

Exploring Leadership Strategies That Promote Psychological Safety and Employee Voice During Organizational Change

Mariam. Hakobyan¹, Tariq. Al-Fasi^{2*}

¹ Department of Business Administration, Armenian State University of Economics, Yerevan, Armenia

² Department of Strategic Management, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar

* Corresponding author email address: tariq.alfasi@qu.edu.qa

E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Davood Feiz  Affiliation: Professor of Management Department, Semnan University, Iran feiz1353@semnan.ac.ir	Reviewer 1: Marco Yamba-Yugsi  Unidad Académica de Posgrado, Universidad Católica de Cuenca, Azuay 010101, Ecuador Email: marco.yamba@ucacue.edu.ec Reviewer 2: Abbas Monavarian  Professor, Management Department, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran. Email: amonavar@ut.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the Introduction paragraph beginning “Closely connected to psychological safety is employee voice,” the definition of voice would benefit from greater theoretical precision. The manuscript currently treats raising concerns, providing suggestions, challenging assumptions, identifying risks, and contributing expertise as manifestations of a common construct. The authors should clarify whether they conceptualize voice as promotive voice, prohibitive voice, change-oriented voice, or a higher-order category encompassing these forms. This clarification would materially strengthen interpretation of the findings because leadership behaviors that encourage constructive suggestions may not operate identically to those needed for employees to communicate criticism, ethical concerns, or potentially threatening information.

The paragraph beginning “Despite growing attention to leadership, psychological safety, and employee voice, important gaps remain” identifies an appropriate research gap, but the novelty claim should be sharpened. The current argument largely states that previous research examines specific leadership styles and settings, whereas this study examines concrete leadership strategies. The authors should state explicitly whether the intended contribution is theoretical, contextual, methodological, or all three. For example, the manuscript could specify that it moves beyond leadership-style taxonomies by inductively

identifying observable leadership practices and by distinguishing an interpersonal-risk pathway from a perceived-voice-efficacy pathway. Without such clarification, the contribution risks appearing primarily contextual rather than conceptually generative.

The Methods paragraph states that “Recruitment continued until data saturation was achieved, meaning that subsequent interviews no longer generated substantially new concepts.” This language should be reconsidered in light of the stated use of reflexive thematic analysis. Reflexive thematic analysis does not necessarily depend on saturation in the same manner as grounded theory or codebook-oriented thematic approaches. The authors should either justify their specific operationalization of saturation and explain how it was assessed or replace this claim with a concept more consistent with reflexive thematic analysis, such as information power, analytical sufficiency, or adequacy of the dataset for addressing the research question.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the final Introduction paragraph, the sentence “This gap is particularly relevant in Qatar, where organizations across public and private sectors have undergone substantial modernization, digitalization, institutional development, and workforce transformation” requires stronger contextual development. The manuscript should explain why Qatar provides a theoretically informative setting rather than merely a convenient geographical context. Relevant organizational features such as workforce diversity, hierarchical structures, multilingual workplaces, expatriate-national workforce composition, or rapid institutional transformation should be discussed insofar as they relate directly to psychological safety and voice. This would make the study’s setting part of the analytical rationale rather than simply the location of data collection.

In the Methods subsection “Study Design and Participants,” the sentence “This study employed a qualitative exploratory research design” is appropriate but insufficiently specific for methodological reproducibility. The authors should identify the qualitative methodological orientation more precisely. It should be clarified whether the study followed generic qualitative inquiry, interpretive description, phenomenological inquiry, qualitative descriptive methodology, or another established approach. Because reflexive thematic analysis is used later, the epistemological assumptions underlying data generation and interpretation should also be stated, including whether the analysis was primarily experiential, constructionist, realist, or contextualist.

The participant description stating that “The final sample consisted of 24 participants, including 10 managers and organizational leaders and 14 employees” requires greater sampling transparency. The manuscript should report how prospective participants were identified and approached, how many individuals were invited, whether anyone declined participation or withdrew, and whether managers and employees were recruited independently. The authors should also explain how organizational diversity was ensured across public- and private-sector workplaces. Without these details, readers cannot adequately evaluate possible self-selection bias or determine whether particularly supportive or dissatisfied employees may have been disproportionately represented.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.