medical education. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 29(2), 611-639.
- Sjöblom, K., Juutinen, S., & Mäkikangas, A. (2022). The importance of self-leadership strategies and psychological safety for well-being in the context of enforced remote work. *Challenges*, 13(1), 14.
- Stamevska, E., & Stamevski, V. (2020). Decisions and skills of the strategic leaders. *Economics and Management*, 17(1), 140-146.
- Uhl-Bien, M., Carsten, M., Huang, L., & Maslyn, J. (2022). What do managers value in the leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship? Identification and measurement of the manager’s perspective of LMX (MLMX). *Journal of Business Research*, 148, 225-240.
- Wanyama, M. T., & Nyaga, J. (2019). Strategic leadership practices and performance of banking sector in Kenya: A case study of Equity Bank Limited, Head Office. *Journal of Human Resource & Leadership*, 3(3), 63-78.
- Weiner, J., Francois, C., Stone-Johnson, C., & Childs, J. (2021, January). Keep safe, keep learning:

- principals' role in creating psychological safety and organizational learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In *Frontiers in education* (Vol. 5, p. 618483). Frontiers Media SA.
- Yasin, R., Yang, S., Huseynova, A., & Atif, M. (2023). Spiritual leadership and intellectual capital: mediating role of psychological safety and knowledge sharing. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 24(4), 1025-1046.
- Zarei, M., Supphellen, M., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2024). Research streams, gaps and opportunities in servant leadership research. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 45(2), 251-264.