

**Leadership style(s) that contribute to perceived
psychological safety in the mining industry in South
Africa: A post pandemic view**

Student Number: 10037782

A research report submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

01 November 2022

ABSTRACT

Purpose- Since the inception of psychological safety and leadership as conceptual constructs, empirical research has proliferated in their respective fields. While both constructs have received much attention and traction from scholars in their respective fields, most of these studies were conducted before the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, there was need to investigate what psychological safety and leadership should look like within the new work context. As constructs that are crucial for the success and productivity of today's globalised business environment, the study aimed to assess the conditions that contribute to employees' perceived psychological safety, find out what leadership styles influence the phenomena positively, and lastly, determine whether leaders were able to be adaptable to lead within the current context.

Design/Methodology- For this study, data was generated from semi-structured interviews, which allowed for open-ended questions, enabling participants to give their own lived experiences of the phenomena under study. Respondents comprise middle managers in the mining industry from different mining houses. A total of 12 respondents were interviewed through Microsoft teams. The study employed qualitative data analysis to gain deeper insights into participants' experiences of psychological safety, leadership styles facilitating psychological safety, and leader adaptability during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Findings- The investigation, through thematic coding, revealed that the factors contributing to employees' perceived psychological safety remain the same after the Covid-19 pandemic, however, under different work arrangements that call for flexibility and more empathy. Furthermore, the findings revealed that transformational leadership is the leadership style that employees perceive to contribute toward employees' perceived psychological safety. Lastly, findings revealed that most leaders continued to lead the way they did before the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in employees experiencing compromised psychological safety.

KEYWORDS

Psychological safety, leadership styles, mining industry, social learning theory, social exchange theory, Covid-19

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. This paper has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to conduct this research.

Apindiwe Bekiswa

Date : 01/11/2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	I
DECLARATION	II
LIST OF TABLES	VII
LIST OF FIGURES.....	VIII
ABBREVIATIONS.....	IX
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	1
1.1 Purpose statement	1
1.2 Context of the study	2
1.3 Mining industry	5
1.4 Problem statement	6
1.5 Significance	7
1.5.1 Significance for business	7
1.5.2 Significance for scholars and academics	7
1.5.3 Delimitations	8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 Leadership	9
2.2 Leadership styles	14
2.2.1 Transformational leadership style	16
2.2.2 Transactional leadership style	18
2.3 Psychological safety	19
2.4 Psychological safety and leadership styles	24
2.5 Psychological safety and leadership styles within the mining industry in South Africa.....	25
2.6 Theoretical Framework: Social Learning and Social Exchange Theory	27
2.6.1 Social learning theory	27
2.6.2 Social exchange theory	29
2.7 Conclusion.....	31

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS	32
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	34
4.1 Introduction.....	34
4.2 Research Methodology and Design	34
4.3 Methodological Choices.....	35
4.4 Population.....	36
4.5 Sampling Method.....	36
4.6 Sample Size.....	37
4.7 Unit of Analysis	38
4.8 Measurement Instrument	38
4.9 Data Gathering Process	41
4.10 Data Analysis Approach.....	44
4.11 Quality Controls.....	45
4.11.1 Credibility.....	45
4.11.2 Transferability	46
4.11.3 Dependability	47
4.11.4 Confirmability.....	48
4.12 Limitations	48
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	50
5.1 Introduction.....	50
5.2 Overview of the study sample	50
5.2.1 Profile of the Participants	50
5.2.2 Relevance of Empirical Data.....	52
5.2.3 Saturation of the Interviews	53
5.3 Themes of the Study	53
5.4 Conditions that influence an individuals' perceived psychological safety	54
5.4.1 Understanding of psychological safety.....	55
5.4.2 Perceived psychological safety due to organisational attributes.....	56
5.4.3 Perceived psychological safety due to leader attributes.....	57
5.4.4 Perceived psychological safety due to team dynamics	58
5.5 Leader attributes that contribute to psychological safety.....	59
5.5.1 Leadership attributes	59

5.5.2	Leadership styles.....	62
5.6	State of conditions pre and post Covid-19 pandemic.....	65
5.6.1	Organisational conditions attributes	66
5.6.2	Discrepancies highlighted by Covid-19	68
5.6.3	Operational changes.....	69
5.6.4	Positive and negative psychological changes brought by Covid-19	70
5.6.5	Post covid review.....	71
5.7	Changes in leadership behaviour to ensure psychological safety	72
5.7.1	Impact of psychological safety	74
5.7.1.1	Psychological safety advantages.....	74
5.8	Summary and conclusion	76
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS.....		78
6.1	Introduction.....	78
6.2	Discussion on Participants definition of psychological safety	78
6.3	General conditions that contribute to perceived psychological safety?	79
6.3.1	Perceived psychological safety due to organisational attributes.....	80
6.3.2	Perceived psychological safety due to leader attributes.....	82
6.3.3	Perceived psychological safety due to team dynamics	83
6.4	Leader behaviours that contribute to psychological safety	83
6.4.1	Leadership attributes	83
6.4.2	Leadership styles.....	85
6.5	State of psychological safety pre and post Covid-19 pandemic	87
6.5.1	Organisational Conditions Attributes.....	87
6.5.2	Discrepancies highlighted by Covid-19	89
6.5.3	Operational Changes.....	89
6.5.4	Positive and Negative changes brought by Covid-19.....	89
6.5.5	Post Covid review.....	90
6.6	Changes in leadership behaviour to ensure psychological safety	91
6.6.1	Change in leader attributes to suit current context to ensure psychological safety	91
6.6.2	Impact of psychological safety	93
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION		95
7.1	Introduction.....	95
7.2	Principal conclusions per research question.....	95
7.2.1	Factors that influence the individual's perceived psychological safety.....	95
7.2.2	Leader attributes and behaviours that contribute to psychological safety in the work environment.....	95

7.2.3	Have any of the factors that influence psychological safety changed post Covid-19?	96
7.2.4	Leader adaptability during and after Covid-19 to ensure psychological safety	97
7.3	Implications for management and relevant stakeholders.....	97
7.3.1	Performance outcomes.....	97
7.3.2	Hindrance to learning organisations.....	98
7.3.3	High turnover	98
7.3.4	Limitations of the research.....	98
7.3.5	Small sample size.....	99
7.3.6	Unit of Analysis.....	99
7.4	Suggestions for future research.....	99
7.4.1	Office based vs mining sites	99
7.4.2	How to increase psychological safety when it has been compromised	99
7.4.3	Alternative methodology	100
7.5	Conclusion	100
	REFERENCES.....	101
	APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM	117
	APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE	118
	APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE	119
	APPENDIX 4: CODES GENERATED	120

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Interview questions investigating research questions	39
Table 5.1: Showing the job description of the participants in the study.....	51
Table 5.3: Shows the research questions, sub- themes, and themes of the study	53
Table 5.4: Leadership styles.....	64

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Model of social learning theory of organisational behaviour	28
Figure 2.2: Contextualised research model	30
Figure 4.1: Data collection process	44
Figure 5.1: Showing the dominant words in the study	52
Figure 5.2: Thematic map of general conditions that influence individuals' perceived psychological safety.....	55
Figure 5.3: Thematic maps of leader attributes	59
Figure 5.4: Thematic map conditions changed pre-Covid and post the Covid-19 pandemic	65
Figure 5.5: Thematic map changes of leadership attributes and behaviour.....	73

ABBREVIATIONS

Covid-19 - Coronavirus disease

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

VUCA- Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Purpose statement

Psychological safety research is in its immediate to mature phase as the field has progressed from exploring the conceptual construct and its associated constructs to evaluating its relationships. As a result, the field has well-developed instruments for measuring the construct (Frazier et al., 2017). The findings in the field have mostly found similar results when looking at the relationship between psychological safety and its related constructs such as performance, creativity, employee voice, and team learning (Newman et al., 2017; Frazier et al., 2017; Pearsall & Ellis, 2011). A positive relationship of the above-mentioned related constructs was reported (Pearsall & Ellis, 2011).

Leadership has been found to be a precursor to a psychologically safe environment (Alexander et al., 2020; Walumbwa et al., 2009). According to the Alexander et al., (2020) a psychologically safe environment depends specifically on the leadership's behaviour, which ultimately helps in making their employees thrive. The leaders are seen as precursors for psychological safety because they have been argued to be the people who are vital in removing the employees' constraints when they do not feel safe (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). This is supported by Lee (2021) who states that the leadership's decisions and actions play a significant role in shaping the organisation's psychological safety.

Since the results on psychological safety and the relationship between its antecedents as well as its outcomes before the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) were discussed on previous papers, an investigation on the factors and the leadership styles that facilitate psychological safety today must be done (Alexander et al., 2020). The investigation is crucial in ensuring that quantitative research measures the appropriate constructs within today's changing environment. Furthermore, psychological safety and leadership are not static constructs as they evolve over time, and this will be shown in the literature review. Psychological safety is essential not only for the employees, but for the employers as well because it ensures that there is productivity in the organisations. Furthermore, according to (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009; Lee, 2021), psychological safety creates a climate where there is more likelihood for organisations to innovate

quickly and adapt well to change, which are crucial capabilities for the current rapidly changing work environment.

Different scholars have posed many definitions for psychological safety as this has been a commonly researched construct (Schein & Bennis, 1965; Edmondson, 1999; Kahn, 1990). For this study, Edmondson's (1999) definition will be used, which states that psychological safety is a shared belief amongst individuals on whether engaging in interpersonal risk-taking in the organisation is safe or not. Northouse (2010)'s definition of leadership will be utilized in this study, and it states that leadership is a means of using one's influence to get a team to achieve a common goal.

The research on psychological safety has looked at the construct within either the health industry (Edmondson & Mogelof, 2006), the mining industry (Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2013), in software, electronics, and finance (Carmeli et al., 2010), as well as in manufacturing (Elsaied, 2018). This study focuses on the mining industry because it has been a significant contributor to the South African economy and, consequently, it has been reported to be one of the sectors that were the most hard hit by Covid-19 (Jerry et al., 2021).

1.2 Context of the study

While psychological safety and leadership are constructs that have received much attention and traction from scholars within the organisational behaviour and management sphere, most of the findings emanated from the studies that were done before the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world (Alexander et al., 2020). Furthermore, as Masood and Budworth (2021) state, the literature in the leadership subject post-pandemic has been segmented by industry, such as in hospitality (Im et al., 2021); in healthcare (Travers et al., 2020); in information technology (Hu et al., 2020); in banking (Siswanti & Muafi, 2020), and in dental practice (Hanks et al., 2020). The rules of engagement and work arrangements differ significantly in all the industries within the current work environment. As a result, there may be a danger that some leaders still use the same old tactics to manage and engage employees (Alexander et al., 2020).

The way employees currently perceive psychological safety is different from how they perceived it pre-Covid-19. According to Alexander et al. (2020), psychological safety before the pandemic was perceived by employees when the leaders intentionally

created an environment where the employees were not afraid to make mistakes, and they could speak up and challenge the status quo while enjoying challenging work and developing career prospects. In today's work environment, however, psychological safety for most of the employees has been reported to be perceived by the employees when they feel that the organisations and the leaders show social support, empathy as well as support their requests for a flexible work approach to accommodate their personal and family needs (Alexander et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2018; Hobfoll, 2001).

The changes in the way the employees perceive psychological safety result from the Covid-19 disruptions. Covid-19 was discovered in December 2019, although the number of infections started getting announced in January 2020 (Thomas et al., 2020; Djalante et al., 2020). South Africa reported its first case on the 05th of March 2020 and went into hard lockdown on the 26th of March 2020, with only businesses that provided essential services operating (Insession, 2020).

The impact of Covid-19 was so significant that the government and the public health institutions issued regulations on how the businesses ought to operate (Yarberry & Sims, 2021). Such regulations led to the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommending that the workers who can work from home must be allowed to do so. In contrast, for those whose work could not be performed remotely, the employers were encouraged to look at introducing rotational shifts, shorter working hours, and reduced days of work to decrease the number of people at work at the same time (ILO, 2020). According to ILO (2020), by April 2020, 81% of the employees globally were in countries that posed restrictions in traditionally conducted work, thereby forcing them to adapt to virtual ways of working, with some on shorter or extended shifts to avoid physical contact.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought new dynamics and challenges to the work environment worldwide. In response to these changes, the organisations were forced to rethink how they work (Nemteanu et al., 2021; Masmood & Budworth, 2021). For some organisations, this meant lay-offs to stay abreast and survive the losses that resulted from the pandemic. For others, this meant introducing working-from-home arrangements and policies. At the same time, some firms had to introduce contingencies to deal with; absenteeism for the sick employees, for deaths, and for those who had to take care of impacted family members (Nemteanu et al., 2021; Alexander et al., 2020).

The above changes directly impacted the employees' perceived safety of their jobs, thereby increasing job insecurities. Nemteanu et al. (2021) define job insecurity as the employees' concern that there is a threat of job loss. Job insecurity became a significant disruption because, for many people, their jobs are the only source of income which causes even more problems for countries with high unemployment rates, such as South Africa, which had an unemployment rate of 35.3% in Q4 of 2021 (Trading Economics, n.d).

Nemteanu et al. (2021) further argue that the instability that is experienced in the workplace directly impacts the employees' attitudes and job satisfaction. The shift in the way that work is done directly affects how the employees respond to changes and how satisfied they are with their work. Instability and job security have been reported to create negative feelings such as stress, anxiety, depression, and procrastination which have been associated with adverse work outcomes such as job dissatisfaction, low engagement, and poor performance (Nemteanu et al., 2021; Hellgren et al., 1999).

Against such a backdrop, the leaders are required to show up, whether in person or virtually, considering the organisation's work arrangements (Alexander et al., 2020; Masood & Budworth, 2020). New leadership behaviours that will complement the current working environment need to be demonstrated, especially considering that the employees' perceived job satisfaction is linked to their perceived leader and organisational support (Feng et al., 2008; Tecău et al., 2020).

The statistics that were shared by Alexander et al., (2020) on McKinsey and Company's attrition survey for 2022 are concerning as they depict the current climate of the work environment. According to the results from the survey, 54% of the employees who reported leaving their organisations in the past six months quit because they no longer felt valued by their employers, 52% no longer felt valued by their managers, while 51% reported leaving because they no longer felt a sense of belonging (Alexander et al., 2020). The results are concerning because they clearly show that something is wrong and there is a need for it to be addressed if the leaders are to successfully lead thriving organisations.

The above picture from the survey signals a need by the organisations to look at new holistic paradigms to keep their employees engaged and consequently psychologically

safe. These holistic paradigms need to encompass the elements that the employees deem as essential, such as career growth, quality relationships with leaders, caring teams, and organisations with positive work climates (Alexander et al., 2020). The leaders need to demonstrate new behaviours at work and towards their subordinates. The hierarchical and traditional ways of leading are largely no longer applicable; and authors such as Alexander et al. (2020) have called on the leaders to invest in more positive and inspirational leadership styles.

1.3 Mining industry

The mining industry in South Africa has been a significant contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and the primary source of employment since the early 1900s (Masia & Pienaar, 2011). The mining industry is known to be one that has a challenging environment to work in, and it is particularly challenging to achieve positive work outcomes such as psychological safety (Maximo et al., 2019). According to Paul and Maiti (2005), the mining industry is one of the challenging and risky occupations that are characterised by high demand for production, productivity, time constraints, and strict deadlines for the employees to meet (Masia & Pienaar, 2011). Over the years, a lot of emphasis has been placed on general safety and employee safety in the work environment. The companies in the mining industry are reported to not only have increased support for their employees in terms of ensuring physical safety, but they have also been reported to have placed more emphasis on psychological safety (Carlisle & Parker, 2014). This shift has been driven by the high costs that are associated with psychological injuries, which usually result in increased absenteeism, as well as legal and medical bills (Carlisle & Parker, 2014).

Furthermore, the mining industry in South Africa is argued to have major challenges in terms of the need for increased productivity (McLaggan et al., 2013). The mining industry was, however, not immune to Covid-19's impact on organisations across the globe. While some mining operations were deemed essential services under level five hard lockdown, some were not. At a global scale, the pandemic was reported to have caused a lot off havoc that has not been seen since the great depression across the sectors (Laing, 2020). In the mining industry particularly, the interruption came because of

decreased demand as production and construction were put on hold for many operations across the globe. The direct impact was seen globally in drastic price falls in some minerals and metals. Aluminium and copper were reported to have the most drastic fall in price. In South Africa for example, several mining operations shut down production, which brought increased pressure for the leadership but additionally, this increased the costs for these mining operations to recover post the pandemic (Laing, 2020).

Additionally, a need for inspired leadership has been advocated for in this type of work environment where the leader's influences are needed to drive positive work outcomes (McLaggan et al., 2013). If pre pandemic, such calls were being made for the type of leadership that is required for this type of work environment, one must wonder if there was any leader adaptability post covid to lead today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world.

1.4 Problem statement

This study aims to understand how leadership style(s) contribute to the perceived psychological safety in the mining industry post-COVID-19 pandemic, as the miners' work environment is already deemed risky (Jerry et al., 2021). The investigation is prompted by the changes that were brought about by Covid-19 globally in many different sectors, including the mining industry, which is the focus of the study.

This is considering that, as previous studies have suggested, what the employees' perceived to facilitate a psychologically safe environment before Covid-19 may differ from what they deem to facilitate psychological safety in today's hyper-competitive business environment. With that in mind, the study aimed to:

1. Establish the factors that contribute to the perceived psychological safety for the employees in the mining industry.
2. Assess what leadership style(s) facilitate psychological safety for the employees in the mining sector;
3. Investigate whether there has been a change from what the employees' perceived to enable a psychologically safe environment before Covid-19;
4. Assess whether the leaders have had to adapt to the changing business environment and, consequently, to assess the results that were obtained from leader adaptability.

1.5 Significance

1.5.1 Significance for business

In today's competitive and dynamic workplace, knowledge-sharing and learning behaviour have been deemed as critical elements to steer an organisation's competitive advantage (Frazier et al., 2017). As organisations strive to be innovative and to stay ahead of the competition, the organisational structures have shifted from the traditional structures to more fluid structures, thereby fostering more interference amongst the different divisions and forcing the different units to collaborate, share information, and continually engage in learning behaviours. Given the importance of psychological safety in the workplace, the study will contribute to the business environment by identifying the relevant leadership and behavioural factors that influence psychological safety within today's business environment post the covid-19 pandemic. Knowing how to create an environment that is psychologically safe for employees is important if organisations are to thrive in today's hyper competitive business environment where collaboration, knowledge sharing, innovation and continuous learning are prerequisites to win. By better understanding, businesses will be in a better position to practice the leadership styles that are deemed positive for their work environment, thereby getting the desired outcomes out of the employees while simultaneously creating a psychologically safe environment (Steffens et al., 2017). This is important to assist organisations in maintaining their competitive advantage by having engaged employees who can innovate, challenge the status quo, produce new ideas and ultimately perform. The study will also help the human resource practitioners and the leaders to intentionally create a psychologically safe work environment for their employees.

1.5.2 Significance for scholars and academics

Theoretically, psychological safety is mainly linked to the performance outcome in all the units of analysis (individual, team, and organisation). With the advent of Covid-19, productivity and performance have never been emphasised as they are today, mainly due to how competitive the economic and global landscape looks today. The study, therefore, enhances the understanding of the role of positive leadership in facilitating psychological safety. Secondly, this study highlights the importance of psychological safety in facilitating the behaviours and the attitudes that are required in today's world

of work, but most notably, how it is a critical factor in getting the desired results from the employees (Edmondson, 1999; Frazier et al., 2017). The scholars need to bring new insights into what contributes to the high-performance organisations as well as what they are gaining for, and psychological safety remains one such significant element to explain it (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

1.5.3 Delimitations

Both constructs that have been chosen for the study are extensively studied and they have numerous definitions. This study will clarify the authors whose definitions it will use. The study by no means aims to resolve the controversy around getting to a single, universal definition. As Kanji and Moura (2001:709) argue about leadership, "...there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are researchers who have attempted to define the concept".

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section of the study addresses the literature review of the selected constructs, namely psychological safety, leadership, and the associated leadership styles within the business context in the South African context. There is a brief overview of what these constructs look like within the mining industry where this study has a particular interest. The literature review aims to highlight what has already been done by previous scholars, identify the existing gaps, and justifying the direction of this study.

2.1 Leadership

Since its early years, leadership has been a widely researched topic in the psychological, social, behavioural sciences, and in the management journals, which speaks volumes about how vital it has been across the decades (Van Seters & Field, 1990; Daft, 2011; Benmira & Agboola, 2021; Steffens et al., 2017). This is further supported by Benmira and Agboola (2021) when they argue that leadership is a complex and multi-dimensional construct that has been studied extensively over the past decades, which remains relevant in today's fast-paced, ever-evolving, and globalised business environment. According to Van Seters and Field (1990), 'a leader' as a term was noted in the 1300s, and 'leadership' was conceptualised in the 1700s (Stogdill, 1974; Van Seters & Field, 1990). Because the topic has been researched in the past, the continued search for new meanings in the topic means it is an ever-evolving concept that continues to develop (Daft, 2011; O'Toole & Bennis, 2009).

Over the years, many definitions have been posed about leadership, some with remarkable similarities and differences with the scholar definitions from past and recent scholars. According to Yukl (1999), several scholars have defined leadership in reference to their own individualised perspectives and area of interest, while others have defined leadership according to the reference that was made to the leaders' individual traits, how leaders behave, how they interact with those they lead, the subordinates' perceptions of their leaders, and the leaders influence on their subordinates (Yukl, 1999).

Amongst the different definitions that have been posed, Stogdill (1950) posits that leadership is a process of influence that is focused on achieving set goals for one's subordinates (Stogdill, 1950). Avolio et al. (2003) define leadership as the ability to

influence people to go beyond pursuing their own interests but to work towards a common communal goal. Hogan and Kaiser (2008) define leadership as the ability to build a team that can perform well and equally maintain such standards. Similarly, Daft (2011) defines leadership as the influence between a leader and their followers, with the intention of seeing change for a shared purpose. The above definitions share similarities in their definition, which Maxwell (1993) simplifies by saying that leadership is about influence. In essence, all the above-mentioned authors acknowledge the need for influence and the ability to get a team to work towards a shared purpose.

As evident from the few illustrated definitions, there is no universally agreed-upon definition of leadership and what constitutes an effective leader, which is why the efforts to understand this phenomenon better continues (Benmira & Agbola, 2021; Nawaz & Khan, 2016) and it is the reason why the construct is still relevant for this study within the mining industry. With the absence of a universally agreed upon definition of leadership or what makes leaders effective, effective leadership has, however, been recognised as a crucial key to unlocking the success and effectiveness of many organisations (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). Leadership and management have also sometimes been used interchangeably and sometimes distinctions are made between the two. For this study, however, the terms leadership, manager, and supervisor will be used interchangeably as the aim is to assess how those leading in these positions influence the subordinates' perceptions. This decision to use leader and manager interchangeably is in line with Williams et al. (2002) when they argue that managers are leaders as they also play the critical role of helping others to achieve set goals.

Because the external environment is constantly changing and is increasingly unpredictable, leadership remains crucial for driving the change and transformation that is needed within organisations (Naidu & Van Der Walt, 2005). In South Africa particularly, over, and above operating in a business world that is more competitive, with all kinds of changes, leadership is the added requirement to manage a diverse workforce (Naidu & Van Der Walt, 2005). A challenge that is posed for the leaders in the changing business environment is the fact that they cannot expect to lead the way they did in the past and expect to get results (Alexander et al., 2020). Rather, the changing work environment requires the leaders to change strategies, methodologies, and leadership competence to achieve effectiveness in their organisations. As Kotter (1998) puts it, the

more change an organisation face, the more leadership is required. To thrive in the current volatile business environment, businesses need the right leaders, who will use the correct leadership approaches and styles, with the right people, at the right time (Beck & Yeager, 2005; Berr et al., 2000), which suggests that leader adaptability is crucial. Covid-19 brought about change in the business environment globally, and this is evident in the regulations that were issued by the different governments across the globe. Furthermore, past research has reported that employee needs are heightened during a transition or change such as the Covid-19 pandemic, and therefore require the organisation, and managerial actions to have this in consideration.

Leadership has undergone four main eras through its evolution, namely: the personality era (comprising of the great men era and trait era), the behavioural era, the contingent or situational era, and the new leadership era (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). To have an appreciation of the leadership styles to be discussed for the study, an overview of the different eras and their developments will be explored in the next section.

The personality era

The personality era was the first formalisation of the leadership theory and it assisted with the distilling of the leadership process that was posed by the scholars. This era was categorised into two related but different types of the leadership theory, namely the great men era and the trait period (Van Seters & Field, 1990).

The great men era /Trait approach

The leadership era started with the great man era which was in the 1930s to the 1840s when it was believed that leaders were born and not made and, for those reasons, they could not be trained (Lord et al., 2017; Nawaz & Khan, 2016). This era focused on looking at the innate characteristics of what makes a great leader, and it tried identifying the personality traits that make leaders effective in their interactions with others and their roles (Dziak, 2019; Judge et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2018). In this era, the success of the leaders was therefore attributed to the personality attributes that were seen as extraordinary such as great energy, deep intuition, excellent foresight skills, and irresistible persuasive powers (Yukl, 1989). During this era, the scholars studied those

who were seen as strong leaders, by studying their personalities and behaviours so they could be imitated by others (Galton 1869; Borgata et al., 1963).

As Stogdill (1974) notes, however, the research in this era failed to find the innate leadership characteristics that guaranteed leadership success. Furthermore, as Van Seters and Field (1990) state, the process was frustrating when the scholars in this era realised that different leaders had different personality traits. Additionally, these different personalities could sadly not be imitated by others to become effective leaders. It is for these reasons that the leading theory was then advanced to the trait period.

The trait period

With the progression from the great men era, the trait period was born (Hunt & Fedynich, 2019). The trait period attempted to remove the links to certain individuals, and it tried to come up with general traits, that, if inherited, would lead to effective leadership (Van Seters & Field, 1990). The trait period was disrupted by scholars such as Jenkins (1947), when he revealed that there was no single trait that led to effective leadership. Furthermore, scholars such as Johns and Moser (1989) argue that both the great men era and the trait period had no empirical evidence to support the theories. Furthermore, the great men era and the trait period suggested that the leaders were pre-determined and could not be trained (Hunt & Fedynich, 2019). The lack of consistent findings on the innate characteristics or traits that make a great leader prompted the field to enter a new leadership theory called the behavioural era (Benmira & Agbolola, 2021; Hunt & Fedynich, 2019).

The behavioural era

The behavioural era was in the 1940s-1950s, and it focused on the leader's behaviours which were later grouped or categorised and labeled as leadership styles (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2017), as opposed to looking at the leader traits. This era was more concerned about what the leaders do in their job, and consequently their managerial effectiveness (Yukl, 1989), instead of their traits. Some empirical work from this era focused on the behaviour patterns of the leaders, and the others looked at the differences in behaviours in the leaders who were deemed as effective leaders versus those who were deemed to demonstrate poor leadership (Yukl, 1989). This era made

great strides as the managers could practically implement the behaviours that were identified to be exemplified by the effective leaders and therefore it made considerable progress in moving away from the earlier inconsistent theories (Benmira & Agbolola, 2021).

The criticism of this era, however, was that it failed to consider the environment and the context within which the leaders were operating, and thus it suggested that leadership happened in a vacuum, which the scholars soon realised was not true (Benmira & Agbolola, 2021). Additionally, within these investigations, there was no consideration of the leader's subordinates and their role, as stated by Malakyan (2014). The lack of attention that was given to the changing dynamics between a leader and a follower led the researchers to explore the contingent and situational era. Subsequently, the different behaviour patterns were then grouped together, and they are now known as the leadership styles. The behavioural era is still very prevalent and relevant with consideration of the leadership styles that are utilised in the differing environments (Benmira & Agbolola, 2017); hence the study looks at the leadership styles.

Contingent or Situational Era

The behavioural era was advanced, which then led to the contingent or situational era. Major advancements were further made in this era, as the scholars came to the realisation that leadership was not unidimensional but rather it was multidimensional, as it consisted of several different elements, as stated by Van Seters and Field (1990). The contingent era was grounded on the argument that effective leadership was based on more than one factor of behaviour, and it was also dependent on variables such as personality, influence, and situation (Van Seters & Field, 1990). Furthermore, the situation era in the 1960s came with the recognition that the environment in which the people function plays a huge role in the leader-follower relationship, and most importantly, there are other factors beyond the leader-subordinate relationship (Yurii et al., 2018). The factors that are highlighted to be above the leader subordinate relationship are the leader's social status, the power that the leader possesses, and the type of job that the leader does (Bass, 1985). This era also implied that the leaders needed to look at the environment and context within which they operate, and they could then adapt to a suitable leadership style for the context. Effective leadership in this era

was therefore measured by how well a leadership style that was used by a leader was best suitable for a particular context (Benmira & Agboola, 2017).

New leadership era

Lastly, in the 1990s, a new leadership era emerged to accommodate the complex and challenging environment that the leaders must navigate, which involves rapid change, disruptive technological advancements, new innovations, and increased globalisation. This era saw a move away from the traditional, uni-directional influence of leadership, which was seen as the top-down approach to one that focused on the complex interactions between the leader and the follower (Benmira & Agboola, 2017). This era brought new insights to suggest that effective leadership did not only rest on the person or situation, but also on the social interactions and the role differentiation played a key role in effective leadership (Van Seters & Field, 1990). Role differentiation and social interaction are best described by transactional and transformational leadership, which will be the focus of the study's leadership styles (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Transactional leadership emerged in the 1990's and transformational leadership in the 2000s, and these will be the leadership styles that this study will focus on (Benmira & Agboola, 2017). Essentially, this era highlighted the influence that happens between the leaders and the subordinates, which is not necessarily one-dimensional, but it is a reciprocal dilemma (Benmira & Agboola, 2017).

The two leadership styles that are highlighted from the new leadership era are discussed in the next session in detail.

2.2 Leadership styles

Several leadership styles and leadership dimensions have been studied over the years, with a reported systems that have been developed to describe leadership dimensions since the 1930s (Walters & Diab, 2016). The scholars have argued that with the different leadership eras and styles that have emerged from those eras, there are many overlaps and therefore, an integration effort is required (Anderson & Sun, 2017). The authors such as Avolio and Bass (2002) argue that the leadership styles exist in a continuum, ranging from the laissez-faire leadership style which is viewed as a passive avoidant leadership style to the transactional and transformational leadership styles that are

viewed to be the more active leadership styles. This literature review seeks to take the reader through the main leadership eras and the theories that are discussed in the leadership theory to date, and thereafter it highlights the leadership styles that this study will focus on, namely the transactional and the transformational leadership styles.

In the previous section, the researcher highlighted that several distinctive leadership theories came from different eras as the leadership theory progressed. The study has looked at the personality era, which focused its efforts on the great men and the trait theory which attempted to highlight the distinctive leader characteristics that were deemed to demonstrate effective leadership (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018). The trait theory was preceded by the behavioural theory, which sought to show how the different leaders used different leadership styles, and the contingency leadership theory which sought to add on the behavioural theory thereby demonstrating that the leaders used certain leadership styles with the leader, follower, and situation in consideration (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018). The contingency theories suggested that there was no one correct leadership style to use; rather, the leaders relied on the leadership styles based on the situation, by looking at factors such as the quality and the situation of the followers. This was further supported by Greenleaf (1977) when he states that a leadership style that is used by a leader in one situation, may not be effective for another leader in different circumstances.

The leadership styles were therefore borne between the behavioural and the contingency theory era as has already been demonstrated. According to Oberer and Erkollar (2018), the leadership styles can be defined as the behaviours, the traits and the skills that are demonstrated by a leader in interacting with the leader's subordinates. The leadership style theory acknowledges the importance of specific skills in the leaders that enable them to be influential (Nawaz & Khan, 2016). Different leadership styles in the management field have been studied to show how they help the leaders to get the influence they need to successfully run effective organisations with a suitable work climate for their employees (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Furthermore, the leadership styles and the behaviours are seen as the way in which the leaders relate to and manage their subordinates and the overall team's work environment (Igbaekemen, 2014). These styles and the behaviours are critical in shaping the work environment and the perceived

work climate (Mao & Tian, 2022). The importance of leader behaviour and the adopted styles by the leaders are further supported by Luthans (2002) who posits that leadership is a critical factor for flourishing organisations and for an engaged workforce. It is therefore clear from the stated empirical evidence that the leadership styles are not only important for shaping the leader and the supervisor role, but also for shaping the climate of the organisation.

Two outcomes have been associated with effective leadership in the leadership field, namely, psychological safety and work engagement (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Psychological safety will further be explored within the literature review to demonstrate how leadership is critical to facilitating a psychologically safe environment for the employees.

The following leadership styles were studied for this study, transformational leadership, and the transactional leadership styles. The following section will define the identified leadership styles and explain how they are associated with psychological safety.

2.2.1 Transformational leadership style

The transformational leadership theories have been built from the transactional theory and models, and from earlier leadership eras such as the personal traits era (Stogdill, 1974). Bass (1990) was the first author to define transformational leadership. Transformational leaders are defined as the leaders who motivate and harness the employees to do more than their assigned tasks and those who pursue organisational goals rather than their own (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Zaman and Abbasi (2020) highlight the critical components of transformational leaders as per the below:

1. **Charisma**, which speaks to the way a leader behaves and it is perceived to be admirable and causes the followers to identify with the leader (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). It is also known as idealised influence as coined by Bass (1985).
2. **Inspirational motivation**, which is usually achieved through a shared vision, and it must appeal to the leader's followers and challenge them with high standards. The motivation must communicate a message of hope, attainable goals, and meaningful work (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Zaman & Abbasi, 2020).

3. **Intellectual stimulation** is defined as the degree to which the leader can challenge the followers, thereby stimulating their creativity (Anderson & Sun, 2015). Zaman and Abbasi (2020) argue that the ability to challenge assumptions drives innovation and creativity.
4. **Individualised consideration** is when the leaders function as mentors, coaches, or advisors, by paying particular attention to each member's needs and listening to their concerns and needs (MacKenzi et al., 2001; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

The above-highlighted components are further supported by Syrek and Antoni (2017) when they state that the transformational leaders' distinctive characteristics include but are not limited to a clear vision and mission, effective communication skills, managing the change management process, consistent attitude, and behaviour, as well as higher reported levels of self-efficacy and self-awareness.

Past research has shown evidence demonstrating that the transformational leadership behaviours influence employee attitudes and work outcomes (Bass & Avolio, 1990). This is further supported by Isaksen and Akkermans (2011) when they argue that transformational leaders play a huge role in shaping an organisation's climate. The evidence that has been collected on the effectiveness of transformational leaders further suggests that this type of leadership style is valuable to most organisations, individuals, and leaders (Mokgolo et al., 2012). This is because the transformational leaders' effectiveness comes from exuding high ethical standards and becoming change agents within their organisations. The leaders function as role models and they are inspirational and compassionate (Zaman & Abbasi, 2020). The above evidence demonstrates that transformational leadership brings forth a lot of positive outcomes, including their recognition of the need for change.

The positive work environment that the transformational leaders create, cultivates perceived psychological safety as the employees are encouraged to speak up, and their career development is prioritised (Carmeli et al., 2014). Additionally, support comes across as one of the key elements for transformational leaders, and Li et al. (2020) argue that it is the support that creates the perceived psychological safety for the employees.

The transformational leadership style has been criticised for its vagueness especially on how the leaders influence work groups, teams, and organisations (Yukl, 1999). However, overall, the scholars agree with the findings that show that transformational leadership influences the subordinates and the organisations' performance (Diaz-Saenz, 2011).

2.2.2 Transactional leadership style

Transactional leadership is the opposite of transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is seen as a process of exchange with the aim of fulfilling contractual obligations (Antonakis et al., 2003). Additionally, transactional leadership is seen to be linear as it is typically a process of setting objectives, evaluating, and controlling the intended outcomes (Antonakis et al., 2003). In simple terms, transactional leadership is about the exchanges that happen between the leader and the follower, as noted by several authors that include Bass (1985) and Burns (1978).

Transactional leadership is argued to be beneficial for the leaders and the followers because it allows the leaders to meet their objectives, whilst getting the work done. It directs everyone's behaviour and attitude towards completing tasks. Subsequently, for the followers, transactional leadership enables them to attain rewards for the jobs they have done well, and it avoids unnecessary interpersonal risk and ultimately, they perform at the efficient levels that are required by the leader (McCleskey, 2014). Additionally, transactional leadership is argued to lessen anxiety as the subordinates are given clear goals and objectives to accomplish, which contributes to superior quality, reduced costs, and more efficient production outcomes (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Under these conditions, both parties thereof continue the relationship in pursuit of their own interest and purposes.

Transactional leadership has been conceptualised to have three dimensions, namely: contingent reward, management by exception (passive), and management by active exception (McLaggan et al., 2013). A brief overview of how these conditions work is briefly explained below:

Contingent reward- An extrinsic reward that is given by the leader to the subordinates for achieving set goals and for demonstrating behaviours that positively influence expected performance and good performance (Valeria, 2009).

Active management by exception- Preventative behaviours that prevent potential problems before they arise (McLaggan, 2013).

Passive management by exception - Alludes to the leaders being alerted of any deviations that the subordinates may make to set targets, goals, and expected behaviours and, as such, they provide feedback to rectify (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Although the leaders who use the transactional leadership style are noted to be effective in getting the desired results, the weaknesses in this leadership style have been highlighted to include but they are not limited to shallow and short-term relationships as the contractual obligations tend to be short-term and are abandoned once the obligations are met (Burns, 1978). As a result of the lack of meaningful relationships that some employees desire, the transactional leadership style is also argued to create some resentment from the subordinates towards the leaders (McCleskey, 2014).

2.3 Psychological safety

Today's fast-paced, competitive, and highly globalised business world is increasingly encouraging the employers to have employees who contribute to the organisation's continuous improvement in the work processes and procedures (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009). The reason for such efforts is to ensure continuous learning for the organisation, which is seen as a competitive advantage as it can allow the organisations to stay ahead of the competition (Newman et al., 2017). Some scholars have investigated the behaviours that allow the employees to contribute to the organisation's continuous learning. These include but they are not limited to, producing innovative ideas to solve problems, trying new ways of doing things, collaborating with team members and sometimes with members from other groups, and challenging the status quo (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety was discovered to be the factor that facilitates all these behaviours to happen, which Kahn (1990) and Edmondson (1999) both recognise as a cognitive state. However, as Edmondson et al. (2001) state, these behaviors can also be risky depending on the environment's receptiveness.

Upon reviewing different articles on psychological safety in the organisational behaviour and management field, it is evident that different authors have posed different definitions and perspectives on the topic at hand. Shein and Bennis (1965) who first introduced the concept, looked at it from a perspective where the individuals feel secure and confident in managing change, which they called the "unfreezing" process, which is a requirement for organisational learning and change. In contrast, Kahn (1990) describes psychological safety as an individual's perception of how confident they are in showing their authentic self without fear of negative consequences. The author saw it as a critical condition for the employees to feel engaged with their work. Carmeli et al. (2010) define psychological safety as a representation of the perceptions that the employees have about the environment, they work in. One of the most quoted definitions by Edmondson (1999) proposes that psychological safety is a shared belief amongst individuals on whether engaging in interpersonal risk-taking in the organisation is safe. He further argues that in an environment where the employees feel psychologically safe, they show up as themselves with no fear of being rejected, and they say what they think. The employees also show interest in each other as humans first, they can experiment, and they engage in constructive conflict (Edmondson, 2004).

The definitions that are shared above show that a positive organisational context is crucial for the employees to feel psychologically safe. Against the backdrop of such contexts, the employees feel safe and are confident to bring their best selves and perform to the best of their ability as suggested in Kahn's (1990) definition. Thus, psychological safety is argued to allow the employees to feel free and safe in their work environments, as they can actively participate, contribute, and engage in continuous learning. Past research has shown that the individuals who perceive their work environments to be psychologically safe feel free to express their concerns as they are not afraid to say when they do not know something. They ask for help or show the need to learn their tasks effectively even amidst a changing global work environment (Frazier et al., 2017). Additionally, the organisations where the employees feel psychologically safe have been believed to have high-performing teams. This was demonstrated through Google's study, where the findings demonstrated that psychological safety was the number one factor that contributed to the organisation's high-performing teams (Bergmann & Schaeppi, 2016).

It is worth noting that psychological safety is a construct that has been investigated mainly from three different dimensions or units of study, namely, organisational culture (Schein, 1985), team perspective (Edmondson, 1996), and individual perspective (Kahn, 1990). From a team perspective, psychological safety means the team climate is safe for one to share their thoughts, ask questions, seek feedback, report mistakes, and propose innovative ideas freely (Edmondson, 1999). Furthermore, team psychological safety is reported to be an enabler for team members to let their guard down and engage openly in organisational behaviors that contribute to innovation and learning. Additionally, the team members in psychologically safe spaces are not afraid to make mistakes, or to try out new things, or suggest innovative ideas, as there is no fear of getting penalised (Edmondson, 2004). The employees in the teams where psychological safety is lacking tend to manage their interpersonal risk to protect themselves even if this hinders the team's effectiveness (Edmondson, 2004).

Company cultures have been reported to differ significantly, as represented by the inferences to authority, participation, openness, and how the employees are treated (Collins & Porras, 1994). The literature looking at organisational culture tends to define an organization's culture based on the company's norms, values, and beliefs and how those influence the organisation's effectiveness (Schein, 1985). From an organisational perspective, the literature suggests that the organisations cultivate a climate of psychological safety by having a culture where speaking up or trying new things is not frowned upon (Collins & Porras, 1994; Weiner et al., 2021). Consequently, there are organisations where such actions do not fit the organization's culture, and therefore, such actions would be frowned upon and not encouraged. The companies need to be deliberate about creating a climate with psychological safety through leadership actions, policies, and organisational structures that break barriers for individuals and teams (Edmondson, 2004). The organisational policies and structures that encourage psychological safety are important as the experience in corporate has demonstrated that these become the enablers and push the rest of the organisation to adopt company acceptable behaviours despite the differences in the personalities or the leadership approaches.

Despite all the positive outcomes that were shared from the environments that are conducive to psychological safety on the organisation's performance and learning, some

scholars have brought evidence that shows that some of the conditions that are required to ensure psychological safety are lacking (Detert & Burris, 2007; Sherf et al., 2021). It has been noted for example that many organisations do not facilitate an environment where the employees perceive it safe to speak up (Milliken et al., 2003; Weiner et al., 2021). In environments where the employees do not perceive it safe to speak up or voice up their opinion, they deliberately withhold information even if the information would assist in improving the organisation's effectiveness, in fear of the consequences of the environments that are not open to such actions. Yet, the employee's voice, while it may question and challenge the status quo has been shown to be critical to the organisation's well-being. The employees who view such an action to outweigh the benefits or the perceived consequences to follow from such actions unfortunately intentionally do not speak up (Detert & Burris, 2007; Weiner et al., 2021; Sherf et al., 2021). Yet in high-risk work environments such as the mining industry, the employees' failure to speak up can lead to fatal incidents with far reaching consequences (Bienefeld & Grote, 2014). Furthermore, the fear of speaking up has negative impacts both in high and minimal risk environments as it has further been demonstrated to hinder innovation, organisational learning and the critical change processes that are required by the organisation (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Sherf et al., 2021).

Since its inception, several antecedents and outcomes that are associated with psychological safety have been studied. Kahn (1990) for example, found four antecedents to psychological safety and these are leadership, interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, and organisational norms. This means that the environments that are deemed to be psychologically safe are facilitated by the type of leadership that is present and what actions they take, the nature of the relationships between the organisation, the leaders and the subordinates, the team dynamics in terms of the way the group works together and relates to the leader and the organisation's culture which speaks to what is deemed as acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and practices. In addition to the four identified antecedents, Kahn (1990) also later discovered that the differences in the employees' personalities influenced psychological safety. This is both from the employee's perception of psychological safety as a result of either being open, conscientious, extraverted, agreeable or neurotic as alluded to by Edmondson (2006); and due to the leaders personality traits which inform their

leadership behaviour (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009) Likewise, specific work outcomes have been associated with psychological safety, such as work engagement, task performance, citizenship behaviours, learning behaviours, and job attitudes (Pearsall & Ellis, 2011).

Edmondson (2004) mainly made the claims that what enables psychological safety in organisations is trust and the perceived organisational support by the employees. This is further supported by Weiner et al. (2021), when they argue that social support is important in influencing the employee's perception of psychological safety that is embodied by the organisation, the supervisor, and the co-worker support (Singh et al., 2017). Social support is demonstrated through mutual trust, having open communication, transparency and empowerment as has been demonstrated by Frazier et al. (2017). It is worth noting, however, that the employee's perception of psychological safety can be changed by the workplace changes or disruptions such as the Covid-19 pandemic that disrupted many organisations and industries across the globe (Weiner et al., 2021). The changed perceptions can be influenced by the perception of job security, job autonomy or the lack of it thereof, voice autonomy and the perceived fairness in the treatment of employees and the team members (Weiner et al., 2021). It is evident from Anand et al.,(2018) that the leaders can have different relationships with their subordinates, which can create perceptions of unfairness. Additionally, the changes in business bring about uncertainty and vagueness, while the lack of social support and autonomy frustrates the employees who are creating perceptions of low-psychological safety which can cause them to withhold some aspects of themselves in the work environment which is not effective for the organisation's effectiveness as has been demonstrated.

There are gaps in the literature on psychological safety in relation to the individual level unit analysis. While research has been conducted at the individual, team, and organisational level; it has remained questionable whether the individual experiences reflect the majority's view at the organisational level (Newman et al., 2017). Very little research has been done at the organisational level, as evident in Newman et al. (2017). Because this research will give new insights into the post-pandemic view of such a study, the individual unit-level analysis was used, thereby enabling the researchers in the field to test for homogeneity to take the field forward. Furthermore, most research

on this topic has been conducted in the United States, where the cultural characteristics differ from the South African context regarding the level of collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance, as illustrated in Hofstede (2001). Therefore, the study will give light to South Africa's corporate culture concerning psychological safety. Lastly, authors such as Pierce and Aguinis (2013) have proposed a principle they call Too Much of a Good Thing Effect (TMGT effect) to argue that too much psychological safety within an organisational context could be potentially detrimental, thereby raising a need for further research to look at the adverse outcomes of psychological safety.

2.4 Psychological safety and leadership styles

Past research has suggested that a leader's behavior is vital in facilitating a psychologically safe environment for the employees (Mao & Tian, 2022). As Kahn (1990) and Edmondson (1999) state, when the employees perceive a positive relationship with their leader, this positively influences their perceptions of psychological safety in their work environment. With the correct leadership, not only is psychological safety created but it can be increased (Kahn, 1990). The behaviours that have been explored by the researchers that have demonstrated a facilitation of a climate that the employees perceive as psychologically safe include but are not limited to the development of high-quality relationships between the leaders and the employees (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009), perceived trust (Mao & Tian, 2022) and contexts within which the leadership and the organisation are supportive (Li et al., 2015). The supportive leader environments are argued to be the ones where the leaders show concern for the employees' needs and, as such, they allow the employees to show and talk about their concerns, by providing constructive feedback and encouraging the building of new skillsets (Dunne & Greenwald, 2014). Additionally, the supportive leaders are said to reward the significant effort that has been put into work, and they do not respond unfavorably to the mistakes that are made by the employees but instead they help the employees to learn from them (Heyns et al., 2021).

These are behaviours that the employees in today's working world refer to as the humane treatment of the employees. They communicate essential information to the employees about the leaders' support, consistency, trust, and employee competence (Kahn, 1990). The leadership further plays a vital role in facilitating psychological safety

because it is often the leaders who can remove the constraints or the barriers to the employees being able to express themselves, their concerns, and their ideas (Wang et al., 2010). In environments that have a high presence of psychological safety, the leaders have argued to talk about the importance of interpersonal risk at work and they reassure the employees that there are no repercussions for speaking up, questioning, and or challenging the status quo for better results in work output.

As the leaders acknowledge the importance of psychological safety in getting the best out of their employees, it is crucial that they are cognizant of the fact that their views and authority may sometimes be challenged and they must accept the views and the opinions that go against theirs when they make sense (Wong, et al., 2018).

Psychological safety in turn, is a critical element that is identified as an enabler or an influence that is a requirement for the leadership, which creates an environment where the employees work towards achieving the common goal with increased work engagement. The leadership styles and the behaviours that are portrayed by the leaders often determine whether the employees feel safe, which further determines whether they can take interpersonal risks at work and whether they feel the work environment they work in is safe for them to work in, as well as to contribute in, engage in, and willingly participate in work activities (Mao & Tian, 2022). This is further supported by Frazier et al. (2017) when they state that the leadership constructs or the styles that are used by the leaders not only facilitate psychological safety, but they influence it through how the leadership is used to shape the work context for the employees.

2.5 Psychological safety and leadership styles within the mining industry in South Africa

The mining industry is known to be one that has a challenging environment to work in and it is particularly challenging to achieve positive work outcomes such as psychological safety. Furthermore, the mining industry in South Africa is argued to have significant challenges in terms of the need for increased productivity (McLaggan et al., 2013). As Mbazima (2020) argues, the mining companies need to be positioned well to be able to embrace and adapt to the changes that come while at the same time stimulating growth and remaining competitive (Heyns, 2021).

As has already been discussed, psychological safety in this study is being investigated in line with Edmondson's (1999) definition of psychological safety, which states that psychological safety is a shared belief amongst individuals on whether engaging in interpersonal risk-taking in the organisation is safe. Interpersonal risk has been referred to in terms of the ability and the willingness to introduce new ideas, to come up with innovative solutions, to experiment and question as well as to challenge the status quo without being afraid of negative consequences. A recent study by Palo and Rothmann (2016) has put forward an argument that for psychological safety to be increased in the mining industry, an improvement in the leadership support would be imperative.

It is, therefore, not a surprise that the different leadership styles have been studied as necessities to facilitate psychological safety for the employees in the work environment. Furthermore, the leadership styles such as transformational leadership (Detert & Burris, 2007), ethical leadership (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009), and servant leadership (Schaubroeck, et al., 2011) have been studied within the mining environment. McLaggan et al. (2013) argue that the transactional and the transformational leadership styles are the most dominant styles in the mining industry. The leaders who demonstrate the transactional leadership style place importance on the set work standards and consequently on the work outcomes. The transactional leaders are said to be task orientated and they rely on incentives to motivate the employees (Northouse, 2010). On the other hand, the transformational leaders are argued to pay more attention to the interests of their followers (i.e., how they are growing at work, what concerns them, what are their needs, and what is the support they need (Avolio et al., 2003).

According to Matinde et al., (2018), leadership and governance are important in shaping the mining industry as is evident in the mining sector's historic development and in the key roles in transforming South Africa. The literature on leadership in the mining sector usually identifies the transformational and the transactional leadership styles as the dominant styles that are used in the mining industry (Naidu & Van Der Walt, 2005).

. Over the years, a lot of emphasis has been placed on safety and employee safety in the work environment. The companies in the mining industry are reported to not only have increased their support for their employees in terms of ensuring physical safety, but they have also been reported to have placed more emphasis on psychological safety

(Carlisle & Parker, 2014). This shift has been driven by the high costs that are associated with psychological injuries, which usually result in, increased absenteeism, as well as legal and medical bills (Carlisle & Parker, 2014).

Emphasis has been placed on effective leadership and the role of the different leadership styles in facilitating the desired outcomes, however, Avolio (2004) states that it is possible that some of these leadership styles do not meet the challenges that many mines are currently confronted with. Thus, the study is being conducted to assess the right leadership styles that are required to facilitate psychological safety in the mining sector.

2.6 Theoretical Framework: Social Learning and Social Exchange Theory

The social learning theory and the social exchange theory are used to explain the link between the leadership behaviours and psychological safety for the employees in a work environment. Although they are quite similar theories, the two theories explore the link between positive leadership and psychological safety from somewhat different but essential angles.

2.6.1 Social learning theory

The social learning theory was developed during the emergence of organisational behaviour when the psychologists sought to explain human behaviour. Bandura notably coined it in 1997 when he sought to demonstrate that the employees learn through role modeling in the workplace. Explicitly, for this study, it is suggested that the employees may try to imitate the behaviours from their leaders, which in turn can determine the quality of their output. The social learning theory is based on the premise that the employees' interactions with the others in the workplace are critical in explaining the work environment and the perceived emotional support (Yarberry & Sims, 2021). In explaining the social learning theory, Bandura (1969) used the behaviour explanation, which states that behaviour is continuous and must be reciprocal between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental determinants (Davis & Luthans, 1980), as seen in Figure 2.1. below:

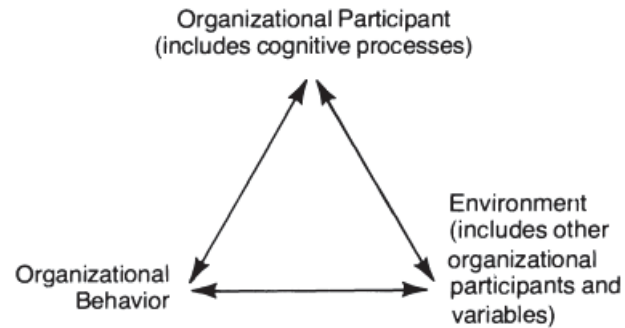


Figure 1
Model of Social Learning Theory
Of Organizational Behavior

Figure 2.1: Model of social learning theory of organisational behaviour (Davis & Luthans, 1980)

Thus, the social learning theory states that the people produce the condition of the environment through their actions (Yarberry & Sims, 2021). Additionally, Frazier and Tupper (2018) further postulate that the organisations intentionally want their employees to feel comfortable experimenting and bringing their best innovative selves to work without the fear of failure or retaliation from their leaders. Thus, the leaders need to create an environment that is safe for the employees to experiment using the social learning theory, which can be created by the leaders living out the characteristics that create psychological safety.

Frazier and Tupper (2018) argue that when the employees observe their leaders demonstrate actions and behaviours that make them feel psychological safety, they are highly likely to imitate similar behaviours and actions. Frazier and Tupper (2018) further argue that these actions and behaviours that the employees want to role model further establish the norms of the organisation or the teams where they are acted out, which further influences the employees' perception about their leaders and psychological safety. They should for example be receptive to the feedback, going as far as asking for it which communicates that feedback is okay and in turn, the employees will be willing to receive constructive feedback for the improvement of work outcomes or they voluntarily give it to the leaders. The leaders should also be able to share their failures from the innovations they were trialing as this will model to the employees that it is okay to try

and fail if there are lessons from it. As a last example, the leaders can productively challenge the employees on work tasks or new ideas, which can also be a model and invite the employees to do the same with the leaders if the environment is safe, and it allows it. With that said, the social learning theory therefore suggests that the leaders give cues to their employees that it is safe or not safe to engage in interpersonal risk in the workplace through actions that show that the leader listens, gives support, gives guidance, gives direction, and there is consistency (Frazier et al., 2017).

2.6.2 Social exchange theory

The social exchange theory is one of the most popular frameworks that is used by the sociologists and the psychologists in the social psychology field to explain workplace behaviour and organisational dynamics (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Its emergence can be traced back to the 1920s to authors such as Homans (1961), Blau (1964) and Emerson (1976); and it is founded on the understanding that the transactions between two parties come with reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The social exchange theory was built from the premise that with almost every interaction that happens in the organisation amongst different stakeholders, some exchanges need to happen (DeLamater et al., 2013). It has been argued that the differing views on the actual definition have been proposed, however, the common theme from all the definitions by the scholars is the fact that the social exchange theory offers a series of exchanges which in turn creates obligations from the involved parties (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003). Homans (1961) for example in his early works, defined the social exchange theory as a tangible or intangible exchange that is rewarding or costly to the involved parties. While Blau (1964:91) defines social exchange as, “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others”.

The exchanges that happen are said to be interdependent and contingent on the actions of others (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This means that when one party perceives favourable treatment that is being given to them, they want to offer the same courtesy to the other party, and the same is valid for the unfair treatment that is being returned. The applicability of the theory of social exchange has been confirmed in other human behaviour studies where for example, the organisations that provide support to their

employees had employees, in turn, feel an obligation to do the same (Wilson et al., 2004). As an example, this means that where the leaders create an environment that is psychologically safe, the employees are always willing to go above and beyond in work outputs in exchange for the safe environment that has been created for them.

The interdependent transaction actions are argued to have the potential to generate high-quality relationships between the employee as well as the leader and even between the employee and the colleagues (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Over time, through these repeated interdependent actions, the social exchange theory framework is argued to have relationships that grow into trusting, loyal and robust commitments between the individuals over time. This is because, as Frazier et al. (2017) state, the social exchanges between the leader and the employee over time create formalised expectations of what is appropriate behaviour and what is not. Furthermore, trust is the core principle or the enabler of the social exchange theory, rather than formal or legalised obligations as many would think (Dunne & Greenwald, 2014). Mutual trust has already been discussed to be one of the valuable factors that contribute towards perceived psychological safety (Weiner et al., 2021). The social exchange between the leader and the employee as well as mutual trust therefore leads to the reciprocity in work and to social support within the organisational and leader support circle (Spence et al., 2011).

Thus, the suggested framework is that certain leadership styles create psychological safety in that they can create social learning or social exchange between the leader and the follower.

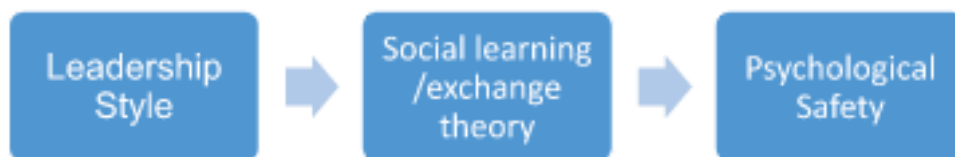


Figure 2.2: Contextualised research model (created by author 2022).

2.7 Conclusion

Chapter 2 sought to highlight the importance of the two chosen constructs for the study, namely: psychological safety and leadership. Through the literature review, it was demonstrated that leadership and psychological safety are constantly evolving constructs as evident in how much they have been studied by previous scholars (Steffens & Haslam, 2022).

Critical in driving the complex and ever-changing external environment and global business context organisation's exist in, leadership has been highlighted as a critical for organisation's to thrive (Benmira & Agboola, 2017). Additionally, in the face of a constantly changing environment, adaptability in leadership has been pointed out as a very critical skill for leaders of the 21st century to have.

Covid-19 was one such disruption that forced changes in how business was conducted and has continued to have long-term impact even post the pandemic, both positive and negative (Alexander et al., 2020).

An overview of four main eras of the leadership evolution were highlighted to aid in taking the reader through why the two leadership styles the study focused on were chosen.

Lastly, chapter 2 demonstrated why psychological safety is an important phenomenon in the workplace, and particularly having the right leader using the correct leadership style a precursor to facilitating psychological safety for employee's. The social learning and social exchange theories were used to explain how leadership, and particularly the right leadership style contributes to perceived psychological safety (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Next, the studies research questions which will aid in the studies investigation will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The below four research questions, listed below were formulated to aid with the understanding of the leadership styles that facilitate a psychologically safe environment for the employees in the mining industry in South Africa. The reviewed literature in Chapter 2 of the study informed the questions.

Research Question 1: What are the general factors that influence the individuals' perceived psychological safety?

Research Question 1 aims to identify the factors that the employees deem important that would influence how they perceive psychological safety in their place of work. This will also ascertain the position taken by the study, which is to place the leadership as the most crucial factor of the factors that were mentioned by the previous scholars. According to the literature review done in Chapter 2, leadership, interpersonal relationships, group dynamics and organisational norms are some of the antecedents that were reported to be associated with psychological safety (Kahn, 1990).

Research Question 2: Which leader attributes or behaviours contribute to psychological safety in the work environment?

Research Question 2 will help to link the identified leader behaviours to the leadership styles which will enable the study to narrow down the listed to one or a few leadership styles that are associated with psychological safety.

Research Question 3: Have any of the factors that contribute to psychological safety changed since Covid-19?

Research Question 3 aims to determine whether Covid-19 has led to any changes to the factors that the employees deemed important to facilitate psychological safety, and if so, the study sought to understand which of those conditions have changed. This is important for the study as we know that Covid-19 changed the rules of engagement for many organisations, thereby requiring new tactics (Alexander et al., 2020).

Research Question 4: How have the leaders tried to change their leader behaviours to the current context to ensure psychological safety?

Research Question 4 will help to ascertain the claims that are made in the study that most of the leaders are still leading the same way they did before the Covid-19 pandemic with no consideration of the employees' needs that have changed.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology and the design that were used for the investigation of the study. A qualitative, exploratory design was employed to explore what the leadership styles contribute to psychological safety for the employees in the mining industry. The chosen methodology then informed the population choice, the size of the sample and how the study would sample the participants, the measurement instrument to be used, as well as how data would be collected and analysed to reach conclusive findings. All of these are discussed in detail in the subsequent sections, together with detail on ethical clearance, the quality controls that were used in the study and the limitations the study faced.

4.2 Research Methodology and Design

The study adopted an exploratory research design that is useful in uncovering the nature of phenomena that is not well known (Polit & Beck, 2012). The use of an exploratory research design allowed the researcher to gain new insights and pose different questions than those posed previously with the hope to inform new perspectives and to add to the body of work in question (Saunders & Lewis 2018; Thorne 2016). As stated in the purpose of the research, the study aimed to assess the leadership styles that contribute to or facilitate psychological safety in the mining industry with consideration that the world of work has slightly changed since the Covid-19 pandemic. The identified leadership behaviours and factors enabled the researcher to link these to the leadership style(s) that are associated with psychological safety. Both psychological safety and leadership are evolving constructs, that are overly sensitive to context, therefore the study aimed to capture the changes that would have taken place, if any, hence the choice of an exploratory research design was suitable for the study.

Additionally, an interpretivism philosophy was utilised for the study. Interpretivism focuses on exploring the research variables and context in depth and distinguishes the humans from the physical things (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Bryman, 2016). This choice of philosophy was chosen because interpretivism is deemed relevant for the study of social phenomena in their natural environment (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) further state that the interpretivism philosophy brings the phenomena

under study to the realities of the participants in that culture, in the circumstances and in the context. Psychological safety and leadership are social phenomena in the organisational behaviour field. Due to the nature of the study being qualitative, this dictated that the researcher conducts semi-structured interviews, with open-ended questions where the constructs in question could be studied in their environment thereby allowing the participants to articulate their realities well (Remtulla et al., 2021). This type of setting allowed for conclusive findings to be drawn from the participants' perspectives, with their own interpretations.

An inductive approach to theory development was followed as seeking for new insights required the development of new theories to understand the constructs under study. An inductive approach has been defined as a systematic process where the analysis of the raw data is informed by specified objectives and the findings that emanate from the interviews with the participants (Thomas, 2006). Furthermore, the fact that there was no sufficient hypothesis to either prove or disprove concerning the research topic supported the chosen approach (Remtulla et al., 2021). This was therefore a bottom-up approach (Saunders & Lewis, 2018), where the researcher starts with observations from the data collection and moves to theory development.

The findings from the interviews once they were analysed informed the theory development and the frameworks that are relevant for the constructs that are being studied which is opposite to deductive reasoning which is mechanical and is used to prove or reject existing theory. Although psychological safety and leadership have previously been studied, very little is known about their conditions and influence since the Covid-19 pandemic. Against such a backdrop, the choice to use an inductive approach was further supported by Woo et al. (2017) as they argue for this approach to be used when very little is known about a topic.

4.3 Methodological Choices

This study employed qualitative research methods, defined by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) as the tools used to gain in depth knowledge of a particular phenomenon that is experienced by people. Qualitative research allowed a better understanding of the phenomena under study as it was studied and interpreted from the perspective of those who had experienced the phenomena (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

The study also utilised a qualitative mono-method approach in its data collection. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with the participants who met the required criteria to participate in the study.

The study was conducted on a cross-sectional time horizon, which is defined as a 'snapshot' of a particular setting at a particular point in time (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The time horizon chosen was due to the time constraints of the academic programme, which did not allow for a longitudinal study. The research has mostly been done utilising cross-sectional studies, and a call for researchers to conduct longitudinal data has been made by researchers such as Frazier et al. (2017). The use of a cross-sectional study still provided new insights into the field given that the focus of the study was to find out whether the constructs in question differ since the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.4 Population

A population as a complete set of group members under study where inferences can be made to, and from the sample (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The study's population were middle management employees working in the mining industry in South Africa. This is a phenomenon that is relevant to all industries, however the researcher had to focus on one industry to gain in-depth information that could then be transferred to other industries. The choice to focus on this population was a result of the type of work that is done in the mining industry, which is usually described as a risky and a hazardous environment. The assumption was that this industry would have been significantly impacted by Covid-19, therefore this group of employees would thus be able to paint a picture of which psychological factors were important for them before Covid-19, that is, whether these factors had changed for the worse or better as a result of the pandemic. The research also looked at the leaders' adaptability to the changes that were brought about by the pandemic in how they lead and facilitated psychological safety in a changed environment.

4.5 Sampling Method

A non-probability sampling technique was used. Due to the nature of the study, the probability sampling technique was not possible as the researcher did not have a complete list of the participants that were required for the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2018) and most importantly, the study did not aim to infer statistical findings to the

study's population (Creswell, 2016). Furthermore, a purposive sampling technique was used as this technique allowed for the selection of the sample of people the researcher knew would be able to answer and have insights into the factors that contribute to perceived psychological safety. As a result of the participants referring people who they thought met the criteria and would be able to answer the questions asked, purposive sampling was subsequently supplemented by the snowball sampling technique. Purposive sampling is described as the deliberate sourcing of participants whose characteristics match those of a study (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Daniel, 2019). Additionally, purposive sampling is a useful method to use when not enough information is known about a phenomenon, which was the case with psychological safety after Covid-19 and leadership adaptability subsequently (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). Snowball sampling happens when the participants who have already been interviewed refer more suitable candidates to the interviewer (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

The researcher used their network of master's in business administration (MBA) colleagues to request for the contact details of the participants who met the sample's set criteria. Several colleagues in the mining industry spoke to their colleagues and thereafter, sent contact details wherein the researcher could reach out to the participants.

For this study, the criteria were employees in the mining industry in Gauteng, who are in middle management between the ages of 30-50 years old. These individuals were carefully selected to ensure diverse characteristics of the phenomena that were being investigated to enrich the data collection process. The diversity in the participants was achieved through different functions across the mining value chain, tenure, and age as was also attempted by the study done by Edmondson (1999). As per the benefits of purposive sampling, interviewing individuals with insights and experience into what psychological safety is enabled the researcher to make logical generalisations from the collected data.

4.6 Sample Size

For qualitative studies, the sample size is generally smaller than in quantitative studies, as qualitative research relies more on in-depth information from the collected data

(Bryman, 2016). A key aspect in qualitative studies is ensuring that the researcher interviews and collects data until such a time that data saturation is reached (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Furthermore, if the interviews are transcribed and analysed immediately, it will help the interviewer to determine whether saturation has been reached (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The study aimed for the 10 respondents, which is the minimum number of participants as recommended for a qualitative study (Boddy, 2016; Dukes, 1984). The total number of individuals interviewed though was 12. The aim was not to collect information from many participants to allow for the generalisation of data, but rather to gather in-depth and enough information of perceived psychological safety and leadership factors to ensure that addition to the body of already existing information in the field.

4.7 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis was a crucial step in the sample selection of the study. Using the correct unit of analysis is crucial in the research process as it determines what research questions will be asked (Srnrka & Koeszegi, 2007). The study looked at the individual level as the unit of analysis as the researcher believed that inferences could be made to the team and organisational level unit analysis as argued (Newman et al., 2017). This means that for the study, the individual perceptions of middle managers in the mining industry were assessed relating to how they perceive psychological safety and the leadership's role in facilitating it, and whether they saw psychological safety change as a result of Covid-19 and subsequently, their own views of how their leaders adapted to the current world of work.

4.8 Measurement Instrument

As illustrated in Appendix 2, an interview guide was used to conduct semi-structured interviews with selected and eligible participants and the guide was used as a measurement tool as recommended by Saunders and Lewis (2018). The interview guide was developed by the researcher, thereby posing questions that would ensure the research questions in Chapter 3 were answered which were informed by the literature review in Chapter 2 and were borne out of the problem identified in Chapter 1. The questions developed on the interview guide were developed in such a manner that each

research question would have questions on the interview guide that would help answer it as shown on the table below:

Table 4.1: Interview questions investigating research questions

Research Question	Interview Questions
RQ1: “What are the general conditions that influence the individual’s perceived psychological safety”.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does psychological safety mean to you? 2. What makes you feel psychologically safe at work? 3. Can you explain what about the highlighted factors makes you feel safe?
RQ2: “What leaders attributes or behaviours facilitate psychological safety in the work environment”?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What does your leader do to make you feel safe? 5. Are there things that your leader does that do not make you feel safe? 6. How would you describe your leader’s leadership style?
RQ3: “Have any of the factors that contribute to psychological safety changed since Covid-19”?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. What factors played a role in strengthening your perceived psychological safety during and after Covid-19? 8. What factors may have played a role in your perceived psychological safety being compromised during and after Covid-19? 9. Have any of the mentioned factors that made you feel safe changed since Covid-19? 10. What did they look like pre the Covid-19 pandemic? 11. If you think they have changed, why do you think that is the case?
RQ4: “How have leaders tried to change their behaviours to fit the current context to ensure psychological safety”?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. How have leaders adapted their behaviour to suit the current context?

	13. How have these adapted changes encouraged or fragmented your sense of feeling safe?
--	---

Semi-structured interviews are a commonly used methodological choice in qualitative research (Gill & Baillie, 2018), and they inform the measurement instrument that is to be used. Additionally, the choice to use semi-structured interviews was to ensure that all the themes that needed to be covered in the investigation were covered while allowing time for probing questions where the researcher felt there was more information that could be gained from the participants. This chosen tool also assisted in ensuring some degree of consistency in the data that was collected from all the participants. The semi-structured interviews have also been argued to be adaptable in nature and they allow for more openness from the participants when sharing information (Remtulla et al., 2021; Gill & Baillie, 2018), without necessarily leading the participants in a direction the researcher might want to take (Roulston, 2010). Semi-structured interviews provide a guide to ensure that all the participants are asked the same questions, however, its adaptability allows for different probing questions to be asked differently depending on the direction of the responses of each participant as their views differ significantly, as they are informed by their context and experience.

The measurement instrument was tested by two pilot interviews, which assisted in strengthening the credibility of the measurement instrument as the researcher had found that some questions were not understood the way the researcher meant for them to be interpreted, which also allowed for these questions to be changed. The adjustments assisted with ensuring effective interviews a (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The researcher's interview skills were also improved as the researcher realised that the way in which the piloted interviews were conducted was not highly effective for transcription purposes due to a noise element, which allowed the participants to deviate and try to acknowledge all the points that the participants were making. This was improved by nodding the head to the camera instead, which improved the interview drastically.

The questions were drafted to cover all the key elements that were highlighted in the study's research questions and objectives. The interview guide was specifically designed for this study, and the questions were carefully crafted to ensure that the study

achieves its aim and answers exactly what it was set up to search for answers for. Before the participants were interviewed, the researcher ensured consent by making the participants sign a consent form which also disclosed the issues around confidentiality and how the collected data would be analysed and stored.

4.9 Data Gathering Process

Before collecting the data, the researcher had to ensure that the sample that was required for the study was one that the researcher could gain access to. In determining the population to study, the researcher considered several things such as the gaps in literature relating to the sectors that have not been a focus on the studies selected constructs, the sector that Covid-19 would have had significant impact on and lastly, whether the researcher would have access to the relevant participants to interview (Creswell & Poth ,2016).

The researcher reached out to fellow students in the MBA cohorts who are in the mining industry to enquire from their contacts within the industry who match the study's criteria. The researcher utilised and requested for assistance with contacts from the MBA Blue group and the MBA women's group via WhatsApp. The requirements of the study and the researchers contact details for willing participants were shared. For individuals who sent contacts of people they knew that met the criteria in the mining industry, the researcher made telephone calls to schedule suitable times for the interviews and followed through with scheduled appointments via email. Scheduling via a telephone call instead of just sending emails was the researcher's strategy to build rapport with the willing participants, as building rapport is a crucial step in data collection (Creswell & Poth ,2016).

Data was collected through semi structured interviews that were one hour per participant. The semi-structured questions were carefully crafted to answer the study's research questions and objectives. The interview guide consisted of 15 questions in total, which were crafted to help focus the discussion on the following key areas: psychological safety, pre and post Covid-19 changes, leadership, and leader adaptability. The participants were sent consent forms on email ahead of the scheduled interview to sign and send back before proceeding with the interview which detailed the issues of confidentiality, recordings and how data would be stored. The signed consent

forms were sent back to the researcher, and this signalled that the participants were giving the researcher permission to proceed with the proposed interview process.

The interviews were conducted in English, which is the language used in most work environments in South Africa. Initially, the researcher had planned for face-to-face interviews as there are added benefits in reading body cues over and above what the participants share in their verbal responses. This was, however, not possible as most of the participants were residing out of Johannesburg. The interviews were then done through Microsoft Teams, with videos turned on, where possible to allow the researcher to still read body cues as well as connect with the participants which mitigated the issue of distance. As stated by Hine (2005), online interviews have become a valid and legitimate way of collecting data and they have been further proven by Sullivan (2012), to enable the researchers to be able to pick up verbal and non-verbal cues. The online interviews also proved to work better as the researcher was able to record the interviews on Microsoft teams and this enabled transcription as well which saved the researcher time that it would have taken using an audio recorder and transcribing from scratch (Bryman, 2016). The challenge for recording interviews was also highlighted by the same author, by stating that sometimes the recording may cause the participants to not be fully open in their responses, as they will be cognisant of the fact that the interview is being recorded.

The structure of the semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to answer openly, thereby focusing on what they deemed important, while allowing the researcher to follow up where the researcher felt the participants were holding back, and thus used probing questions to ensure that the responses were taken as the participant meant it (Bryman, 2016). This meant paraphrasing at times, as it was already mentioned that the choice of methodology concerns itself with studying the phenomena in the participants context and from their interpretation. The chosen method of collecting data also allowed the researcher to seek meaning in the hidden messages and probing where the researcher saw the participant struggled to articulate themselves clearly (McCracken, 1988).

A total of 12 interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams which was more than the recommended minimum of interviews that are sufficient for a qualitative study (Boddy,

2016). A pilot was conducted with two participants once the ethical clearance had been approved, and the pilot was utilised to test that:

1. The questions were indeed seeking to find answers for the research objectives;
2. The participants understood the questions as they were intended by the researcher;
3. Could there be any challenges that could be posed by the questions before formally gathering data.

After the piloted interview, the posed questions were found to be relevant to ask in seeking to answer the research objectives. The researcher, however, found that some of the questions were not interpreted the way they were intended to. For example, in initially trying to not use jargon such as 'psychological safety', to find out what made employees feel psychologically safe, the question was initially posed as "What makes you feel safe at work?". Since the industry under question is participants in the mining industry, they interpreted the question as physical safety due to the fact that they work in a hazardous environment. The question was then changed to what the participants understood by psychological safety and then it proceeded to ask what made them feel psychologically safe at work.

After each interview, the recording and transcript of the interview were stored on cloud storage with the intention of keeping it on the cloud for a period of ten years after the research submission date. All the files were saved with password encryption to protect them and ensure data integrity. The recording of the interviews allowed the researcher to still be able to read body cues, while the medium used took care of the recording and transcription. As Bryman (2016) states, the researchers are not only interested in what the participants say, but equally on how they say it, while being attentive to even what is not said.

The full data collection process that was followed is depicted in the diagram below,



Figure 4.1: Data Collection Process Creswell and Poth (2016)

4.10 Data Analysis Approach

The data was analysed using the six-phase thematic analysis approach as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) with the assistance of a qualitative analysis software called Atlas ti 22 (Atlas, 2022). Thematic analysis is a method that aids the researcher in identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns in the data that is collected from the interviewed participants (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). This method is useful in qualitative research in analysing the participants' perspectives and interpretations. The analysis was done in a cyclical and recursive approach, requiring the research to cycle back and forth between the stages as new information became available (Braun & Clarke, 2020).

In the first phase of the analysis, there was 'familiarisation' where the recorded data with audio was transcribed to aid with the reporting objective and the unbiased findings of the research. During this phase, the empirical data was read and reread several times to locate information that was relevant to the research questions that were being investigated in this study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). To avoid selective reading or skipping this first step, the interviews were given the same amount of attention across the entire dataset. The wordlist focussing on the key words was conducted to ensure the consistency, relevance, and alignment of the data across the interviews.

In the second phase, the initial codes which are the building blocks from which the themes emerge were developed. This was done through line-on-line coding as there

was no predetermined conceptual model in the study. The goal of the coding procedure created shorter descriptive labels of data points that are relevant to the research issue (s). This was done in two stages, identifying the initial codes and the final round of codes done post filter, removing duplication, and combining similar codes. All these codes had quotations that were linked to them. In the third phase, the emphasis changed from the analysis of individual data items to the interpretation of the meaning and significance of the dataset as a whole. The coded data is evaluated and analysed to determine how different codes might be merged based on the related meanings to produce consolidated codes or sub-themes and then the final themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). In the fourth phase, the researcher undertook a recursive examination of the possible themes in connection to the coded data items and the complete dataset to produce a final set of codes, sub themes and themes that are linked to the research questions and that develop the thematic maps which highlight the relationships. The fourth phase was done in parallel with the fifth phase of naming the themes. Then finally, the sixth and final phase was producing the report that is detailed in the findings of the study presented in Chapter 5 of this study.

4.11 Quality Controls

Like any other research, it is crucial that the researcher demonstrates the ways in which quality was achieved and assessed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Jackson et al., 2007). Certain criteria have been proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1994), and they are demonstrating trustworthiness and authenticity. The quality controls for qualitative research which entail trustworthiness refer to credibility, transferability, dependability, as well as confirmability (Jackson et al., 2007; Bryman, 2016), and they will be discussed in the next sub-sections.

4.11.1 Credibility

According to Bryman (2016), credibility in qualitative research refers to establishing the credibility of the study's results and ensuring that the research process follow the principles of good practice as per the qualitative research standards. This is supported by Daniel (2019), who highlighted that credibility speaks to the researcher having ensured that the study's research findings are dependable, are relevant for the study and for the participants' context. This must reflect the participants' intended

representation of their story and reality (Patton, 2002). To ensure the study's relevance and congruence, certain strategies can be put in place on the research design and implementation to enhance the study's credibility as stated by Noble and Smith (2015). Multiple initiatives were taken in the research to ensure credibility, which included the use of well-established research methods and the design for the study, the researcher's reflective commentary, data saturation in collection and analysis and doing member checks (Guba, 1986; Shenton, 2004; Bryman, 2016; Daniel 2019). This study was looking at the factors that contribute to the perceived psychological safety after Covid-19, which only novel within the past three years. It was important to apply the exploratory methods during design and in the line-on-line coding to obtain all relevant information that was necessary to answer the research questions. The research also ensured 'reflective commentary' by noting and reflecting on the data collection process, as well as by reflecting on the emerging patterns to develop what Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer to as "progressive subjectivity" (Shenton, 2004). Another step that was taken to ensure credibility was the members' check, where a sample of four participants were provided with the transcription to confirm that the researcher was getting the relevant content. Credibility was also ensured with saturation of less than 5%, which used a base size of six and a length of two (Guest et al., 2020)

4.11.2 Transferability

Transferability as Bowen (2010) states is the level in which data is gathered and the results thereof can be applied to other settings or populations than those originally applied on. This is further supported by Daniel (2019) who states that transferability means the current study can provide findings that are valuable to a different setting. Additionally, transferability is crucial in qualitative research as it speaks to the integrity of the research findings as Cope (2014) states. In this study, transferability was ensured by providing an adequate context about the field of work and by providing rich data on the phenomenon under study.

Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the content from the interviews reflects the true context of the participants, which includes their behaviours and any other observed events. Transferability also entails that the researcher provides details about the study's sample, thereby disclosing the participants' demographic information (Hannes, 2011).

4.11.3 Dependability

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, dependability is a critical criterion as it pertains to what Bryman (2016) calls an 'audit trail'. The audit trail is important to ensure that the researcher has kept all the records of, and for all the research process phases such as how the researcher selected the formulated problem, the research participants, as well as how they conducted interviews and their transcription thereof. It also includes how the researcher analysed data and recorded it in a manner that is safe. Daniel (2019) refers to this process as auditability, and as a dimension that ensures rigour for qualitative researchers. Furthermore, two kinds of auditability are referred to, namely, an internal and an external audit (Daniel (2019)). External auditability is when a researcher is able to get to conclusive findings that can be further supported, while internal auditability refers to the study being able to address the methodological issues relating to research questions, their alignment with the research design and the formulated problem (Halpern, 1983).

One of the ways in which the researcher ensured the dependability of the collected data for the study was to ensure that the measurement instrument (interview guide, Appendix 2) was trustworthy. This meant ensuring that the questions that were asked were relevant and were in line with what the study aimed to achieve (that is, checking whether the leadership behaviours that contributed to psychological safety before the Covid-19 pandemic are still relevant). This was achieved by linking questions on the interview guide with the study's research questions and objectives as has already been alluded to in the previous sections.

Furthermore, the participants were asked what they understood about psychological safety to ensure alignment with the participants responses and also to ensure that the collected data is interpreted the way it was intended to by the participant and not in any way subject to the researcher's own biases and belief systems. The above noted strategies to ensure trustworthiness are also in line with Saunders and Lewis (2018) when they highlight that to ensure trustworthiness and credibility the following questions must be asked, "Who was interviewed?" 'What were the questions asked?' as well as "Did the interviewees have sufficient knowledge to be able to answer the questions credibly" (Saunders & Lewis, 2018:133).

4.11.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the researcher's realisation and acknowledgement that it is not possible to completely be objective as a human. The element of confirmability therefore requires the researcher to demonstrate how they have acted in good faith and put measures in place to try not to let their own personal values, beliefs or experiences sway the interviews and analysis of data collection to their own views (Bryman, 2016).

One of the ways in which the researcher tried to solve this was to look out for researcher bias and influence during the piloted interviews. This was picked up through how the researcher prompted questions or asked follow up questions as they were sometimes leading questions although they were not intended to be that way which helped the researcher to be conscious of this during the rest of the interviews. Subsequently, this entailed continuous reflection of the researcher's biases and influences during the analysis of the data. More importantly, the reporting of the results was objective, as it was based on the narrative that was confirmed with the verbatim quotes from the transcripts thereby ensuring congruency between the interview content and the reporting of the findings. Furthermore, the areas of agreement, association and contradiction were reported as the positive and negative leader attributes, to provide a holistic view of the presented empirical data.

4.12 Limitations

Most of the past research is cross-sectional in nature as asserted by Fraizer et al. (2017), and not a lot is longitudinal. This therefore presents limitations in the validity of the collected data.

By nature of going the qualitative route, data is not quantifiable. This, therefore, becomes a general qualitative study limitation as it has already been established that we do not aim to make statistical inferences to the larger population. As a result, qualitative data is not generalisable to the larger population (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

Secondly, a sample of ten participants is relatively small and remains a debate in qualitative research about whether one reaches saturation with a sample of ten (Boddy, 2016). For the purpose of this study, however, and because of the time limitations that have already been alluded to, ten participants will be sufficient. As mentioned by McCracken (1988), one of the two key impediments to qualitative research is time

scarcity. This limitation was experienced by the researcher as the participants would request that the researcher try to conduct the interview in less than the required one hour. This poses a huge limitation in the quality of collected data as the researcher would observe with some participants that their minds were not fully in the interview moment as they would be thinking about all the tasks they needed to complete. Some participants requested to be interviewed during working hours, and when the colleagues or managers called them, they would be interrupted and must attend to the work requests. Likewise, those who scheduled in the evenings were still preoccupied with other things such as work that needed to be done after hours, housework or tending to their families. Lastly, because data is solicited from the participants who will give responses concerning their personal experiences, it can be subjective, and therefore its objectivity becomes challenging to maintain, however, this is mitigated by the research philosophy that was taken by the study.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to understand how leadership styles contribute to perceived psychological safety in the mining industry post the Covid-19 pandemic. The empirical data for this qualitative study was obtained from 12 semi-structured interviews with middle managers in the mining industry. These participants were questioned about psychological safety and on leadership within their work context.

There were four research questions that were formulated to understand the leadership styles that create a psychological safe environment for the employees at work within the mining industry. The research questions were discussed in Chapter 3 and are recapped in this chapter. The first research question was “What are the general conditions that influence the individual’s perceived psychological safety?” The second research question was, “Which leader attributes or behaviours contribute to psychological safety in the work environment?”, the third question was, “Have any of the factors that contribute to psychological safety changed since Covid-19? And finally, “How have leaders tried to change their leader behaviours to the current context to ensure psychological safety?”. The findings of the empirical data are presented as research questions using developed themes.

5.2 Overview of the study sample

For this study, data was collected through semi-structured interviews using an online platform, which is Microsoft Teams with middle managers in the mining industry. The overview of the study sample was obtained from the profile of the participants as well as from the relevance of the empirical data.

5.2.1 Profile of the Participants

The participants provided their job profile within the mining industry which aided in determining their relevance in participating in the study (Table 1). The participants were made up of individuals working in various parts of the value chain system in the different mining industries. The value chain includes projects, production, safety health and environmental, beneficiary chain, mine activity design for open cast and other forms of mining. Some of the positions in the value chain represented engineers and engineers

in training, production managers, health and safety compliance managers, plant builders, as well as superintendents who were either involved in short term mining production or long-term production depending on what the company, they worked for mined. The participants were from different mining houses such as from manganese, precious metals, and others were from iron ore.

Table 5.1: Showing the job description of the participants in the study

Participant no.	Job description
1	I initially joined the company as a professional in a training programme and have worked my way up as a plant production manager ensuring that all operational, technical and maintenance activities are on par .
2	I support the production team to troubleshoot and to run the plant to recipe so that we meet all our KPIs. Identifying, areas that are suffering in terms of the performance, identifying improvement projects, areas for improvement projects and executing.
3	I am appointed by my plant manager to oversee everything that is health, safety, and environmental compliance, as well as production and costs in my department. I have 89 people reporting to me or 89 people working in my department with five direct reports reporting to me.
4	We do is we assess our current underground operations and look at ways that we can modernize them. This is in part of supporting the biggest strategy to be one of the leading modernized mines in the world globally.
5	I am a beneficiary chain specialist at an Iron Ore mining house, and I am based in the head office.
6	I am responsible for plant production, I need to make sure that the plant produces, I then manage the team, the operations, ensure that the team members are trained and to have a reasonable continuity plan in place so that there's succession plan,
7	I am a Project Engineer, but I am in customer engineering. I design, install and maintain plants and process engineering equipment throughout South Africa, Latam and the rest of Africa
8	I have a BSc in Mining Engineering. I do short term mine planning, like short term production mine planning.
9	I am an engineer in training for the past four years, but for the past year and a half, I have been relieving, or acting in different shafts and in different operations as an engineer
10	I work currently as a Mine Activity Design Engineer. I am responsible for two pits on site. I do all the deployment sequence, the technical tactical

	design work, where we going to mine, where we going to hold, where we going to dump how we going to access the drills.
11	I work in the project space. We recover precious metals and water across the industry. We are exposed to the mining sector in terms of anything that's national and international as well. I build plants throughout the country, Africa, Latin America, Australia, and certain parts of Europe.
12	I work at the open cast mine, mining manganese. I do projects for my bosses, but sometimes I help with the operations as a pit superintendent. We are an open cast mine.

5.2.2 Relevance of Empirical Data

The word list from Atlas ti 22 was used to determine the relevance of the empirical data and the alignment of the collected data across all the interviews with the purpose of the study (Figure 5.1). The most dominant words were psychological, leadership, covid, environment, team, manager, working, mining, company, and culture. These words were prevalent across all the interviews, and they were in line with the study. The relevance of the empirical data that was collected is essential for the credibility and rigour of the findings (Guetterman, 2015).

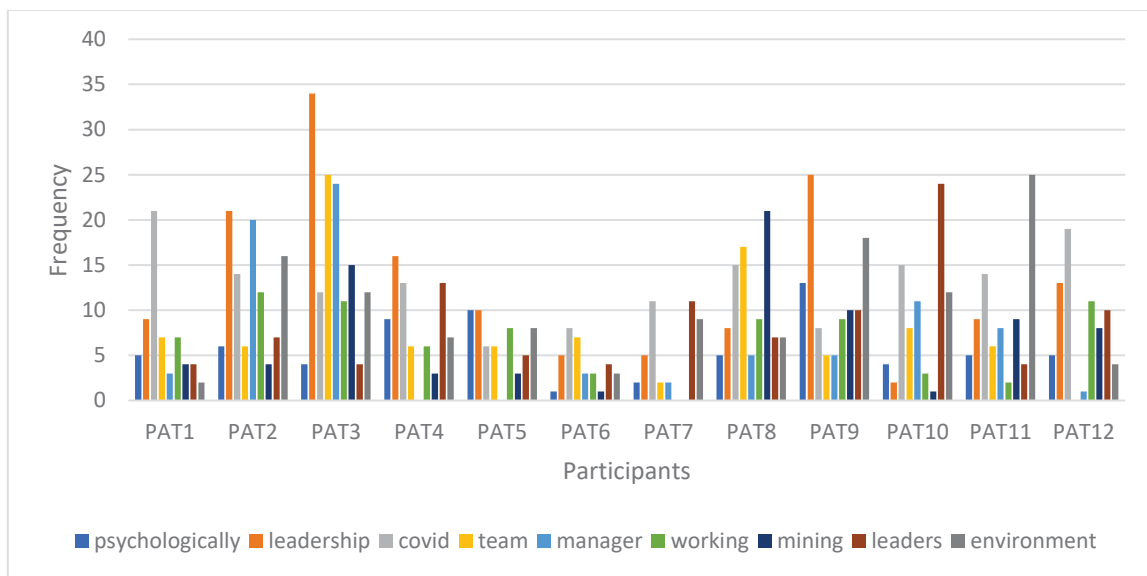


Figure 5.1: Showing the dominant words in the study

5.2.3 Saturation of the Interviews

The approach to test the saturation of the empirical data in the study was analysed using the proposed approach by Guest et al., (2020) as well as by Hennink and Kaiser (2022). In this approach, the saturation is reached when the new information is less than 5% as there is no longer new information (0%). Based on the 12 interviews in the study, the saturation was reached at less than 5% of new themes emerging.

5.3 Themes of the Study

A line-on-line coding was conducted on the empirical data resulting in almost 150 codes which upon the removal of duplication resulted in 129 codes and 360 quotations. The full list of these codes can be obtained from Appendix 1. The codes were then consolidated into groups thereby resulting in 18 code groups or sub-themes and these formed four themes (Table 5.3).

Table 5.2: Shows the research questions, sub- themes, and themes of the study

Research Questions	Sub-theme	Theme
What are the general conditions that influence an individual's perceived psychological safety?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding of psychological safety ▪ Perceived psychology due to leader attributes ▪ Perceived psychology due to environmental/organisational attributes ▪ Perceived psychology due to team dynamics 	Perceived psychological safety
What leader attributes or behaviours contribute to psychological safety in the work environment?	Positive attributes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledgeable leader ▪ Protection through 'rules of engagement' ▪ Transparent and trustworthy leader ▪ Engaging leader ▪ Adapting leader to change environment ▪ Leader that trusts team capabilities ▪ Challenging leader, setting stretch goals ▪ Leader enhancing growth and continuity ▪ Mentoring leader 	Leader attributes that contribute to psychological safety

	<p>Negative attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disregard of team competencies because of leader overpowering attitude ▪ Exclusion of team from participation ▪ Lack and language of communication ▪ Inflexible and unadapting leader 	
	<p>leadership style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Authoritative or dictatorial leadership ▪ Ethical leadership ▪ Transformative leadership ▪ Transactional leadership 	
Have any of the factors that contribute to psychological safety changed since Covid-19?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organisational attributes ▪ Discrepancies highlighted by covid ▪ Operational changes ▪ Positive psychological changes ▪ Negative psychological changes 	Covid impact on psychological safety
How have leaders tried to change their leader behaviours to the current context to ensure psychological safety?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little change, events overwhelm leaders ▪ Enhanced empathy and more humane ▪ Leaders listened more ▪ Adaptability and connectedness ▪ Allay fear and keep strong for staff 	Leaders' change and impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effects of psychologically unsafe environment ▪ Psychological safety advantages 	Impact of leader attribute change on psychological safety

5.4 Conditions that influence an individuals' perceived psychological safety

The first research question in the study was, "What are the general conditions that influence an individual's perceived psychological safety? In the interviews, the participants were asked what their view of psychological safety was in the workplace and there were different answers which then contributed to theme one "perceived psychological safety". This was answered using one theme which was perceived as psychological safety and it was discussed over three sub-themes, which were perceived psychological safety due to leader attributes, perceived psychology due to environmental/organisational attributes and perceived psychology due to team dynamics.

It is evident that the understanding of psychological safety provided insight on the general conditions that influence an individual's perceived psychological safety. These were identified as the perceived leader attributes, perceived organisational attributes and perceived team dynamics, with the conditions influencing each other and there being the need for concurrent attention to achieve psychological safety (Figure 5.2).

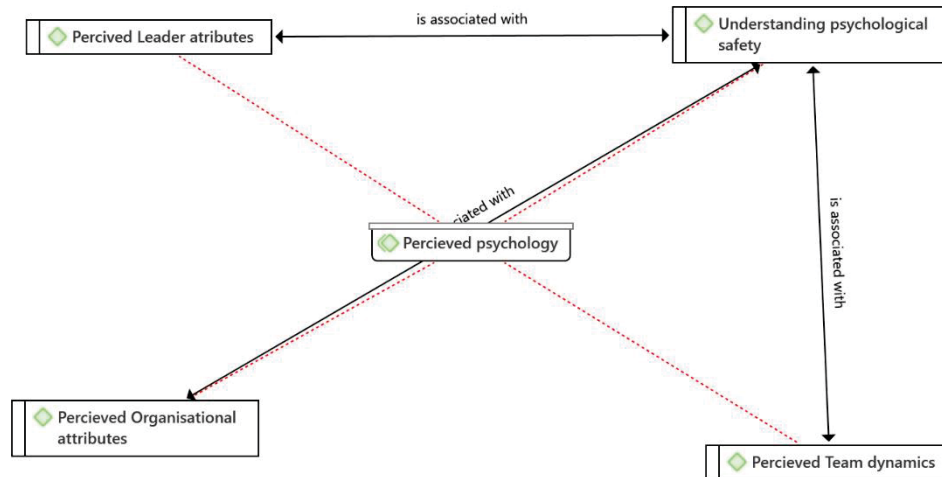


Figure 5.2: Thematic map of the general conditions that influence individuals' perceived psychological safety

5.4.1 *Understanding of psychological safety*

The focus of the study was on understanding how the leadership styles contribute to perceived psychological safety in the mining industry post the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this context, it was prudent for the research to first consolidate the understanding of the psychological safety by the participants.

So psychological safety for me is being free to be who you are being free to express yourself, to be able to take to work your best without having to reserve your true feelings, your true nature, your idiosyncrasies, your thoughts, your expressions, but being able to carry who you are to the workplace, so that you're able to give your best in executing your duties. **(Participant 2)**

psychologically safe environment comes by when people say they will do what they say they will do. If I put things on the table and say, can we look at this? You know, that without a shadow of a doubt, somebody will look into what you've

raised to be a concern, or you, if he says we can do things better, somebody will literally go back and deliberate. **(Participant 5)**

Other participants explain that psychological safety is about preparedness beyond the physical as it also includes the emotional side focusing on the mental state. In this process, the people are able to express their feelings and speak their mind without fear of retribution in the workplace.

So, my, my thinking on psychological safety is, is exactly that how are our teams prepared beyond the physical, beyond every other thing, how are they prepared to come to work both from an emotional and a mental state? (Participant 3)

So, for me, psychological safety is that it's that freedom to speak out, your thoughts, speak out your feelings to say what's what you what's on your mind and what you feel without any fear of retribution based on what you say and not its actual the valid validity of what you just said. **(Participant 1)**

5.4.2 Perceived psychological safety due to organisational attributes

The participants felt the organisation played a role in facilitating a psychologically safe environment. Psychological safety was promoted by these organisations through for example, growth opportunities such as opportunities to lead and career advancement. The environment at work also played a role in feeling psychologically safe, and there was an allusion to the environment that promoted learning as being psychologically safe. Furthermore, the way the organisation responded to mistakes and risks also played a role in how the participants felt because the companies where the culture encouraged risks, did not have adverse punishments to mistakes and that created psychological safety. The investigation also showed that working for a company that had diverse representation within the leadership positions were considered psychologically safe institutions as the participants felt they were better understood being lead or managed by a diverse group of people who shared similar backgrounds. Lastly, the availability of support structures that were put in place by the company as well as the ability to take breaks from work (taking leave) for rest or emergency purposes without judgement or being heavily penalised was considered to create a psychologically safe environment for workers by the participants.

My performance, my results are checked, and I performed very well and that's when he started giving me support all the courses that the managers were attending. He was pushing them that I must also start attending them so that when the position does come out, I've already completed these courses and I'm ready for the position. **(Participant 3)**

I would put a very strong emphasis on culture and culture. the way we do things that defines us as an organization. I mean, a safe environment will come when people know that if I have given my suggestion of doing things differently. **(Participant 5)**

5.4.3 Perceived psychological safety due to leader attributes

The second category of perceived psychological safety was perceived psychological safety due to leader attribute, which gave an overview of what leader attributes would make the participants feel psychologically safe within an environment. The participants felt that the leaders or the managers who allowed them to have autonomy of decisions and who made decisions on how to tackle a problem or a project at work, of course within the guidelines of the company would make them feel safe mentally at work. The participants also reported that the leaders contributed to the facilitation of psychological safety when they acted in such a way that the employees felt heard and valued by their leader. This insight was measured by how the leaders acted on the suggestions and the solutions that were brought forward by the employees, and most importantly how the leaders acted on the grievances that were brought forward to them (whether those grievances were acted on or brushed off). Furthermore, the participants felt that the leaders created a safe space when they were able to challenge the leaders' ideas or the leaders' way of doing things if they felt they had a better and more efficient solution. Additionally, the leader was reported to create psychological safety when they demonstrated trust in their team members, or in their suggestions and ability to conduct the suggestions efficiently. Thus, it was important for the participants to feel capable and trusted by their leader. The leaders who did not portray any bias and favouritism were also viewed to create a psychologically safe environment for the participants as they felt that everyone in the team would be treated equally and fairly. The leaders' conflict management and resolution skills were also brought up, as the participants felt it was important that their leader or manager was able to resolve conflict fairly and efficiently

as this would make the work environment easy to work in, which contributed to their psychological safety.

It is also obvious that our leader has favourites, we don't all get the same treatment, sometimes then you give of yourself in relation to how you are received to protect yourself. **(Participant 7)**

So certain aspects of my work, I would not be able to articulate to her to say, I'm not happy, or I don't think you're doing the right things. It is a matter of that is her take on certain aspects of the job. She would just say, make peace with it. **(Participant 5)**

Sometimes when he wants to communicate something and then there is conflict, he prefers to keep quiet. But other times he would voice it out. But because he is short tempered, he is not as calm as I am when I communicate with the team. **(Participant 8)**

5.4.4 Perceived psychological safety due to team dynamics

Finally, there was a discussion on the perceived psychological safety due to team dynamics. A respondent mentioned that a psychologically safe environment is experienced when people say they will do what they said they will do . The other aspects that were mentioned were collaboration, that is, working together to solve a particular problem or to tackle a task, and all of the above mentioned required open communication and respect among colleagues. This means that the team had a culture of information sharing , collaboration and inclusion for all team members .

You cannot make incremental changes without running it past them, the same applies to them. At top level they need to tell or get everyone involved before they decide. It is sort of cascade talk to bottom and then back from us to them get after if that makes sense. **(Participant 11)**

The other values are care and respect, how you care and respect by being more, empathetic towards your team. Collaboration is one of our values. How do you, you become collaborative? By creating a safe space where teams can express themselves and they will be able to give feedback and give their opinions and collaborate. **(Participant 4)**

5.5 Leader attributes that contribute to psychological safety

The second research question was what leader attributes or behaviours contribute to psychological safety in the work environment?

5.5.1 Leadership attributes

It was evident from the interviews that the leader is central to the conditions that influence the individuals' perceived psychological safety, based on the qualities of the leaders, how the leader interacts with the team and provides direction within the workplace. The participants highlighted both the positive and the negative leaders' attributes that have this influence on psychological safety (Figure 5.3).

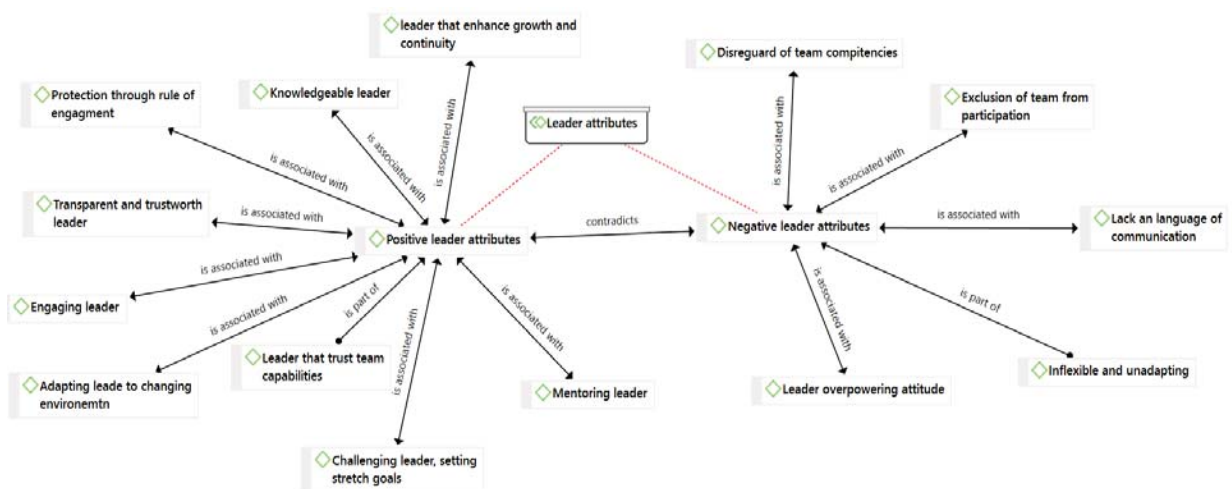


Figure 5.3: Thematic maps of leader attributes

The positive leader attributes were highly linked to the participants feeling safe in the workplace. The participants were asked which of their leader's attributes made them feel psychologically safe in the workplace. Several attributes were put forward by participants which include, a knowledgeable leader, rules of engagement with the leader, transparent and trustworthy leader, a leader allowing engagement with team and trusting their capabilities, a leader that also challenges and provides the team with

stretch goals, a leader who is also a mentor, who grooms other leadership thereby allowing growth and continuity as well as an adapting leader to new changes and new environment. The participants also talked about a caring leader who is interested in the mental and emotional health or state of the team.

I think my boss is very amazing. And he always said to me, you know, first it is your health, then family then work. And I think being constantly reminded of that in every one of our interactions, it makes me feel so much better. **(Participant 4)**

The participants explained that the leader's knowledge of the entire processes they undertook at work, made them feel safe and confident in the decision-making or the suggestions made in the workplace especially by their direct leader.

I think maybe he just had a drive to excel young professionals, he was passionate about mentoring, because he did that for me and for this guy, I think at the time we were the only young professionals at the time. **(Participant 3)**

This is a person who understands the whole value chain up until where the customers get their product. She understands that very well and I think she reads a lot and maybe that is why as well, she keeps on upping her game in terms of the value chain knowledge. **(Participant 5)**

Another participant contextualised explaining that the leader made them feel safe, when they were intentional in establishing lines of power and instruction as the leader made sure that no one instructed the leader's team members without the leader's knowledge because the leader was responsible for the team and their performance outcome at work. This made the subordinates to feel supported and protected.

She was very clear about the reporting structure; she would confront people who asked you to do work for them without her permission. She will ask so why you did not come to me directly. So that is what being open to speak directly to that power is about. **(Participant 1)**

An open and trusting leader was also considered to be an important aspect in creating a psychologically safe environment which tied in with a leader who included the team members in decisions, allowing the subordinates to voice out their opinions. Not only did the participants appreciate a leader who trusted their capabilities, but they also

appreciated a leader who challenged their capabilities. The participants reported that being mentored and seeing their leaders groom others also made them feel psychologically safe as this allowed them to believe that there was room for growth, and that with the changing times there were leaders who could adapt to the new culture and environment. The other aspect of a psychologically safe environment had to do with the personal needs of an individual. Participants reported they felt psychologically safe at work if their leader cared about their mental state or emotional health and cared about what was going on in their personal lives as it affected their ability to work.

There were also negative leader attributes that were highlighted which were creating a psychologically unsafe environment. One of the most common negative attributes amongst the participants had to do with the lack of communication and specifically the language use chosen when leaders did engage participants.

She would make threats very often about you'll climb off the bus. It was the type of work environment where it is all about threats and this and that, but none of the building and motivating and coaching. **(Participant 2)**

Many of the participants complained that the way their leaders spoke was not reflective of respect and professionalism, and one participant went as far as describing it as militant. As a result of a militant language or vulgar language use, these leaders were perceived to be unempathetic towards their subordinates. Consequently, for these reasons, participants reported finding it difficult to voice out their opinions to these leaders either about things that bothered them professionally or personally and thus they refrained from communicating with their leaders regardless of whether this occurred directly to them or just by observing how their leader treat their teammates. Contrary to being heard and valued, the participants felt that their managers were overpowering them by not listening to their opinions and using their positions to shut down the subordinates. The above finding also tied in with the leaders not learning from their subordinates or taking into consideration the experience of the subordinates because of the position they held, which then translated into a lack of trust either by believing that the subordinates were incapable of doing the job or did not want to do the job.

They want to be responsible across the board, but you also need to understand that we are qualified professionals, and we are not going to do harm to people or the environment. So, they've got to step back and believe that people can do that safely. However, leaders just fall back into, autocratic style, especially within the mines. **(Participant 11)**

Furthermore, the leader's ability to create a psychologically unsafe environment was observed by participants' to do with the leader's ability to adapt to new environments or the ability to be flexible in certain situations. The participants felt that their leaders or managers were stuck in old ways of doing things and did not want to see differently. Consequently, in new environments such leaders still expected things to go the same way they had always gone previously. One of the participants spoke about how she could possibly contribute to psychologically unsafe environment herself in trying to raise her point. She highlighted that if her subordinates did not show enthusiasm by acting immediately, she could just do things herself because she knows how to do her subordinates work but stated that this does not create psychological safety. The lack of patience and direction thus, could contribute to a psychologically unsafe environment for subordinates, with lack of direction and support from leaders.

And they also will teach you everything. The people who report to you are much older, much more experienced and your kind of must allow them to take a lead, and they will also respect your authority. **(Participant 1)**

It will be what people observe around them, how they see their teammates being treated. They tend to link that to what could possibly happen to them. If their team member is being mistreated, then they know that the next day is possibly could be them. **(Participant 6)**

5.5.2 Leadership styles

The participants were asked to describe the type of leadership style their direct leader possessed, and a vast array of leadership styles were discussed. As part of working together, some participants highlighted the importance of understanding one's manager or the leader's personality type and the way in which they communicate. One participant when asked what leadership style their leader used, argued that their leader was an authoritarian and thought that it was because the leader was still old school and

requiring to be called boss. Some other leadership styles that were mentioned by the participants were the dictator leadership style, where the leader dictates what should be done and does not have an interest in other opinions or suggestions. Subsequently, the transactional leadership style was also mentioned, where the leader wanted to see the exact details of a project and outcomes, in the manner they were instructed. Although not mentioned explicitly by the participants, the transformational leadership style was also alluded to, where the participant felt their leader was transformative in the way they led and as a result the team they led tended to imitate the leader's way of doing things. An interesting leadership style mentioned was the ethical type of leadership style which participants' felt was critical and justified in a sector that dealt with a lot of legal issues, and sometimes fatalities too.

You must be able to read a room as the person who is reporting to them. You must understand them and if you want to have a good relationship, you must understand today it is not the day or today is the day let me try my luck today and see what happens. **(Participant 12)**

The kind of leadership that says, I believe in you, the kind of leadership that seeks to understand where you are at as a person, what are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? **(Participant 2)**

she is a transformation leader. It's amazing how much we as a team have learned from her and only when she is not in a space with us, and we have dialogue as colleagues, and you listen to how we speak like her and how we see things from a business point of view. **(Participant 5)**

We must rotate around this one, the ethical leadership is 70%, and 65% of the leadership style that we run. And then I would want to divide that the, the rest of the percentage to inclusive transformational and authentic. **(Participant 9)**

The participants were further asked, what sort of a leadership style the leader demonstrated in the workplace (Table 5.4).

Table 5.3: Leadership styles

Leadership style	Frequency (n)	Reference	Quotation
Authoritative or Dictatorial	3	PAT3, PAT11, PAT8	<p>Authoritative, authoritative dictator. Like, if I can put it that way, it's simple as that day.</p> <p>Authoritarian? Somewhat. I think because he's also still old school, He wants to tap into that yes baas thing, but that also needs to come with respect.</p> <p>I dictate it is like, I'm a dictator.</p>
Transformative	3	PAT2, PAT5, PAT12	<p>But he is a supportive leader. I would say, he is a supportive leader. And he actually is for development.</p> <p>I think it is transformational type of leader leadership style, but with of inclusivity and, you know</p> <p>They do welcome input from their employees, right? In terms of, they wouldn't they do want to hear what, what your thoughts are, what, so they, we, they involve us. So, day to day work for example, personally, my one would ask you, like, when can I get this? They want to hear it from you.</p>
Ethical leadership style	2	PAT9, PAT7	<p>I would say, ethical leadership take lead with an inclusive leadership.</p> <p>Her leadership style is do as you do. I will observe. And then I will, I will tell you what I don't like after an observation. So, I'll tell you what the task that needs to be done. Do it. And I'll tell you what I want from the task. Go and do it, bring it back to me and</p>

			I will observe, critique, and tell you then how you fix.
Transactional	1	PAT8	So, he is a red cap, a red cap in his character, he's that person that he's a perfectionist, you know so he'll tell you to execute one, two and three, right? And then, he'll give you time

5.6 State of conditions pre and post Covid-19 pandemic

The third research question was Have any of the factors that contribute to psychological safety changed since Covid-19? The key factors that were highlighted include the organisational conditions, discrepancies that were highlighted by Covid 19, the operational changes, the positive changes brought by covid, and the negative changes that were brought by covid and finally the post Covid-19 review (Figure 5.4). Participants highlighted these themes to talk about factors that changed or stayed the same with Covid-19.

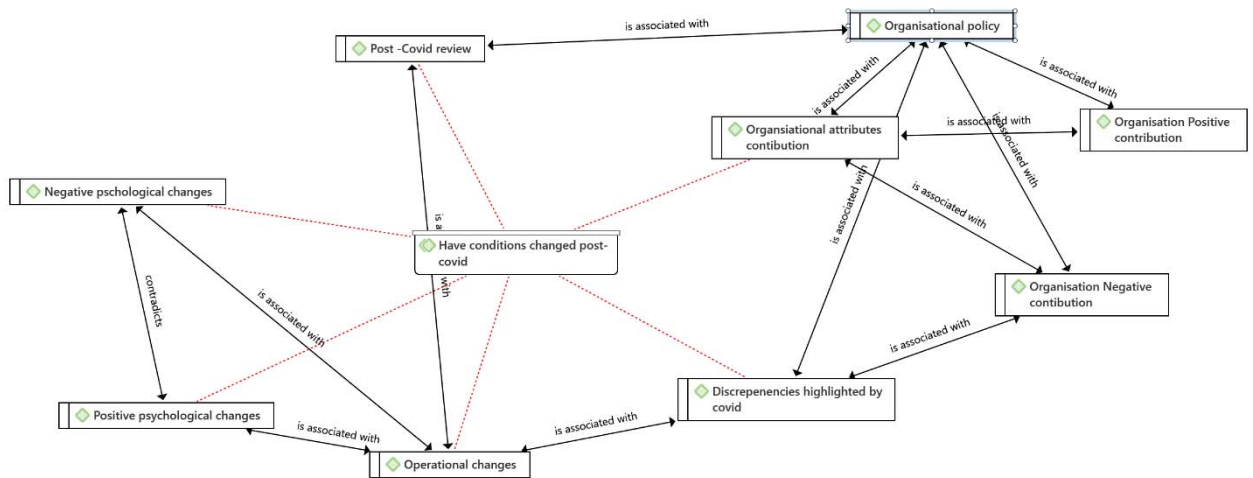


Figure 5.4: Thematic map conditions changed pre-, COVID and post the Covid-19 pandemic

5.6.1 Organisational conditions attributes

The organisational conditions highlight the organisational impact on employees psychological safety, which includes the organisations' policy, the positive contribution towards psychological safety and the negative contribution towards psychological safety as a result of actions taken by the organisation.

In relation to the organisational impact on psychological safety, the participants highlighted how the organisational culture and the policies of a company play a significant role in the psychological safety of the individuals. Similarly, the participants acknowledged that the industry itself was vastly different from other corporate environments and thus, the participants considered that in their analysis of their company's contribution to psychological safety. In noting the positive contributions towards psychological safety, the participants felt there were some company policies or cultures that positively contributed to psychological safety such as rewarding people who performed exceptionally well or who went above and beyond what was required of them especially during the pandemic. Such actions by an organisation made participants' feel appreciated for the work they were doing and the effort they put in. Another aspect highlighted were policies and organisational structures that cultivated a working environment that promoted honesty and openness as well as an environment that promoted innovation at policy levels. Participants also deemed it important that the policies aimed at promoting psychological safety or learning organisation's were not just on paper , but adhered to by all the departments , leaders and colleagues.

Over and above the fact that people get paid their basic salary and the fact that when they believe they have achieved, what they were supposed to achieve, they get remunerated as promised there is that trust between the organization and the team members. **(Participant 6)**

I think that our executive is very deliberate and good at that. Even the people because of their own personalities are not naturally good listeners, naturally good caregivers for their employees, but there is a framework and certain guides and certain things you can say, that create an atmosphere of open dialogue. **(Participant 2)**

But it is an environment that is quite innovative. It is quite challenging, and it is an environment that you want to be in or a space you want to play in because there is room to grow. I'm not saying that I haven't grown along the way you can grow. **(Participant 11)**

Understanding your employees and then being empathetic and trying to meet them halfway, seeing what you can do, if you can provide housing, you know, you do that. If you can provide water and electricity, because at the end that makes your operation operate at a better level. And I think that has like really helped a lot where we've developed the culture of people coming up and saying, you know, the senior leader did this, that senior leader did that. **(Participant 4)**

Participants indicated that with psychological safety in the workplace being a new concept, a lot of companies (including some of the participants employers) are still adjusting and setting up policies regarding this phenomenon. Thus, the participants pointed out the negative contributions of work and company culture that contribute to their perceived psychological safety. Majority of the issues highlighted were the lack of a company policy in relation to psychological safety, sometimes the policy was in place however participant's highlighted that there were weaknesses in implementation and monitoring thereof. Furthermore, some participants highlighted that the weakness in policy implementation was how it was handled differently for employees based at headquarters and those based in mining sites, which was reflected in its outcomes. The participants highlighted that companies seemed to prioritise psychological safety at the head offices or headquarters more than it was in the mining sites thus the culture felt different. This also translated in the hierarchy of the company as it seemed like the participants leaders were also not getting psychological safety from their direct reports, and thus passed the same treatment and pressure to their direct reports.

Participants further highlighted issues around lack of confidentiality at work with respect to the personal information that was shared with the leaders in confidence. One participant shared how some of the personal information that was shared with their leader in confidence would later be discussed in the corridors. Subsequently, this made the participant withdraw in a lot of discussions with the leader as soon as they realised this was common in the organisation and was not frowned upon.

Additionally, participants brought up issues around workplace threatening that was not regulated by company policy such as threatening workers with job loss if they did not do something the leader expected, which then promoted fear and negative feelings about being at work. This of course, goes against cultivating an environment of psychological safety because retaliation and a sense of punishment takes safety away. It was further highlighted that the threatening behaviour would usually be accompanied by vulgar language with no consequences that leaders faced for such behaviour even if it was reported. Such leadership behaviour, together with a lack of reporting platforms made it difficult for the workers to report or speak against it. The mining industry has already been considered as a difficult industry to work in because of the risks inherent in mining, thus the participants felt that psychological safety was even more important to be in place in their organisation's for efficient operations and everyone's well-being.

They also have bosses that they are not psychologically safe with. Like we have people coming from HQ, the Exco people, you see how these, our bosses are running up and down. Does that look like someone who is psychologically safe?

(Participant 1)

It is almost, as if the senior leadership does not enforce certain culture aspects to the senior leaderships on site, senior leaderships on site develop their own culture because the whole point of that is to have oversight. **(Participant 4)**

Because it is easier to measure quantifiable points, something that you can measure? Are you producing? No. Let's look at your structure. Are there women? Yes. Are they black people? Yes. How you're treating them? You can't measure that. **(Participant 3)**

First is they would need to stop that intimidation thing, because they use a lot of intimidation. Now when you're intimidated, you don't feel psychologically safe, when you are intimidated. **(Participant 12)**

5.6.2 Discrepancies highlighted by Covid-19

Covid-19 was one of the biggest disruptions and crisis for people and companies to deal with in recent times. The pandemic revealed a lot of weaknesses and unpreparedness in the health department of South Africa, however, there were also several discrepancies

in company policy, in management, and in the day-to-day activities. Firstly, the pandemic revealed that there was so much segregation in medical access in south Africa, with the black majority not being able to afford basic health assistance and when the pandemic hit a lot of people could not afford to be assisted and required government assistance for them and their family. Obviously, the lack of medical assistance for themselves and their families had a huge effect on their mental state and thus as explained by a participant mental health came to the fore front of many companies as they realised that the safety of workers heavily relied on the ability to make the right decisions under pressure and for that to occur people had to be in a healthy state of mind.

People were dying it was a matter of life and death. And it also opened our eyes to see how segregated we are for instance, in terms of medical care. **(Participant 4)**

when COVID 19 hit and mental health came to the forefront. That is my basic understanding of it, and it is also part of what I sometimes interpreted as a buzzword. **(Participant 1)**

I think with COVID and the general state of South Africa, GBV and all that people carry with them at work is a lot. And a lot of decision making, and safety is all about making the right decision. **(Participant 4)**

5.6.3 Operational changes

The COVID-19 pandemic naturally forced the companies and the industries to change their day-to-day operations to avoid the spread of the virus and some mining industries had to stop production during the hard lockdown in level five. Some companies however because of their essential service could not shut down and they had to continue working throughout the pandemic. The industries that worked during the hard lockdown adopted a shift working plan splitting their workers into smaller working groups to manage and minimise the spread of the virus. Due to the uncertainty that was brought about by the pandemic, a lot of companies had to have daily feedback to report to their staff what was next and what needed to be done to increase production. However, because of the social distancing, the tools of communication changed, the companies had to rely heavily on technology to stay connected with workers and communicate with them as such there were a lot of online meetings on various platforms such as zoom, and teams.

Some participants spoke about how certain messages were passed on using WhatsApp instead of emails as not everyone working in the mines had email addresses. An interesting change that was brought up by COVID-19 was the vaccination roll outs, which companies had to adopt and insist on for workers so as to minimise the spread and improve the mortality rate of the disease. This was difficult as people had their own ideas regarding the vaccines and the companies found it difficult to convince people to take the vaccine.

But during COVID, we had to split our operation because our operation was morning shift and night shift. **(Participant 9)**

Every day we have a production meeting where they give us feedback, we do a recon of what was planned. **(Participant 8)**

In terms of psychological safety of COVID vaccination, I personally didn't feel coerced into vaccinating. It was a personal choice. I did the research myself. **(Participant 10)**

5.6.4 Positive and negative psychological changes brought by Covid-19

Some of the changes that the pandemic brought were positive and these included changes in some leadership styles to adapt to the situation. Some of the grievances that the participants had such as micromanagement were not experienced during the time as the leaders did not have the time to do so due to the pressures of the pandemic. Some participants reported that the leaders became more inclusive by involving team members in decisions and updating them on the tasks at hand. Another positive aspect of the pandemic was the increased holistic view of individuals in the workplace, as well as how the cultural norm changed. People started understanding that other people were going through a lot, and this would thus affect work performance then this led to updates in psychological safety policies within the workplace.

Even the autocratic leaders had to move into that kind of inclusive leadership because of the pandemic, they could not be there full time. **(Participant 9)**

I do not remember if the minor also died. Head office was extremely hard on us to say, how did you guys miss this? How can you just decide about your teams without consulting or asking. **(Participant 9)**

Although working from home for most people was a positive outcome of the pandemic, for the participants it was a negative one as they experienced salary cuts, as well as cuts in extra benefits to survive the financial crisis that was brought about by the pandemic. Even though the participants reported a decrease in micromanagement, another half of them spoke about an increase in micromanagement due to increased stress and the pressure at work. The other negative outcomes were increased stress and anxiety in workers as they feared losing their jobs as there was a decrease in job security across all the industries. A participant confirmed that during covid they compromised other people's psychological safety because work had to be done and they could not just allow everyone who was not at ease about coming to work to stay how they wished.

Nothing, for us during level five lockdown, we went home. I think it was two months. I think it was from March until May we were not given full salaries. **(Participant 8)**

So, we had to cut down on a lot of things like managers used to have lunch bought for them every Friday, like braais and potjie kos, we had to cancel those things. **(Participant 8)**

We are constantly not in a good mental space and what do I mean by that? We are always anxious to say, if I as a person get it, then the person that I'm sitting next to will get it. **(Participant 10)**

Because they got into my mind, and I was scared now to lose the job. I would do things like working overtime, working day and night shift because I was scared to lose my job. **(Participant 12)**

5.6.5 Post covid review

When the participants were asked if there were any sustained changes that were brought about by covid, very few of them answered yes, and of those that answered yes, the sustained changes had to do with the way people treated each other at work.

Psychological safety was at the forefront of many leaders and thus they considered it when dealing with subordinates. Another thing that improved and was sustained after covid was an understanding of family emergencies or the inability to come to work due to mental health issues or fatigue and this was suspected to be as a result of the companies not really requiring workers to be present at work as covid showed that remote work was possible and effective. However, most participants felt that there were no sustained changes that were brought about by covid, they felt that things returned to normal as soon as covid died down and the negative issues such as the negative leaders' attributes and the positive aspects of the workplace returned to how they were before covid occurred.

Let me put it like this. I think it got slightly better and why I say people might feel safer is because the tick box exercises do contribute a little. For example, if I go now to my boss and I say I am depressed. From whatever training he has been through, he knows the wrong things to say. **(Participant 11)**

I mean, during COVID, or even now if I have got a family emergency, it is not a train smash for me, not to report for work, I think they done well in terms of adopting technologies that allow us to work remotely. **(Participant 2)**

I think if you had a crappy leader before you the same crappy leader is still there. They just know that I need to tick that box of talking about psychological safety. I need to talk about mental health. **(Participant 1)**

But I think from a leadership point of view, it was just agility that had to come by because then you understood the normal way of working is not going to work anymore, but I do not think there was much change that happened in terms of our leadership style. **(Participant 5)**

5.7 Changes in leadership behaviour to ensure psychological safety

The final research question was how have the leaders tried to change their leader behaviours to the current context to ensure psychological safety? This was critical in understanding the response of the leaders to the effects of the turbulence that was created by COVID-19. The participants highlighted that there was little to no change. Some explained that the leaders became more empathetic and were more humane,

while some indicated that the leaders listened more and were receptive to the situation, and they had to continually allay the employee fears. The others indicated that the leaders were more adaptable and were connected more with the staff. Some participants, however, highlighted that some leaders led the same way, which is still showing little empathy and understanding in a different work context. The context being one where some employees were expected to work from home, while the others were doing rotation shifts. With that, however, the only thing that changed was the medium of communication which was mostly WhatsApp, and the way of engaging employees remained the same. These changes had an impact on psychological safety (Figure 5.5).

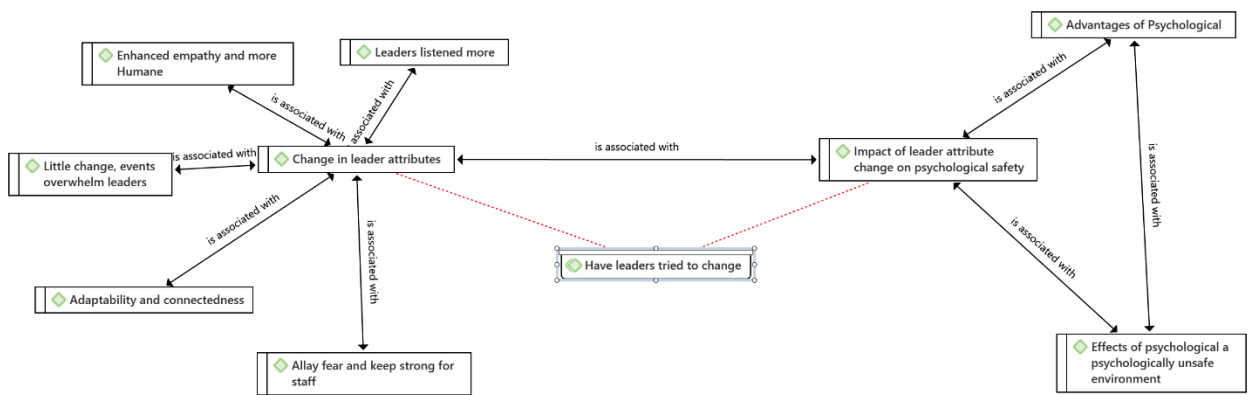


Figure 5.5: Thematic map changes of leadership attributes and behaviour

5.7.1 Change in leader attributes to the current context to ensure psychological safety

The participants acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic overwhelmed everyone, and it compromised psychological safety. Everyone was nervous and they did not know what to do or how to handle the situation. Furthermore, some of the leaders had certain attributes that did not change willingly but with buy-in during the pandemic. In justifying the minor change, Participant 1 contextualised by saying “we are probably we back where we were before COVID-19, just with better language and our leaders, especially higher ups have been training to use it. So, I think if you had a crappy leader before [COVID] the same crappy leader is still there. They just know that I need to tick that box of talking about psychological safety”. In supporting this lack of change, Participant 2 advised:

I do not know if I actually picked up any big difference during COVID. The big difference was new buzzwords, but people were still chasing target. Target were being reviewed and you need to work. **(Participant 2)**

Despite this, Participant 2 still highlighted some positive changes that came from the leaders became more humane though believing that this was because they might have lost people from COVID-19. This brought up the more emotional side of the leaders. This meant that the changes in attributes that were noticed by the staff was the enhanced empathy with the leader being more humane. This meant that the leader improved their caring about the staff and their well-being which improved their psychological safety.

Additionally, what was also highlighted was that the leaders had to be strong, and they had to continuously allay the fear of the staff while still ensuring business continuity. The leadership were in a dilemma of either not continuing the business and risking the staff's livelihood or running the business and increasing the risk. Motivation and allaying fear were critical aspects from the leaders.

People were nervous, people were scared. As leaders you would try to allay those fears. But I think at the end of the day, it was a matter of the business had to continue to run. **(Participant 6)**

Furthermore, the leaders had to adapt by improving the connection with the staff, and the events were occurring quickly, even negatively affecting the health and wellbeing of the employees, and also the virtual interaction or intermittent working meant there was increased chance of disconnect between the leader and the staff.

They just had [to] adapt because you know COVID, if you do not talk to someone...who knows I would be in ICU. The situation was just so fragile. The situation forced people to adapt. **(Participant 7)**

5.7.1 *Impact of psychological safety*

5.7.1.1 *Psychological safety advantages*

The advantages of a psychologically safe working environment amongst individuals maintaining a healthy mindset include improved communication at work as no one would be afraid of speaking out and suggesting solutions or even being honest about

challenges they face in completing tasks. The psychologically safe environments fostered learning within the workplace as people felt comfortable to upgrade their skills and challenge themselves because they felt their leaders supported them. This also increased the turnover because the individuals felt motivated to go beyond for their companies and direct managers who they felt did the same for them. The culture of caring among co-workers increased and the participants reported increased care and understanding between them and their managers as well as their colleagues.

Even though it was virtually but there was more connectedness, I mean with certain meetings for example, we couldn't travel so we had to do a lot of admin and procedures updating those, we had to find alternative work that could keep us busy. **(Participant 7)**

But if, it is that environment of which I think psychological safety can create, then you would have people go the extra mile do over and above what is expected of them but if you do not, then you have a person saying my objective is what is required of me, X and I'll give X and go home. **(Participant 7)**

And again, that makes them to always try and go in extra mile to say, because you've given us this task I will put in the extra work, maybe over the weekend and do it when I have time. **(Participant 8)**

For example, leaders who are pro psychological safety that is s a big drive for us we can get the best out of people and leaders who are not pro psychological safety, who are against it, whether subconsciously or consciously do not get results from their teams. **(Participant 10)**

5.7.2.2 Effects of a psychologically unsafe environment

The psychological safety of individuals either stayed the same, decreased or increased after covid and as described by the participants the disadvantages of a psychologically unsafe environment were increased pressure and constant work with no regards to the mental health of the individuals. The other was a consequence of micromanagement as the participants felt that they were not needed if the manager or the leader would tell them how do things step by step. The use of intimidation and militant language at work caused the people at working level to be afraid of speaking up or saying what is on their

mind as they feared extreme consequences such as being fired. The other consequences of a non-psychologically safe environment were high turnover where people the company have invested in would not stay long enough for the company to reap the benefits of training them due to an environment that was not conducive to them mentally. This made things worse when the employees were not participating in innovation processes or giving input for fear of things going wrong then they may face adverse consequences. This resulted in the company lagging behind and not pioneering any solutions within their industry. The other participants advised that they were doing the bare minimum because they were not motivated to go above and beyond for their company due to the working environment.

The environment itself, it did not allow that for that change. It not only the environment, but it is also the environment and the law in as much as those government gazettes and all that stuff. It is kind of, superseded every other regulation. **(Participant 9)**

In terms of output and productivity it is higher and leaders who are not like that, they are constantly in the market to hire new people because nobody really stays in those toxic environments. People resign and they go for better places. **(Participant 10)**

The company ran with intimidation. When your boss calls, you shake, yes sir, yes sir. Now, so they need to change that because now I do not participate fully because I am scared to make mistakes. **(Participant 12)**

But someone that wants me to do things their way all the time, it comes to a point where I shut off completely and say, yes, I will do that, and I do the bare minimum and I move on. **(Participant 11)**

5.8 Summary and conclusion

There were four research questions that were formulated to understand the leadership styles that create psychological safety at the workplace. The first research question was, "What are the general conditions that influence the individual's perceived psychological safety? The findings indicate that the general condition was influence by understanding psychological safety then by perceived psychology due to leader attributes, perceived

psychology due to environmental or organisational attributes and perceived psychology due to team dynamics.

The second research question was, “What leader attributes or behaviours contribute to psychological safety in the work environment? This was a combination of positive attributes such as a knowledgeable leader, protection through ‘rules of engagement’, a transparent and trustworthy leader, an engaging leader, adapting leader to the change environment, a leader that trusts team capabilities, a challenging leader, setting stretch goals, a leader enhancing growth and continuity as well as a mentoring leader. At the same time, there were negative attributes including the disregard of team competencies, a leader overpowering attitude, the exclusion of a team from participation, the lack and language of communication as well as an inflexible and unadapting leader. It was also driven by the dominant leadership styles which were the authoritative or the dictatorial leadership style, ethical leadership, transformative leadership, and the ‘perfectionist’ leader.

The third question was, “How have these conditions changed post the Covid-19 pandemic, or have they stayed the same? The organisational attributes were highlighted and there were discrepancies that were highlighted by covid, such as operational changes, positive psychological changes, and negative psychological changes. The final question was, “How have leaders tried to change their behaviour or attribute to the current context to ensure psychological safety”?. The findings revealed that there were mixed views, while some indicated that there was little to no change and the events were overwhelming the leaders. There was enhanced empathy with some becoming more humane, and there was an increase in adaptability and connectedness and the leader had to keep strong or stay and allay fears. These findings are discussed in Chapter 6, with the limitations that contextualised them presented in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 discusses the results that were presented in Chapter 5 as per the research questions. The participants' views of psychological safety and what they perceive to facilitate psychological safety, specifically in the mining sector, are contrasted and discussed against available empirical data. Furthermore, the participants' views of the leadership behaviours and the leadership styles that are deemed to facilitate psychological safety are discussed. An investigation into whether the above conditions have changed or have remained the same after Covid-19 is explored both through the lens of what is already existing in literature and in the participants' own views. Lastly, the discussion will delve into the flexibility of the leaders to lead in uncertain times and their ability to pivot to suit the current context against the Covid-19 pandemic.

6.2 Discussion on Participants definition of psychological safety

Factored into the interview guide was a question on what the participants defined as psychological safety. This was done because the researcher had already noted from Chapter 2 that there had not been a universally agreed upon definition for psychological safety amongst scholars (Frazier et al., 2017). Added to this conundrum, was the added responsibility to ensure that when talking about psychological safety, participants were talking about the same phenomenon, experienced differently in their lived experiences.

When the question on what psychological safety was asked, some participants asked the researcher to explain as they did not understand the jargon and wanted to be sure they were aligned with the definition, in which case the researcher would describe the term as per the adopted definition for this study by Edmondson (1999). It is worth noting, however, that due to the nature of the mining industry being one that is risky and prone to hazards, and consequently, having had the mining industry prioritise physical safety (Masia & Pienaar, 2011), some participants initially thought of psychological safety as their employers having to make sure that the employees are not exposed to hazardous situations. In a few instances, the participants also included mental health to reflect psychological safety, thereby suggesting that the leader would be aware of the

employees' mental state and treat them accordingly which came through in participant's responses as seen on chapter 5.

When the question was posed on what psychological safety is, surprisingly the majority of the participants described it or viewed it as per Edmondson's (1999) definition who proposed that psychological safety is an individual's belief on whether engaging in interpersonal risk in the work environment is safe for them. Edmondson (1999, 2001) and Carmeli et al., (2010) further elaborated that when the employees are not afraid to take interpersonal risk they show up as themselves, not fearing being rejected by their leader or their teams, and they are not scared to voice opinions, or to ask questions and challenge the status quo. A lot of the participants highlighted that the aspect of not being excluded or the absence of retaliation with them showing up as themselves was more important and as a result, it informed how they showed up at work.

The adopted definition is therefore also consistent with how the participants responded to the questions in relation to psychological safety. This was also proven by a participant who reflected on when he showed up at work as his best self-versus when he withheld aspects of himself to his leader, to the team and to the organisation as a whole due to the fact that there was no psychological safety and repercussions to certain actions such as speaking up that were not necessarily tolerated. In addition to the agreed upon definition by Edmondson, there was great emphasis placed on safety created as a result of a leader who is conscious of how their actions affect employee's wellness and mental health.

6.3 General conditions that contribute to perceived psychological safety?

Research Question 1 aimed to identify the factors that the employees deem important that would influence how they perceive psychological safety in their place of work. To investigate this question, the participants were asked their view of what facilitates psychological safety and what they deemed contributed to their psychological safety from the different mining organizations' they work for. The sub-themes that emerged from this question are namely: leader attributes, environmental or organisational attributes and team dynamics.

6.3.1 Perceived psychological safety due to organisational attributes

The first identified theme suggested that the employees perceive psychological safety depending on the organisational or the work environment attributes. Amongst the organisational contributors to psychological safety that were mentioned by the participants are:

(1) Growth opportunities and career advancements, suggesting that the organisation values learning. Amongst the highlighted factors for the organisation's that promote learning was the fact that such organisation's have a culture where taking risks , making mistakes and speaking up were encouraged for the improvement of the employees' capabilities and the organisations' capabilities and innovation .These findings support the claims made by Camerli and Gittell (2009) when they propose that today's business environment demands employees to be able to contribute towards the organisation's continuous improvements in work processes and procedures. Such contributions, however, can only be permitted by the organisations' that promote a learning environment, where learning through failure and speaking up are permitted. Scholars have investigated the behaviors that allow employees to contribute to the organisation's continuous learning and these include producing innovative ideas to solve problems, trying new ways of doing things, collaborating with team members and sometimes with the members from other groups, and challenging the status quo (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009; Newman et al., 2017). Furthermore, the above findings are in line with Schein and Bennis's (1965) definition of psychological safety which states that psychological safety is the "unfreezing process" that is required for organisational learning, where threats to taking interpersonal risk are removed, and the organisation tolerates failure as a means to learn without retaliation. This definition highlights the importance of learning and unlearning as things change, with the aim to keep up with the change and thrive. Most participants, however, reported that they did not feel that their organisations' in the mining sector have a learning culture or cultures that cultivate psychological safety in general. One of the key things that were highlighted as a hindrance is the mining sector's tolerance to mistakes and allowing the employees to try new things. The employees who perceive taking interpersonal risk to have consequences later refrain from taking interpersonal risk as it was discovered in the interviews, even if the action was for the improvement of the organisation. This is further supported by Detert and Berris (2007)

when they state that the employees who view the consequences of speaking up to outweigh the benefits of such actions intentionally do not engage in interpersonal risk. Yet, the employees push back in engaging in interpersonal risk has shown to have far reaching consequences in the mining industry (Carlisle & Parker, 2014). Lastly, most of the participants reported the fact that most leaders in these organisations' have been with their organisations for long and have no tolerance to hear employees suggest new ways of doing things or creating a learning culture as this new pipeline becomes a threat to the existing leadership which came as a surprise as this was not explored in the literature review.

(2) The participants reported having a supportive organisation to facilitate psychological safety. The support of the organisation was alluded to in terms of allowing flexible work schedules, especially where the employees' work clashes with family emergencies, and being afforded time out to replenish and spend time with family, supported by Alexander et al., (2020). The participants also highlighted the importance of being trusted when an employee takes time off because they are sick. The findings about a supportive work context have been supported by Liu et al. (2015), when they state that the environments where the leaders and the organisation are supportive facilitate psychological safety as this communicates trust in employee's competence and ability to carry out tasks. The empirical evidence suggested that organisations's are seen as supportive when they show concern for the employee's needs (i.e. as suggested in this investigation, they must be supportive in cases where an employee is sick and is not in a position to report to work), or they must allow the employees to show and talk about their concerns , which the participants have argued to be a key factor to demonstrate the humane treatment of people which is in line with Weiner et al, (2021) findings.

(3) The participants also reported a diverse leadership team to be a contributor to facilitating psychological safety. The findings suggest that the employees find comfort in having a leadership team that can offer diverse opinions, and that thinks differently to allow for diversity in decision making. This finding came as a surprise, as past research has shown that the companies that embrace diversity in their workforce are more likely to have a psychological safe space as this suggests that the organisation is open to differing views, with the employees speaking up and suggesting new ideas (Li et al., 2015).

6.3.2 *Perceived psychological safety due to leader attributes*

The second theme that was highlighted in terms of the factors that contribute to the employees perceived psychological safety was the leader attributes, which talk to how the leaders behave and in so doing how they interact with their subordinates. On the leader attributes that contribute to facilitating psychological safety, much emphasis was placed on the leaders who can give the employees autonomy in doing their work through decision making. Many participants who did not feel that their leaders created psychological safety felt they were being micro-managed which communicated a lack of trust to them, and a lack of trust in their capabilities to do the tasks that were required of them. This is in-line with the findings by Mao and Tian (2022), when they perceived that the trust between the leader and the employee creates perceived psychological safety and the feelings of incompetence that were created by the leaders resulted in learning anxiety and in a lack of psychological safety in the employees. The research on psychological safety indicates that one of the conditions to allow employees to be okay with taking interpersonal risk is when an environment enables the employees to raise ideas and try new ways of doing things without fear of making mistakes (Carmeli et al., 2010).

Furthermore, employees reported leaders contributed to their perceived psychological safety when they felt leaders listened when they spoke and felt heard. This was demonstrated by participants signaling that this sometimes-looked like leaders who had an open-door policy, welcoming employees to be able to go and talk about any concerns they may have. Coupled with the open communications, participants wanted to be able to be challenged and likewise challenge their leaders for progressive dialogue

Lastly, employees reported that the equal treatment of all employees contributes to employees perceived psychological safety as this made them feel that leaders made decisions on promotions, team leads, rewards, and team contributions based on merit and feasibility and not favoritism. Empirical research however has shown that it is common for leaders to have different relationships with their subordinates as consistent with Anand et al., (2018), This poses a challenge as it is evident that different treatment of employees influences employees perceived psychological safety.

6.3.3 Perceived psychological safety due to team dynamics

The last theme that was highlighted in the conditions that contribute to the psychological safety that came from the interviews was team dynamics. Although the investigation was on an individual unit analysis, the theme of a collaborative team that works well together with transparency, open communication, and trust and can stand up for each other came up strongly. The participants reported feeling psychologically safe if they felt they belonged to a team. This finding is supported by Edmondson (2004) when he stated that there is psychological safety in a team when members feel safe to share their thoughts with the rest of the team, feel included, can let their guard down, and feel trusted by the team.

6.4 Leader behaviours that contribute to psychological safety

Research Question 2 aimed to identify the specific leader attributes that employee's feel plays a significant role in facilitating a psychologically safe environment for them. To investigate this question, the participants were asked what things their direct leaders did that made and feel safe, and subsequently they were asked what their leaders did that did not make them feel psychologically safe. An important objective of this study was to also determine which leadership style(s) were associated with facilitating psychological safety. To determine the leadership styles, after participants disclosed what their leaders did to make them feel psychologically safe or not, participants were asked to describe their leader's leadership and substantiate the chosen style. This process was to ensure that the researcher would be able to link the availability or lack thereof of psychological safety with a leadership style or styles. The following sub-themes emerged in the analysis, namely: leadership attributes and leadership styles and will be discussed next.

6.4.1 Leadership attributes

Through the investigation of Research question 1, which aimed to identify the factors that contribute to the employees' perceived psychological safety; it had already been established that leadership is one of the factors or is a precursor. This is consistent with findings from Kahn (1990), Mao and Tian (2022) which state that leadership is one of the antecedents to psychological safety. What the findings have highlighted, however, is that leadership is a central theme in the factors that contribute towards perceived psychological safety but specifically to the positive leadership behaviours (Edmondson,

1999; Carmeli & Gittell, 2009; Liu et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2010) which has been confirmed by past literature and this study's investigation.

When the employees were asked about the leader attributes that contribute towards their perceived psychological safety, a couple of behaviours were highlighted. For example, several participants highlighted that having a leader who was knowledgeable in his field, which is having both the technical skill and the managerial know how, made them feel safe. This finding is attributed to the fact that the participants felt that a leader who is knowledgeable would be able to provide guidance and direction where needed which is consistent with how transformational leaders lead as per Syrek and Antoni (2017).

Additionally, it was also mentioned that transparency and trustworthiness are the other leadership attributes or behaviours that contribute towards the employees' perceived psychological safety. The participants felt this was necessary to create psychological safety in the context of the leaders trusting the employees' capabilities to complete assigned tasks but furthermore, to being transparent in communication, in the sharing of feedback and in enabling a psychologically safe environment. These findings are consistent with the leader behaviours that the scholars in the past found to facilitate psychological safety, namely, the development of high-quality relationships (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009), perceived trust (Mao & Tian, 2022) and supportive leadership (Liu et al., 2015).

Furthermore, most of the participants highlighted that the leaders who acted as mentors and coaches facilitated a psychologically safe space. This is because through such action, the leaders challenged the employees and steered them towards growth in their careers. This finding is consistent with the empirical evidence that was found for the transformational leaders who through their individualised consideration create psychological safety through being attentive to each member's needs and as such providing coaching, mentoring, or advising as needed per individual (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Bass, 1990).

Lastly, the participants shared sentiments that the leaders who were concerned about their mental and emotional health and did not prioritise work more than their health helped in facilitating a psychologically safe environment for them. This finding speaks

more to the leaders showing care and empathy for the employees which communicates that they are valued by their leader. These findings are consistent with the previous findings which argue that a supportive leader's behaviour such as the leaders showing concern for the employees, being empathetic and compassionate, being leaders who allow employees to talk about their needs and concerns facilitates psychological safety (Dunne & Greenwald, 2014; Zaman et al., 2020).

The participants were also asked what leadership behaviours do not contribute towards their perceived psychological safety.

6.4.2 Leadership styles

One of the objectives of this study was to find out what leadership style(s) contribute to perceived psychological safety. To investigate this, the participants were asked what leadership behaviours contributed to perceived psychological safety, regardless of the response, this question was followed up by requesting participants to describe their leader's style. This was done to aid the study in matching the factors that contribute to perceived psychological safety, together with the leadership styles that are suggestive of facilitating psychological safety.

Among the leadership styles that were mentioned by the participants were the authoritative or a dictatorial leadership style which is interestingly still common in a lot of mining companies where there has not been a transformational shift in culture. A transformational leadership style was also explicitly mentioned and sometimes inferred to by the participants through how they described their leader's leadership style. Two participants also reported that their leaders used an ethical type of leadership, which they justified to be needed because of the nature of the mining environment. Lastly, a transactional leadership style was reported, which was highlighted to be quite similar to the authoritarian leadership style in that the leader is not interested in anything else but seeing deliverables executed as instructed,

Consistent with the investigation done on the literature review, the findings revealed that the leaders who demonstrated the transformational leadership style were highly likely to facilitate psychological safety for their employees. As already noted in Chapter 2, the transformational leaders are those leaders who seek to motivate and harness the

employees to do more than the assigned tasks (Bass & Avolio, 1990). The leadership style characteristic that was particularly reported by the participants to facilitate psychological safety is the supportive aspect of a transformational leader. As has been illustrated in the literature, the transformational leaders inspire their employees which allows them to share a shared vision which the employees can buy into, while challenging them but equally helping them to achieve the set goals and ensuring everyone has meaningful work (Zaman & Abbasi, 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Carmeli et al., 2014). Additionally, the transformational leaders' characteristic of intellectual stimulation links with a factor that was noted by the participants to facilitate psychological safety which is career development and growth. This is done by these leaders through challenging how the employees think, and stimulating creativity as well as innovation (Zaman & Abbasi, 2020). This is consistent with the participants' findings that the leaders created a space for them to learn, whether through sharing their own learnings, encouraging the employees to go on training or furthering their studies and this created psychological safety because this communicated that they cared not only about the employees' performance in their team, but the leaders demonstrated that they cared about the employee's growth perspectives.

The transactional leadership style showed no evidence that it facilitated psychological safety both in empirical research that was perused and in the findings from the interviews. Due to the fact that many participants highlighted the care of the individual by the leader to facilitate psychological safety, by default participants saw transactional leaders as lacking in care. Consequently, by perceiving transactional leadership to be the opposite of transformational leadership, participants saw transactional leadership failing to create psychological safety as they were reported to only want work and deliverables from employees with no care of the individual, their well-being or growth (Antonakis et al., 2003). Additionally, literature refers to transactional leadership to be the opposite of transformational leadership, which suggests that the characteristics that the transactional leaders possess will be the opposite of those of transformational leadership.

6.5 State of psychological safety pre and post Covid-19 pandemic

The findings from the third research question of the study, “How have the conditions that contribute to psychological safety changed post the Covid-19 pandemic?” were alarming as most of the participants reported no change which is contradictory to the findings by Alexander et al., (2020). This means that the participants still deemed the conditions that were proposed by Edmondson (1999) as well as by Carmeli et al. (2014) to facilitate psychological safety to be the same. This means that the participants still consider the leaders and their organisations who create an environment where employees are not afraid to make mistakes, speak up, or who challenge the status quo with challenging work and developmental prospects to be what contributes to psychological safety in the work environment (Edmondson, 1999). The only difference however, is that such conditions must exist within a changed work setting and business environment for the different companies, industries and countries (Singh et al., 2017; Hobfoll, 2001).

Furthermore, the lack of change reported for conditions that facilitate psychological safety mean that if a leader or an organisation was proactive in facilitating psychological safety for its employees; they continued to do so in a different work setting; while those who did not facilitate psychological safety continued to lead the way they did. In reflecting on the changes or the impact that Covid-19 may have had on the employee’s psychological safety, the participants mainly highlighted the organisational conditions, the discrepancies on the employee’s psychological safety that would have been highlighted because of Covid -19, as well as the operational changes and a post covid-19 review.

6.5.1 Organisational Conditions Attributes

As was evident in Research Question 1, the participants highlighted the organisation’s role in creating a culture and organisational policies that assist the leaders and the whole organisation in facilitating psychological safety. As such, this theme was brought up when participant’s tried to illustrate whether conditions they deemed to facilitate psychological safety changed or not as a result of Covid-19.

The findings revealed that organisation’s who were deliberate in having a psychological safe environment before the pandemic, were somewhat able to either increase employee’s sense of perceived psychological safety or maintain it, which was cascaded

from top down. Because this was already deeply embedded in the organisation's culture, values and how performance was reviewed, this made it easy for the organisation and leaders of the organisation to continue to ensure psychological safety was created even in the new context because this has after all become the way of doing things. Furthermore, these organisation's were able to put more measures in place to assist the organisation and leaders to ensure psychological safety during the pandemic, such as ensuring that employee's who were going above and beyond that stressful and uncertain period were rewarded and this would be communicated across the organisation; employee's whose work allowed them to work from home and were not comfortable being in the office were allowed to work from home with the autonomy they had before the pandemic and employees wellness and health was prioritised.

On the other hand, organisation's that had not been deliberate saw a compromise in employees' psychological safety during the pandemic. Although some companies tried to be deliberate about enforcing an environment that was psychologically safe, participants highlighted that this only introduced the phenomena in the organisation but did not necessarily enforce new actions. Participant's highlighted that some leaders who created psychological safety either continued to or compromised it because they failed to continue to give employee's autonomy under the new working conditions such as working from home. Additionally, it was highlighted that the compromise in psychological safety happened because if their leaders did not get it from their leaders, they would take out their frustrations on their subordinates

It is thus evident that an organisational culture that is deliberate in creating psychological safety for it's employees had better chanced to have a psychologically safe environment than companies that did not as the promotion of psychological safety was embedded in the organisation's culture, structure and was impeneted as a top-down approach.

6.5.2 *Discrepancies highlighted by Covid-19*

Findings also revealed that inequality in the workplace became blatant due to the obvious access or lack of access different employees in the workplace had particularly to medical services. For many participants this was highlighted as a factor that compromised their perceived psychological safety as they felt these highlighted weaknesses and discrepancies in their organisational policies. This was also highlighted by employees who had access to good healthcare but may have been exposed to employees in their teams who could not access some medical services over the Covid-19 pandemic either for themselves or their families and felt the organisation should have been able to have everyone covered for basic health especially during the pandemic. This was highlighted as something that compromised employee's psychological safety because their wellness which should come first was compromised.

6.5.3 *Operational Changes*

As has been noted previously, government had to enforce regulations on how businesses were to operate during Covid-19(Djalante et al., 2020). In complying with government regulations, this meant that some business operations would be changed to accommodate the pandemic and government regulations. As has already been discussed both on empirical research and interviews, this meant that some companies went on complete shut downs at some point, some companies implemented rotational shifts and some organisations shortened work hours impacting employees pay as a result of responding to the regulations and financial impact the pandemic had.

Due to the fact that such changes introduce uncertainty and fear to employees even with management trying to manage the situation better, it still added a layer of frustration and pressure to both leaders and employees that compromised psychological safety naturally because of the nature of the situation.

6.5.4 *Positive and Negative changes brought by Covid-19*

Findings further revealed that some of the conditions that employees deemed to contribute to their psychological safety such as autonomy and leaders trusting in participants capabilities and only stepping in when needed and participants signalled,

they needed support were compromised. This was a result of leader's inability to adapt to the new way of working as participants demonstrated that leaders who had previously been able to provide psychological safety through giving their subordinate's autonomy somewhat failed. The lack of autonomy provided during Covid-19 was a result of leaders being away from their subordinates, which somewhat challenged their trust in their subordinates completing their tasks on time. Essentially, under working from home conditions, leaders doubted that employees would keep the same work standards if they were not going to work.

On the other hand, Covid-19 forced some leaders to be more inclusive as companies adopted frequent updates and communication to employees in attempts to be open and transparent and thus reduce fear and uncertainty employees faced during this period. Not only did some companies try to increase communication, but in turn some leaders were reported to have introduced daily meetings to keep the whole team updated on work progress , company changes and Covid-19 impact on the organisation , but most importantly to do pulse check in with employees to check how they were doing , what were their fears and how management could help alleviate these and what support employees needed to get through the period and deliver expected results. Some participants reported this to have continued even after Covid-19 as some leaders saw that this had a positive impact on employees and business operations at large.

6.5.5 Post Covid review

When participants were asked if there were any positive sustained changes as a result of Covid-19, very few participants answered yes. For this group , the changes that were carried even after Covid-19 were the open , transparent and regular feedback and updates with employee's as leaders saw these had a positive impact towards their teams.

Majority of the participants reported that things have gone back as they were before the pandemic. Little noise is made about psychological safety in some organisations , although the pandemic had devastating effects on organisation's and families.

6.6 Changes in leadership behaviour to ensure psychological safety

The final research question tried to assess whether the leaders had changed any behaviours or leadership style to suit the current context to ensure subordinates psychological safety. This was crucial in understanding the leaders' adaptability, especially in times of turbulence such as the Covid-19 pandemic that affected all companies, industries, and countries. As noted by Beck and Yeager (2001) as well as by Berr et al. (2000), one would expect that the leaders took time to assess the situation, its impact on the business and employees, and this assessment would necessitate that certain things be done differently to achieve the required results and productivity. However, the findings did not show this to necessarily be the case with the majority of the respondents. Due to the significant impact brought by Covid-19 in work arrangements and in the ways of doing business and following past research by Alexander et al. (2020), there was an assumption that as per the empirical evidence, a pandemic would force leaders not to lead the way they did in the past in pursuit of effective work outcomes within the current business context. Furthermore, an assumption was made that the leaders would have tried to change as a result of Covid-19 as Beck and Yeager (2001) argued that for businesses to thrive in the current volatile business environment, businesses needed the right leaders, who would utilise the correct leadership approaches and styles at the right time, suggesting that leader adaptability is crucial but as evident from the study's results this was not the case. This is a cause for concern because past research has already made calls for a shift in leadership styles and approaches that are followed in the mining sector to enable a positive work climate and outcomes (McLaggan et al., 2013).

6.6.1 *Change in leader attributes to suit current context to ensure psychological safety*

Most participants agreed that there was some level of change that happened, due to the regulations that were passed by the government on what the companies needed to do to curb the spread of Covid-19. Furthermore, there was also consensus that the Covid-19 pandemic was something that no one had experienced before, and therefore grace was extended to acknowledge that not everything would have been gotten right.

Due to the regulations and the measures the companies had to take to educate their employees about Covid-19 and its impact (Yarberry & Sims, 2021), many participants

reported that there was no change in behaviour by many leaders except that some companies were being intentional to create an environment that was safe for their employees; this therefore merely acted as a tick box exercise . For example, some companies explicitly spoke about psychological safety and how important it was especially in light of the pandemic, and the respondents reported that as a result of such efforts, many leaders knew how to talk about psychological safety but did not necessarily change the behaviour to enable it. This is also further reflected in how at the mention of the word 'psychological safety' "many respondents referred to it as the buzz word that was not followed by action. Furthermore, the respondents reported that although the companies may have put measures in place for psychological safety to be created for the employees, this would not change the leaders' personality or behavioural pattern. If the leader was not a nice, considerate person before the Covid-19 pandemic, the measures that were put in place to try to create a psychologically safe environment for the employees would not necessarily change their personality which is consistent with the findings by Kahn (1990), and Frazier et al. (2017), when they state that differences in employee personalities influence perceived psychological safety , which in this case is the leaders personalities. It comes as a surprise however, that at the back end of the empirical data that shows that the times of crisis require adaptability in the leaders, to ensure that they are leading in a manner that is effective for the context (Beck & Yeager, 2001)

There are some participants, however, who reported a change in their leader's behaviour and in the leadership style because of Covid-19. Most of the changes that were reported had to do with increased empathy in dealing with the employee's requests for flexible work, time off due to illness and family emergencies. Furthermore, the participants who reported a change noted that their leaders became more humane and considerate. For example, the leaders were reported to be more connected to their teams and employees by means of making calls to check up on the employees and their well-being. This was attributed mostly to the losses that the employees and the leaders themselves would have experienced because of the pandemic. This act signalled a level of care for the employees and a certain level of trust that increased the employees perceived psychological safety which supports claims made by Edmondson(2004) and

Weiner et al., (2021), that trust and social support influences employees perceived psychological safety .

Overall, however, the findings showed more of broken-down psychological safety than the building of it as a result of the leaders' failure to adapt to the new context which was brought about by Covid-19. Many of the participants shared sentiments that psychological safety was compromised because some leaders had no sensitivity of the context or the ability to think about how to lead and show up differently against a backdrop where there was panic, fear, loss, and pressure to keep the businesses operating effectively.

6.6.2 *Impact of psychological safety*

The participants who reported to still have had perceived psychological safety or increased psychological safety as a result of the mechanisms and the strategies that were put in place by their organisation and their leader reported the actions to have contributed towards improved communication and transparency between the leader and the employees. Feeling psychologically safe in turn during such a turbulent time made it easy for them to do more than was required of them by their organisation or by their leader. This was a result of social exchange, in that there was reciprocity that the participants felt they needed to return something as a result of being in a psychologically safe environment that was created by their organisation as suggested by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), but mainly their direct leader as this has been demonstrated to have the most impact of perceptions of psychological safety (Mao & Tian, 2022; Liu et al., 2015). Furthermore, the individuals who reported feeling psychological safe during and after Covid-19 , reported that their ability to speak up and propose new ideas for doing things in an environment that required that business be done differently contributed to the team's high performance and to the organisation's effectiveness (Wang et al., 2010; Mao & Tian, 2022; Frazier et al., 2017).

Conversely, the participants who reported to have experienced compromised or lack of psychological safety during this time reported to have resorted to silence. This means that there are many cases where they had constructive feedback to give for the leader or team, but because of the lack of psychological safety, they felt those views would not be welcome or would be followed with consequences. As Edmondson et al.,(2001)

argue where employees feel their work environments are not receptive of some learning behaviours such as speaking up, they would rather keep quiet even if this means affecting the organisation.

The negative impacts of the lack of psychological safety were further exacerbated by the leaders who had no acceptable way of speaking in the business environment where they spoke down on the participants or used vulgar language thereby showing a lack of respect, trust, and little regard for the subordinates. Further to this, some leaders would go as far as threatening some participants of losing their jobs if they tried to be proactive and come up with new ideas of doing things. This caused even the employees who had previously been proactive in doing good for the improvement of the whole company to shy away due to the fear of retaliation or loss of their jobs which goes against what has been advised to create psychological safety (Sherf et al., 2021; Detert & Burris, 2007). Such leaders who were reported to use such tactics are authoritarian and transactional leaders who mostly still believed in the traditional hierarchical order of things in the work environment. These leaders as a result expected to give the employees instructions or tasks, and those were to be carried out as instructed as the results from that would either be a reward or a punishment to enforce the desired results. Transactional leadership has unfortunately been described as the opposite of transformational leadership, meaning even in terms of psychological safety, transactional leadership does the opposite of what has been discussed to contribute towards psychological safety by transformational leadership. Transactional leaders focus on getting the tasks done, the way they expect them to be done with little to no openness to suggestions of doing things differently or being questioned (Antonakis et al., 2003; McLaggan, 2013).

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter will reconcile the empirical data from past scholars, with the findings from the study's semi structured interviews to present the principal conclusions for the stud's research questions. The principal conclusions will be followed by the implications for management and the relevant stakeholders of the mining industry specifically, the study's limitations and suggestions for future research to enrich the field of psychological safety and leadership.

7.2 Principal conclusions per research question

This study sought to investigate the four research questions pertaining to the conditions that contribute to psychological safety, investigating the leader's role in facilitating psychological safety, and whether any of these conditions had changed after the Covid-19 pandemic, and if so, how the leaders had put strategies in place to adopt to the changing world of work.

7.2.1 Factors that influence the individual's perceived psychological safety

Although this study took an individual unit analysis, it became clear that from an employee's perspective, at any single point, the employee's perceived psychological safety from an individual, team and organisation's perspective in parallel . This was demonstrated through the themes that came from Research question 1 which sought to understand, the conditions that contribute to perceived psychological safety. Most of the participants referred to their individual relationship to their leader, the team's dynamics, and the leaders' influence on it thereof and the organisations systems and the processes that were garnered for a supportive work environment as the factors that contributed to their perceived psychological safety. Although past researchers sought to focus on one unit of analysis at a time, all 3 perspectives have been researched extensively as was shown in chapter 2 (Schein , 1985; Edmondson, 1996; Kahn, 1990).

7.2.2 Leader attributes and behaviours that contribute to psychological safety in the work environment

Furthermore, consistent with the findings by Kahn (1990), the findings from this study confirmed that leadership is indeed an antecedent and precursor for psychological

safety. Additionally, as supported by Mao and Tian (2022), it had already been established that a leader's behaviour plays a significant role in facilitating psychological safety for the employees in the work environment. This is why according to Edmondson (2006) and Kahn (1990), the employees' perception of psychological safety is positively influenced when the employees perceive a positive work relationship with their leader. Amongst the leadership behaviours or the factors that were quoted by the study, the factors that contributed towards perceived psychological safety were namely: a knowledgeable leader in his field who knows the technical skills and the managerial know how that would allow him or her to guide the employees, challenging and supporting the employees in their duties; transparency and trustworthiness between the leader and the subordinates which was highlighted as an emphasis that the pattern of the leaders who micromanage the employees in the mining industry is one that communicates a lack of trust in their employees' capabilities and consequently, a lack of transparency as this means there is no open communication or constructive feedback happening that would allow the employee to improve their work performance.

Another research objective that was investigated through the research questions was trying to establish which leadership styles particularly helped to facilitate a psychologically safe environment for the employees, and it became apparent that the transactional and the transformational leadership styles were the most dominant in the mining industry, which is consistent with the findings from McLaggan et al. (2013). From the two dominant leadership styles that were mentioned, it became apparent that the transformational leadership style is one that facilitates psychological safety for the employees. This is because as has been demonstrated through past studies and from the participants' responses, the transformational leaders demonstrate care and show the humane element to their subordinates. They show concern for the employee's needs, thereby including the need for meaningful work and career growth. They also challenge their employees through stimulating their development, creativity, and innovation (Zaman et al., 2020; Carmeli et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2020).

7.2.3 *Have any of the factors that influence psychological safety changed post Covid-19?*

Results showed that the factors that employees deemed to contribute to their psychological safety did not change but were however more sensitive within the new

context. For example, in agreeing that the organisation and the organisational policies it puts in place for encourage psychological safety, participants argued that they were not merely doing enough as the pandemic highlighted weaknesses in those systems.

Furthermore, participants who did not feel psychologically safe before the pandemic, were most likely going to feel the same as leaders did not try to do anything different, and those who felt psychologically safe before the pandemic had their level of maintained or increased.

7.2.4 Leader adaptability during and after Covid-19 to ensure psychological safety

Regrettably, little to no change was reported in terms of leader adaptability to lead in the crisis brought about by Covid-19. Some participants reported that as of the year 2022 where restrictions were eased, the leaders had gone back to leading and doing things the way they did before the pandemic which contributed to no change or making the state of psychological safety worse in such situations.

The investigation also confirmed the benefits of the employees who experienced psychological safety versus those who did not have it. The findings showed that the employees who experienced psychological safety engaged in proactive, learning behaviours such as speaking up, coming up with new ideas, challenging the status quo for better improvements and furthermore, they gave the effort above and beyond what is expected of them as explained by the social exchange theory (Weiner et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2017; Frazier et al., 2017).

7.3 Implications for management and relevant stakeholders

The study found two implications for the mining sector's management and for the relevant stakeholders because of the investigation's findings.

7.3.1 Performance outcomes

One of the main outcomes that was linked to psychological safety is performance outcomes (Frazier et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2017; Pearsall & Ellis, 2011). Unfortunately, the organisations who do not invest in efforts that ensure that their employees feel psychologically safe, risk having low performing individuals which has a

ripple effect on the team's and the organisation's performance at large (Nemteanue et al., 2021; Diaz-Saenz, 2011).

7.3.2 *Hindrance to learning organisations*

Additionally, the world of work continues to be highly globalised, as it is fast-paced and complex, thereby requiring even more sophisticated and improved ways for organisations to learn and grow (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009). The leaders who do not provide a psychological safe space for their employees hinder the learning opportunities for the employees and the organisation and ultimately, they hinder the organisation's potential for creativity and innovation. The findings clearly indicate that the employees who do not feel psychologically safe avoid engaging in prosocial behaviour for fear of punitive measures (Detert & Burris, 2007; Sherf et al., 2021). Additionally, a risky environment such as the mining sector robs itself of opportunities to lessen the chances of accidents and learning (Bienefeld & Grote, 2014).

7.3.3 *High turnover*

Today's employees are looking to do meaningful work, with the organisations with positive work environments. Disruptions such as Covid-19, if not handled properly can have negative impact in terms of employee's outlook and attitude towards their jobs. Such significant changes have been reported to create negative feelings and attitudes for employees such as stress, anxiety, procrastination which can have adverse work outcomes such as job dissatisfaction, low job engagement, poor performance and subsequently, intentions to leave employer (Tecu et al., 2020; Feng et al., 2008). Organisations, leaders and HR, therefore, need to ensure that employee's feel psychologically safe at work at all times, in order to have a high performing and positive work environment.

7.3.4 *Limitations of the research*

Chapter 4 outlined the limitations as they relate to the study's methodology in detail. Two further limitations as they relate to the theoretical implication of the field will be discussed.

7.3.5 Small sample size

The study demonstrated that psychological safety and the application of the correct leadership styles is critical in the mining industry. Although the recommended minimum number of respondents for a qualitative study is 10, for a mining industry as big as the South Africa's mining industry, a bigger sample may be required. A larger sample will in turn allow for the transferability of findings in other settings.

7.3.6 Unit of Analysis

Although the unit of analysis was the individual unit, it was difficult to only keep a lens on the individual unit as participants experience of psychological safety and leadership is experienced at different levels, sometimes differently however in parallel. Because the focus was on one unit, the study could not investigate the how the different perspectives (individual, team and organisation) influence each other in contributing to perceived psychological safety.

7.4 Suggestions for future research

7.4.1 Office based vs mining sites

Although this was out of scope, the study's respondents painted a stark contrast between the level of psychological safety for office-based employees versus mining site employees. From the interviews, it seemed that greater emphasis and efforts of creating a psychologically safe environment was placed on office-based employee's, accompanied by policies and mechanisms to make leaders accountable. In the environment more prone to risks, and errors however, little seems to be placed on transforming mining sites. This is worth further investigation.

7.4.2 How to increase psychological safety when it has been compromised

Through the study's investigation, it was apparent that for many employees in the mining sector, Covid-19 created a situation where psychological safety was fragmented. This is because some employee's had employers and leaders who had never been conscious of the phenomena, and therefore never had it even before the pandemic. Knowing how important psychological safety is in contributing towards learning organisation's that are critical for today's world of business, it is worth investigating how businesses and leaders can build psychological safety withing their organisation and team, to rip its benefits and

have healthy, proactive teams (Newman et al., 2017; Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Frazier et al., 2017).

7.4.3 *Alternative methodology*

Past research in psychological safety has focused on qualitative and quantitative research methods using surveys and semi structured interviews as ways of collecting data. To triangulate the data, researcher can explore other methodologies such as collecting data through observations where the researcher relies on verbal and non-verbal cues on collecting data from both the leader and subordinates to explain psychological safety and the right leadership styles needed as per Newman et al., (2017) suggestion.

7.5 Conclusion

Although empirical data has proven the importance the importance of psychological safety and the use of appropriate leadership styles for certain contexts, some organisations and leaders still seem not to prioritise this phenomenon or understand its impact. Scholars are called to conduct more research on psychological safety post Covid-19 in other industries.

The study's findings have demonstrated that employee's place great importance on feeling psychologically safe, and when they do not, they withdraw and may not be as engaged. Furthermore, it was clear with the results that leaders need to do more to ensure psychological safety in a changed environment requiring flexibility, more empathy and leader adaptability to the change.

REFERENCES

- ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH [ATLAS.ti 22 Windows]. (2022). Retrieved from <https://atlasti.com>.
- Amponsah-Tawiah, K., Jain, A., Leka, S., Hollis, D. and Cox, T. (2013). Examining psychosocial and physical hazards in the Ghanaian mining industry and their implications for employees' safety experience. *Journal of safety research*, 45, 75-84.
- Antonakis, J., Avolio, B.J. and Sivasubramaniam, N. (2003). Context and leadership: An examination of the nine-factor full-range leadership theory using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14(3), 261–295. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(03\)00030-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(03)00030-4).
- Anand, S., Hu, J., Vidyarthi, P., & Liden, R. C. (2018). Leader-member exchange as a linking pin in the idiosyncratic deals-Performance relationship in workgroups. *The leadership quarterly*, 29(6), 698-708.
- Anderson, M. H., & Sun, P. Y. (2017). Reviewing leadership styles: Overlaps and the need for a new 'full-range' theory. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 19(1), 76-96.
- Alexander, A., De Smet, A. and Mysore, M. (2020). Reimagining the post pandemic workforce. *McKinsey Quarterly*.
- Alharahsheh, H. H. and Pius, A. (2020). A review of key paradigms: Positivism VS interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 39-43.
- Avolio, B. J., Sosik, J. J., Jung, D. I. and Berson, Y. (2003). Leadership models, methods, and applications.
- Avolio, B. J. (2004). Examining the full range model of leadership: Looking back to transform forward. In *Leader development for transforming organizations* (pp. 91-118). Psychology Press.

- Bandura, A. (1969). Social-learning theory of identificatory processes. *Handbook of socialization theory and research*, 213, 262.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership: Good, better, best. *Organisational Dynamics*, 13(3), 26–40. Available from: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616\(85\)90028-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(85)90028-2).
- Bass, B. M. and Avolio, B. J. (1990). Developing transformational leadership: 1992 and beyond. *Journal of European industrial training*.
- Beck, J. D., & Yeager, N. M. (2005). The leader's window: mastering the four styles of leadership to build high-performing teams. Hachette UK.
- Bergmann, B., & Schaeppi, J. (2016). A data-driven approach to group creativity. *Harvard Business Review*, 12, 43-62.
- Benmira, S., & Agboola, M. (2021). Evolution of leadership theory. *BMJ Leader*, leader-2020.
- Bienefeld, N. and Grote, G. (2014). Speaking up in ad hoc multiteam systems: Individual-level effects of psychological safety, status, and leadership within and across teams. *European journal of work and organizational psychology*, 23(6), 930-945.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Borgatta, E. F., Bales, R. F. and Couch, A. S. (1963). Some findings relevant to the great man theory of leadership.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2013) *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. SAGE Publication, London.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2020). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qual. Res. Psychol.*
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>.
- Bradshaw, M. B. and Stratford, E. (2010). Qualitative research design and rigour.

- Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K. and Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 97(2), 117-134.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford university press.
- Boddy, C. R. (2016). Sample size for qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*.
- Bowen, G. A. (2010). From Qualitative Dissertation to Quality Articles: Seven Lessons Learned. *Qualitative Report*, 15(4), 864-879.
- Buchanan, D. A., Huczynski, A. (2017). *Organizational behaviour*. Ninth edition ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Carmeli, A., & Gittell, J. H. (2009). High-quality relationships, psychological safety, and learning from failures in work organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 30(6), 709-729.
- Carmeli, A., Reiter-Palmon, R. and Ziv, E. (2010). Inclusive leadership and employee involvement in creative tasks in the workplace: The mediating role of psychological safety. *Creativity Research Journal*, 22, 250–260.
- Carmeli, A., Sheaffer, Z., Binyamin, G., Reiter-Palmon, R. and Shimoni, T. (2014). Transformational leadership and creative problem-solving: The mediating role of psychological safety and reflexivity. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 48(2), 115-135.
- Cope, D. G. (2014, January). Methods and Meanings: Credibility and Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research. In *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 40(1), 89-91.
- Castleberry, A. and Nolen, A. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: Is it as easy as it sounds? *Currents in pharmacy teaching and learning*, 10(6), 807-815.
- Carlisle, K. N. and Parker, A. W. (2014). Psychological distress and pain reporting in Australian coal miners. *Safety and health at work*, 5(4), 203-209.

- Creswell, J. W. and Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- Cropanzano, R. and Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 874-900.
- Daft, R. L. (2011). What does it mean to be a leader? In *Leadership* ,3,29. South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Daniel, B. K. (2019, June). What constitutes a good qualitative research study? Fundamental dimensions and indicators of rigour in qualitative research: The TACT framework. In *Proceedings of the European conference of research methods for business & management studies* (pp. 101-108).
- Davis, T. R. and Luthans, F. (1980). A social learning approach to organizational behavior. *Academy of Management Review*, 5(2), 281-290.
- Detert, J. R., & Burris, E. R. (2007). Leadership behavior and employee voice: Is the door really open?. *Academy of management journal*, 50(4), 869-884.
- Dukes, S. (1984). Phenomenological methodology in the human sciences. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 23(3), 197-203.
- Dunne, B. J. and Greenwald, J. M. (2014). Psychological safety and engagement: clarity through the lens of social exchange theory. *Midwest Academy of Management, Minneapolis*.
- Djalante, R., Shaw, R. and DeWit, A. (2020). Building resilience against biological hazards and pandemics: COVID-19 and its implications for the Sendai Framework. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 6, 100080. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2020.100080>.
- Díaz-Sáenz, H. R. (2011). Transformational leadership. *The SAGE handbook of leadership*, 5(1), 299-310.
- Dziak M. *Great man theory*. Salem Press, 2019.
- Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350-383.

- Edmondson, A. C., Bohmer, R. M., & Pisano, G. P. (2001). Disrupted routines: Team learning and new technology implementation in hospitals. *Administrative science quarterly*, 46(4), 685-716.
- Edmondson, A. C. and Woolley, A. (2003). Understanding outcomes of organizational learning interventions. In M. Easterby-Smith, & M. Lyles (Eds.), *International handbook on organizational learning and knowledge management*. London: Blackwell.
- Edmondson, A. C., & Mogelof, J. P. (2006). Explaining psychological safety in innovation teams: organizational culture, team dynamics, or personality? In *Creativity and innovation in organizational teams* (pp. 129-156). Psychology Press.
- Edmondson, A. C. and Lei, Z. (2014). Psychological safety: The history, renaissance, and future of an interpersonal construct. *Annu. Rev. Organ. Psychol. Organ. Behav.*, 1(1), 23-43.
- Elsaied, M. M. (2018). Supportive leadership, proactive personality, and employee voice behavior: The mediating role of psychological safety. *American Journal of Business*.
- Feng, D. D., Lu, C. Q. and Siu, O. L. (2008). Job insecurity, well-being, and job performance: The role of general self-efficacy. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 40 (4), 448–455. [https://doi.](https://doi.org/)
- Frazier, M. L., Fainshmidt, S., Klinger, R. L., Pezeshkan, A. and Vracheva, V. (2017). Psychological safety: A meta-analytic review and extension. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(1), 113-165.
- Frazier, M. L., & Tupper, C. (2018). Supervisor prosocial motivation, employee thriving, and helping behavior: A trickle-down model of psychological safety. *Group & Organization Management*, 43(4), 561-593.
- Galton, F. (1869). *Hereditary genius: An inquiry into the consequences*. New York, Appleton.
- Gill, P. and Baillie, J. (2018). Interviews and focus groups in qualitative research: an update for the digital age. *British Dental Journal*, 225(7), 668-672.

- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries, *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, 29 (2), 75-91.
- Guest, G., Namey, E., & Chen, M. (2020). A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research. *PloS one*, 15(5), e0232076.
- Guetterman, T. (2015). Descriptions of sampling practices within five approaches to qualitative research in education and the health sciences.
- Halpern, E. S. (1983). *Auditing Naturalistic Inquiries: The Development and Application of a Model*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University.
- Hannes, K. (2011): Critical appraisal of qualitative research. In: Noyes J, Booth A, Hannes K, Harden A, Harris J, Lewin S, Lockwood C (editors), *Supplementary Guidance for Inclusion of Qualitative Research in Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Interventions*. Version 1 (updated August 2011). Cochrane Collaboration Qualitative Methods Group, 2011. Available from URL <http://cqrmg.cochrane.org/supplemental-handbook-guidance>.
- Hanks, S., Cotton, D. and Spowart, L. (2020). Leadership in dental practice: A three stage systematic review and narrative synthesis. *Journal of Dentistry*, 102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdent.2020.103480>.
- Hennink, Monique & Kaiser, Bonnie N., 2022. "Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests," *Social Science & Medicine*, Elsevier, vol. 292(C). [https://doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523](https://doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523).
- Hellgren, J., Sverke, M., & Isaksson, K. (1999). A two-dimensional approach to job insecurity: Consequences for employee attitudes and well-being. *European journal of work and organizational psychology*, 8(2), 179-195.
- Heyns, M. M., McCallaghan, S., & Senne, O. W. (2021). Supervisor support and work engagement: The mediating role of psychological safety in a post-restructuring business organisation. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 31(2), 140-144.

- Hobfoll, S. E. (2001). The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: Advancing conservation of resources theory. *Applied psychology*, 50(3), 337-421.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). Culture's recent consequences: Using dimension scores in theory and research. *International Journal of cross-cultural management*, 1(1), 11-17.
- Hogan, R., & Kaiser, R. B. (2008). Quality control: Why leaders need to understand personality. *Leadership in Action: A Publication of the Center for Creative Leadership and Jossey-Bass*, 28(5), 3-7.
- Homans, G. C. (1961). The humanities and the social sciences. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 4(8), 3-6.
- Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative health research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.
- Hine, C. (2005). Internet research and the sociology of cyber-social-scientific knowledge. *The information society*, 21(4), 239-248.
- Hu, J., He, W. and Zhou, K. (2020). The mind, the heart, and the leader in times of crisis: How and when COVID-19 triggered mortality salience relates to state anxiety, job engagement, and prosocial behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 105(11), 1218–1233. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000620>.
- Hunt, T. and Fedynich, L. (2019). Leadership: Past, present, and future: An evolution of an idea. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 8(2), 22-26.
- ILO. (2020). ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Fifth edition Retrieved August 14, 2020, from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_749399.pdf.
- Igbaekemen, G. O. (2014). Impact of leadership style on organisation performance: A strategic literature review. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, 4(9), 126-135.

- Im, J., Kim, H. and Miao, L. (2021). CEO letters: Hospitality corporate narratives during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102701>.
- Insession. (2020). Coronavirus: President Ramaphosa announces a 21-day lockdown., 01, 09retrivedfrom<https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Publications/InSession/2020-09/final.pdf>
- Isaksen, S. G. and Akkermans, H. J. (2011). Creative climate: A leadership lever for innovation. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 45(3), 161-187.
- Jackson, R. L., Drummond, D. K. and Camara, S. (2007). What is qualitative research? *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 8(1), 21-28.
- Jerry, A., Gajogo, O., Gomwalk, D. and Kabanda, F. (2021). Impact of Covid-19 on mining case studies of four countries. African Development Bank Group. Retrieved from <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/working-paper-357-impact-covid-19-mining-case-studies-four-african-countries>
- Judge, T. A., & Piccolo, R. F. (2004). Transformational and transactional leadership: a meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Journal of applied psychology*, 89(5), 755.
- Judge, T. A., Bono, J. E., Ilies, R. and Gerhardt, M. W. (2002). Personality and leadership: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 765–780. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.4.765>.
- Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33, 692–724.
- Kanji, G. K., and e Sa', P. M. (2001). Measuring leadership excellence. *Total Quality Management*, 12(6), 701-718.
- Kotter, J. P. (1998). What leaders really do. In *Harvard Business Review on leadership*. USA: Harvard business school press.

- Laing, T. (2020). The economic impact of the Coronavirus 2019 (Covid-2019): Implications for the mining industry. *The extractive industries and society*, 7(2), 580-582.
- Lee, H. (2021). Changes in workplace practices during the Covid-19 pandemic: the roles of emotion, psychological safety, and organisational support. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness People and Performance*. <https://doi:10.11108>.
- Li, Q., Guan, X., Wu, P., Wang, X., Zhou, L., Tong, Y., ... & Feng, Z. (2020). Early transmission dynamics in Wuhan, China, of novel coronavirus–infected pneumonia. *New England journal of medicine*.
- Lord, R. G., Day, D. V., Zaccaro, S. J., Avolio, B. J. and Eagly, A. H. (2017). Leadership in applied psychology: Three waves of theory and research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102, 434–451. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000089>.
- Luthans, F. (2002). The need for and meaning of positive organizational behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 23(6), 695-706.
- MacKenzie, S. B., Podsakoff, P. M. and Rich, G. A. (2001). Transformational and transactional leadership and salesperson performance. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 29(2), 115-134.
- Malakyan, P. G. (2014). Followership in leadership studies: A case of leader–follower trade approach. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 7(4), 6-22.
- Masia, U. and Pienaar, J. (2011). Unravelling safety compliance in the mining industry: examining the role of work stress, job insecurity, satisfaction, and commitment as antecedents. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 37 (1), doi.org/10.1402/sajip.v37i.937.
- Masood, H., & Budworth, M. H. E. (2021). Can Work Interactions Cause Technostress during the COVID-19 Crisis? A Dyadic Study. In *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 2021, No. 1, p. 13502). Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510: Academy of Management.

- Matinde, E., Simate, G. S., & Ndlovu, S. (2018). Mining and metallurgical wastes: a review of recycling and re-use practices. *Journal of the Southern African institute of mining and metallurgy*, 118(8), 825-844.
- Mao, J. and Tian, K. (2022). Psychological safety mediates the relationship between leader–member exchange and employees' work engagement. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 50(3), 31-39.
- Maximo, N., Stander, M. W., & Coxen, L. (2019). Authentic leadership and work engagement: The indirect effects of psychological safety and trust in supervisors. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 45(1), 1-11.
- Maxwell, J. C. (1993). *Developing the leader within you*. Harper Collins.
- Mbazima, N. (2020). Reviving a declining mining industry.
- McLaggan, E., Bezuidenhout, A. and Botha, C. T. (2013). Leadership style and organisational commitment in the mining industry in Mpumalanga. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11(1), –. doi:10.4102/sajhrm.v11i1.483.
- McCleskey, J. A. (2014). Situational, transformational, and transactional leadership and leadership development. *Journal of business studies quarterly*, 5(4), 117.
- McCracken, G. (1988). Quality control. In *The long interview* (pp. 49-52). SAGE Publications, Inc., <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412986229>.
- Merriam, S. B. and Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Milliken, F. J., Morrison, E. W. and Hewlin, P. F. (2003). An exploratory study of employee silence: Issues that employees don't communicate upward and why. *Journal of management studies*, 40(6), 1453-1476.
- Mokgolo, M. M., Mokgolo, P. and Modiba, M. 2012. Transformational leadership in the South African public service after the April 2009 national elections. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management/Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Menslike hulpbronnbestuur*, 10(1), Art. #334, 9 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v10i1.334>.

- Morrison, E. W. and Milliken, F. J. (2000). Organizational silence: A barrier to change and development in a pluralistic world. *Academy of Management review*, 25(4), 706-725.
- Merriam, S. B. and Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Naidu, J., & Van der Walt, M. S. (2005). An exploration of the relationship between leadership styles and the implementation of transformation interventions. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 3(2), 1-10.
- Nawaz, Z. A. K. D. A., & Khan, I. (2016). Leadership theories and styles: A literature review. *Leadership*, 16(1), 1-7.
- Nemteanu, M. S., Dinu, V. and Dabija, D. C. (2021). Job insecurity, job instability, and job satisfaction in the context of the covid-19 pandemic. *J. Competitiveness*, 13, 65-82.
- Newman, A., Donohue, R. and Eva, N. (2017). Psychological safety: A systematic review of the literature. *Human Resource Management Review*, 27(3), 521-535.
- Newman, A., Donohue, R., McLaggan, E.; Bezuidenhout, A.; and Botha, C. T. (2013). Leadership style and organisational commitment in the mining industry in Mpumalanga. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11(1), –. doi:10.4102/sajhrm.v11i1.483.
- Northouse, P. G. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and practice* [Kindle version].
- Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-based nursing*, 18(2), 34-35.
- Oberer, B., & Erkollar, A. (2018). Leadership 4.0: Digital leaders in the age of industry 4.0. *International journal of organizational leadership*.
- O'Toole, J., & Bennis, W. (2009). A culture of candor. *Harvard business review*, 87(6), 54-61.

- Paul, P.S. and Maiti, J. (2005). Development and test of a sociotechnical model for accident/injury occurrences in underground coal mines. *Journal of South African institute of Mining and Metallurgy*, 105(1), 43–55.
- Palo, J., & Rothmann, S. (2016). Work engagement in the mining industry in South Africa: The role of tasks and relationships. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 26(3), 221-229.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Polit, D. F. and Beck, C. T. (2008). *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Pearsall, M. J. and Ellis, A. P. J. (2011). Thick as thieves: The effects of ethical orientation and psychological safety on unethical team behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96, 401–411. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0021503>
- Pierce, J. R. and Aguinis, H. (2013). The too-much-of-a-good-thing effect in management. *Journal of Management*, 39(2), 313-338.
- Remtulla, R., Hagana, A., Houbby, N., Ruparell, K., Aojula, N., Menon, A., and Meyer, E. (2021). Exploring the barriers and facilitators of psychological safety in primary care teams: a qualitative study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 21(1), 1-12.
- Roulston, K. (2010). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research*, 10(2), 228199-. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109356739>.
- Sadeghi, A. and Pihie, Z. A. L. (2012). Transformational leadership and its predictive effects on leadership effectiveness. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3(7), 186- 197.
- Saunders, M. and Lewis, P. (2018). *Doing research in business and management*. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.
- Schaubroeck, J., Lam, S. S. and Peng, A. C. (2011). Cognition-based and affect-based trust as mediators of leader behavior influences on team performance. *Journal of applied psychology*, 96(4), 863.

- Schein, E. H. and Bennis, W. (1965). Personal and organizational change through group methods. New York: Wiley.
- Shenton, A.K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects.
Education for Information. 22, 63–75.
- Sherf, E. N., Parke, M. R., & Isaakyan, S. (2021). Distinguishing voice and silence at work: Unique relationships with perceived impact, psychological safety, and burnout. *Academy of Management Journal*, 64(1), 114-148.
- Singh, B., Shaffer, M. A., & Selvarajan, T. T. (2018). Antecedents of organizational and community embeddedness: The roles of support, psychological safety, and need to belong. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 39(3), 339-354.
- Spence, J. R., Ferris, D. L., Brown, D. J., & Heller, D. (2011). Understanding daily citizenship behaviors: A social comparison perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 32(4), 547-571.
- Sullivan, J. R. (2012). Skype: An appropriate method of data collection for qualitative interviews? *The Hilltop Review*, 6(1), 10.
- Siswanti, Y. and Muafi, M. (2020). Empowering leadership and individual creativity: The mediation role of psychological empowerment in facing COVID-19 pandemic. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 7(11), 809–816.
<https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2020.vol7.no11.809>
- Smith, M. B., Hill, A. D., Wallace, J. C., Recendes, T. and Judge, T. A. (2018). Upsides to dark and downsides to bright personality: A multidomain review and future research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 44, 191–217.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206317733511>.
- Syrek, C. J., & Antoni, C. H. (2017). Psychological contract fulfillment and employee responses to pay system change: The effects of transformational leadership. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, 16(4), 172.

- Srnka, K. J., & Koeszegi, S. T. (2007). From words to numbers: how to transform qualitative data into meaningful quantitative results. *Schmalenbach Business Review*, 59(1), 29-57.
- Steffens, N. K., Haslam, S. A., Schuh, S. C., Jetten, J., & van Dick, R. (2017). A meta-analytic review of social identification and health in organizational contexts. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 21(4), 303-335.
- Stogdill, R. M. (1950). Leadership, membership and organization. *Psychological bulletin*, 47(1), 1.
- Stogdill, R. M. (1974). *Handbook of leadership: A survey of theory and research*. Free Press.
- Tecău, A. S., Constantin, C. P., Lixăndroi, R. C., Chițu, I. B. and Brătucu, G. (2020). Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on heavy work investment in Romania. *Amfiteatru Economic*, 22(14), 1049-1067.
- AlhThorne, S., (2016). *Interpretive Description: Qualitative Research for Applied Practice*, Second ed. Routledge, New York, NY.
- Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American journal of evaluation*, 27(2), 237-246.
- Trading Economics. (n.d.). South Africa unemployment rate. Retrieved from [South Africa Unemployment Rate - 2022 Data - 2023 Forecast - 2000-2021 Historical \(tradingeconomics.com\)](https://tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/unemployment-rate)
- Thomas, H., Noam, A., Beatriz, K., Anna, P., Toby, P. and Samuel, W. (2020). Variation in
- Government Responses to COVID-19. Version 6.0. Blavatnik School of Government Working Paper. Retrieved August 14, 2020, from www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker
- Lewis-Beck, M. S., Bryman, A. and Futing Liao, T. (2004). Purposive sampling. In *The SAGE encyclopedia of social science research methods* (pp. 885-885). Sage Publications, Inc., <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412950589.n774>

- Uhl-Bien, M. and Maslyn, J. M. (2003). Reciprocity in manager-subordinate relationships: Components, configurations, and outcomes. *Journal of management*, 29(4), 511-532.
- Uhl-Bien, M. and Arena, M. (2017). Complexity leadership: enabling people and organizations for adaptability. *Organizational dynamics*.
- Valeria, A.M. (2009). Developing woman leaders: A guide for men and women in organisations. West Sussex: Wiley & Blackwell.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781444315967>.
- Van Seters, D. A. and Field, R. H. (1990). The evolution of leadership theory. *Journal of organizational change management*.
- Walumbwa, F. O., & Schaubroeck, J. (2009). Leader personality traits and employee voice behavior: mediating roles of ethical leadership and work group psychological safety. *Journal of applied psychology*, 94(5), 1275.
- Walters, K. N. and Diab, D. L. (2016). Humble leadership: Implications for psychological safety and follower engagement. *Journal of leadership studies*, 10(2), 7-18.
- 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.
- Wilson, M. G., Dejoy, D. M., Vandenberg, R. J., Richardson, H. A. and Mcgrath, A. L. (2004). Work characteristics and employee health and well-being: Test of a model of healthy work organization. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 77(4), 565-588.
- Woo, S. E., O'Boyle, E. H. and Spector, P. E. (2017). Best practices in developing, conducting, and evaluating inductive research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 27(2), 255–264. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmmr.2016.08.004>.
- Williams, A. P., Woodward, S. and Dobson, P. (2002). *Managing change successfully: Using theory and experience to implement change*. Cengage Learning EMEA.

- Wong, A., Tjosvold, D. and Lu, J. (2010). Leadership values and learning in China: The mediating role of psychological safety. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 48(1), 86-107.
- Yahaya, R. and Ebrahim, F. (2016). Leadership styles and organizational commitment: literature review. *Journal of management development*.
- Yarberry, S. and Sims, C. (2021). The impact of Covid-19-prompted virtual/remote work environments on employees' career development: Social learning theory, belongingness, and self-empowerment. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 23(3), 237-252.
- Yurii, S., Yevgen, M. and Nataliia, L.(2018). Evolution and modern tendencies in the theory of leadership. *Baltic Journal of Economic Studies* 2018; 4:304–10.
- Yukl, G. (1999). An evaluation of conceptual weaknesses in transformational and charismatic leadership theories. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 10(2), 285-305. doi:10.1016/S1048- 9843(99)00013-2.
- Zaman, U. and Abbasi, M. (2020). Linking transformational leadership and individual learning behavior: Role of psychological safety and uncertainty avoidance. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS)*, 14(1), 167-201.

APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM

Dear xxx

My name is Apindiwe Bekiswa, I am a final year student at Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), studying towards attaining an MBA. You are invited to volunteer to participate in my research project titled '**Leadership style(s) that contribute to perceived psychological safety in the mining industry in South Africa: A Post Pandemic View**'

This letter aims to give you information to help you decide if you would be willing to participate in this study. It is important that should you agree to participate, you fully understand what is involved. If you do not understand the information or have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. The purpose of the study is to assess leadership style(s) that contribute to perceived psychological safety in the mining industry from middle managers who report to senior leaders within their organisation.

You will be required to sit through an interview on Microsoft Teams which will take one hour of your time to conclude. The interview meeting invite will be sent out via email. The interview will be recorded to assist with transcribing and data analysis after the interview. **Please note that no names will be reported on the research project, participants will completely be anonymous, and information will be treated confidentially with no identifiers. Data gathered will only be used for the purposes of this academic report.**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or stop at any time without giving reasons. Your help in the study will be highly appreciated.

Yours Truly,

Apindiwe Bekiswa

10037782@mygibs.co.za

Supervisor: Dr Michele Ruiters

RuitersM@gibs.co.za

Participant Signature:

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION

1. Can you tell me what kind of work you do and the kind of mining operation you work for
2. How long you have been in this role

Psychological Safety

3. How could you describe the mining environment?
4. What does psychological safety mean to you?
5. What makes you feel psychologically safe at work?
6. Can you explain what about the highlighted factors makes you feel safe?

Leadership Role

7. What does your leader do to make you feel psychologically safe?
8. Are there things that your boss does that do not make you feel safe?
9. How would you describe your leader's leadership style?

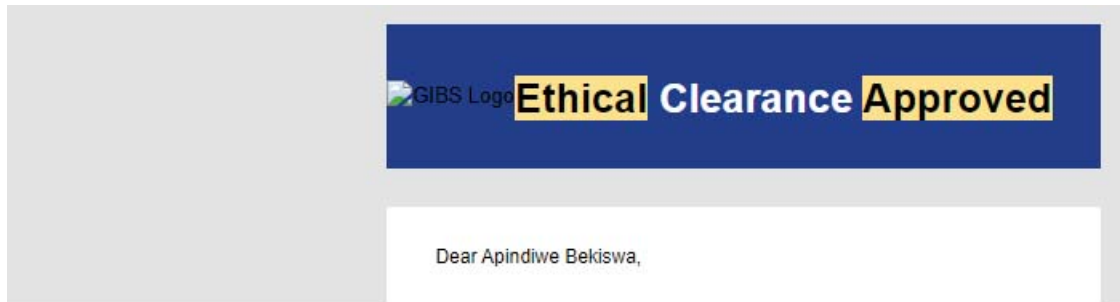
Pre and Post Covid Changes

10. What factors played a role in increasing or maintaining your perceived psychological safety during and after Covid-19?
11. What factors may have played a role in your perceived psychological safety being compromised during and after Covid-19?
12. Have any of the mentioned factors that made you feel safe changed since Covid-19?
13. If you think they have changed, why do you think this is the case?

Leader Adaptability

14. How have leaders adapted their behaviour to suit the current context? (During and after the pandemic)
 15. How have these adapted changes encouraged or fragmented your sense of feeling psychologically safe?
-

APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Please be advised that your application for **Ethical** Clearance has been **approved**.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

[Ethical Clearance Form](#)

Kind Regards

APPENDIX 4: CODES GENERATED

● Advantages of Psychological Safety	● Emotional Health at Work
● Autonomy of Decision	● Emotional Impact of Covid-19
○ Authentic Leadership Style	● Ensure Involvement with Relevant Stakeholders
● Authoritative Leadership Style	● Environment that Fosters Collaboration
● Availability for Growth	● Environment Learning & Mistakes
● Available Support Structures	● Environmental Consequences
● Balance Between Manager and Leader	● Established lines of Power & Instruction
● Balance Between Technical & Psychological	● Ethical Leadership Style
● Balancing Criticism & Giving Direction	● Favourites and Bias in Teams
● Being Heard and Valued	● Fear of Losing Job
● Being Micromanaged	● Feedback
● Benefits of rewarding employees	● Feeling Safe Mentally
● Challenging Leaders' Ideas	● Fostering Honesty and Openness
● Challenging Teams' Abilities	● Grooming Leaders
● Change in Leadership Due to Covid	● Healthy State of Mind
● Changes Due to Covid	● Hierarchical Leadership Interactions
● Changes in Operation	● Holistic Approach to Individual
● Collaboration Between Team Members	● Implementation of new policy
● Communication Between Site & Corporate	● Importance of Mental Health
● Compromised Psychological Safety	● Improved Care Between Colleagues
● Confidentiality at Work	● Improved Communication
● Conflict Management & Resolution	● Improvement Post Covid-19
● Consequences of Micromanagement	● Inability to be Flexible
● Constant Applied Pressure	● Inability to Correct Leader Behaviour
● Creating a Culture for Communication	● Inclusion of Team members

● Creating a Culture of Psychological Safety	● Increased Holistic View of Individual
● Creating Safe Space	● Increased Stress
● Daily Meetings	● Ineffective Hierarchical Psychological Safety
● Dictator Leadership Style	● Ineffective Implementation of Changes
● Difference in Site and HQ culture	○ Ineffective Implementation of Policy
● Disadvantages of Toxic Environment	○ Job Description
● Discontinued Benefits	● Job Security

● Knowledgeable Leaders	● Perceived Psychological Safety
● Knowing Team's Capabilities	● Transactional leadership style
● Lack of Communication Structure	● Platforms to Raise Concerns
● Lack of Empathy	○ Previous Work Experience
● Lack of Patience	● Psychological Safety for Women
● Lack of Psychological Support	● Recognizing Workers State of Mind
● Lack of Trust	● Renumeration and Incentives
● Language of Communication	● Respect Amongst Colleagues
● Language Used at Work	● Room for Innovation
● Leader Adaptability	● Support in Career Advancement
● Leader Flaws	● Supporting Team Subordinates
● Leadership Style	● Supportive Leader
● Learning from Subordinates	● Taking Responsibility for Team
● Learning Mindset	● Team Accountability and Responsibility
● Low Innovation	○ Team Preparation
● Low Turnover	○ Tenure in Company
● Maintenance of Working Environment	○ Tenure in Role
● Maintaining Engagement	● Tools of communication
● Measuring Psychological Safety	● Transformative leadership style
● Medical Segregation	● Treatment of Colleague's vs Individual
● Mentorship	● trusting employee's abilities

● Mindset Needed for Decision Making	● Understanding Leaders Leadership Style
● No Change Post Covid-19	● Understanding Team Members
● No Micro- Management	● Understanding Working Environment
● Online Meetings (covid)	● Updating Policy for Psychological Safety
● Open and Trusting Leader	● Vaccination Psychological Safety
● Open Communication in Team	● Voicing out Opinions
● Opportunities to Lead	● Women Representation
● Organisational Psychological Safety	● Work Impact on Mindset
● Overpowering Subordinates	● Workplace Threatening
	● Working from Home (Covid)