

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study 1 Interviews

Date Information Sheet Produced

15.05.2024

Project Title

The role of team leaders in fostering psychological safety in Aotearoa New Zealand's ethnically diverse organisations.

An Invitation

My name is Hansini Gunasekara, and I am a doctoral researcher in management at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). I am conducting research on the role of team leaders in fostering psychological safety in Aotearoa New Zealand's ethnically diverse organisations. The focus of my research is to explore the perceptions and experiences of psychological safety as well as how the behaviour of leaders (past and present) impact psychological safety at work. In addition to questions related to psychological safety and the role of leaders in promoting or preventing psychological safety, I will also ask you some details around your ethnic identity and your work context. A complete outline of the research project can be found below. Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

What is the purpose of this research?

Psychological safety refers to the ability to take interpersonal risks without the fear of negative consequences. It is a key factor that drives employee participation at work. It is also a key determinant in performance, engagement, retention, learning, innovation, and has been shown to impact employees and the overall organisation in a multitude of ways. While psychological safety is a well-researched topic, there is limited understanding of how ethnically diverse employees perceive and experience psychological safety. There is also little to no research in the New Zealand context. Furthermore, while it is well established that leaders play an important role in employee experiences of psychological safety, there is little understanding related to how leader behaviour prevent or promote psychological safety. Therefore, the aim of my study is to explore the perceptions and experiences of psychological safety and the role of leaders in fostering psychological safety comparing the outcomes between ethnic minority and ethnic majority employees.

The findings of my study will inform future research and organisational practice in important ways by not only helping us understand the phenomenon in depth, but also shed light on what leaders do to prevent and promote psychological safety. The findings of this research will be a part of my doctoral thesis and may be used for other academic publications and presentations. Furthermore, the findings of this study will inform leadership practice.

Options for future use of the information you provide

In order to maximise the utility of the information you provide, we seek your permission to allow future postgraduate research students supervised by Professor Helena Cooper-Thomas to use your deidentified interview data in their research. This enables further students to benefit from the information and ideas that you provided in this interview study. On the Consent Form, there is a tick box for you to indicate whether you agree to this. Additionally, when we provide your deidentified transcript to you so that you

can review it, we will again check your consent/ non-consent at the time to make sure that you have had the opportunity to consider and decide how your interview transcript can be used.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

To seek participants like you for the research, I have used my networks, including LinkedIn and other social media platforms. I have asked the people I know to pass the invitation on, rather than recruiting participants directly. You will have received information on this research in one of these ways.

For this research, the criteria for selecting interview participants are as follows. Please ensure that you fulfil these criteria before proceeding. In the consent form below, you can indicate the fulfilment of these criteria by ticking a series of boxes.

To take part in this study, participants must be,

- 18+ years old,
- currently working on a full-time (30+ hours) in organisations based in New Zealand,
- has been employed in the current organisation for at least six consecutive months,
- reports to a team leader/manager/supervisor,
- has worked under the leadership of their current manager/team leader/supervisor for at least six consecutive months,
- is a part of a team with two or more members, and
- is conversationally fluent in the English language and can carry out the interview in English with ease.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the analysis has begun (2 weeks following review of transcript) or findings have been produced, removal of your data will not be possible.

Upon reviewing the information in this document, if you have questions, please feel free to contact me via email or phone to answer your queries (my contact details are at the end of this form). If I do not receive a reply from you within 2 weeks of my initial contact with you, I will follow up with you to see if you have any queries and ask if you are still interested to participate. Please note that if you are willing to participate in the research, I will need you to sign the Consent Form prior to the commencement of your interview with me. You can either email this through to me beforehand, or we can complete it at the start of the interview.

What will happen in this research?

I am seeking approximately 30 participants for my study with ideally two-thirds of the participants identifying as ethnic minority and one-third of participants identifying as ethnic majority persons in New Zealand. For the purpose of my study, I define ethnic minority employees as people who fully or partially identify as a minority ethnicity person (i.e., fully, or partially identifying as non-pākehā, non-NZ European, or non-European) and ethnic majority employees as people who fully identify as pākehā, NZ-European, or European. Given that defining ethnicity can be challenging, I will ask several open-ended questions to understand which ethnicity you identify with, as accurately as possible.

Once you have read through this information sheet, if you are interested in proceeding, you will provide consent by signing a Consent Form. I will then send you a link to book in an interview time and location. The interview day, time and venue will be arranged to suit you, so that you feel comfortable participating. It could be at a café, at AUT premises or at your office, provided that the location is private, quiet, and safe. Alternatively, interviews can be carried out virtually via MS Teams (note that you **do not need to have a Teams account or Outlook email address** to participate in a Teams meeting). Interviews are expected to take one hour.

With your permission, I will audio-record the interview and it will subsequently be transcribed. The transcripts will be deidentified by removing any references to people, places, or specific identifiable events. The transcript will then be emailed to you for review. If there are any questions or parts I need to clarify further, and depending on your consent, we may arrange an optional second follow-up interview (30 minutes). If you are happy with the transcript, I will then proceed to analysing the data and produce a research report based on the findings across all interviews. You may opt to receive a copy of the final report.

What are the discomforts and risks?

You may recall negative memories about past work experiences. You may also be concerned to manage how you present yourself and may not feel comfortable sharing all your views related to past and present experiences of psychological safety and/or experiences you've had with your past or present leaders.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

All efforts will be made to build rapport and to make you feel comfortable. Participation is voluntary and you can choose to withdraw at any point prior to completion of data analysis. Should you choose not to answer a particular question, you can inform me, and I will skip over that question or topic of discussion.

Throughout the course of the research, pseudonyms will be assigned to the names of the participants to ensure confidentiality is maintained. Interview transcripts will be checked for identifying details and they will be removed, making the transcripts permanently deidentified. Your interview transcript will be shared with you once it has been transcribed, allowing you to review it prior to being used for analysis, and you can amend or delete any parts that you wish to. All forms and data will be securely stored in line with AUT's requirements.

AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into the AUT centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9292.
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling at <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>

What are the benefits?

By sharing your experiences and perceptions of psychological safety in the workplace, you will contribute to advancing knowledge in this field and addressing a critical gap in leadership and diversity research. Specifically, your input will help explore whether psychological safety is experienced uniformly across employees from different ethnic backgrounds, shedding light on a crucial aspect often overlooked in existing research. Furthermore, your contributions will help uncover the role of leaders in fostering or hindering psychological safety. Ultimately, the findings from this study will not only enrich our understanding of psychological safety but also inform practical strategies for enhancing workplace experiences for employees, leaders, and organisations as a whole. Additionally, by participating, you will contribute to broader societal benefits by potentially diminishing stereotypes, reducing discrimination, and promoting equal opportunities in the workplace and beyond.

You will also benefit from discussing your perceptions and experiences of psychological safety which will help you deepen your understanding of the phenomenon as well as how you experience it.

Your contribution to this research will form the basis for me to obtain my doctorate which I am currently pursuing. It may also be used by future postgraduate research students supervised by Prof Cooper-Thomas, depending on whether you give permission for this on the Consent Form (using the tick box). At the end of my research, all participants will be sent a summary report based on my thesis; my full thesis will be available on Tūwhera, which is AUT's open-access research repository. Furthermore, I aim to create practical and accessible resources from the findings of this research which academics, organisational behaviour practitioners and leaders can utilise to improve workplaces experiences for all employees. Finally, the findings of this study will inform further research that aims to design an intervention for leaders aimed at enhancing employee psychological safety.

How will my privacy be protected?

Throughout the course of the research, pseudonyms will be assigned to the names of the participants to ensure confidentiality is maintained. Interview transcripts will be checked for identifying details and they will be removed, making the transcripts permanently deidentified. The interview transcript will be shared with you for your review prior to being used for analysis. All forms and data will be securely stored.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no direct costs associated from your end other than your time. The interview will require a commitment of approximately 60 minutes to complete one interview. There may be an optional follow-up interview (initiated by you or me, depending on whether either of us have follow-up questions) which may take 30 minutes.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have 2 weeks to consider whether you would like to be a part of this research, and you are more than welcome to contact me during this time for any queries. If I do not receive a reply from you by then, I will follow up with you to see if you have any queries and ask if you are still interested to participate. Additionally, if I have enough participants already, I will not follow up further.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Your interview transcript will be available as a written document for your review and feedback within a few weeks of your interview. I will email this through to you to give you the opportunity to amend or delete material within two weeks of receiving each transcript. I will also be producing a summary of the thesis

once it is complete; if you would like to obtain this summary, please tick the appropriate box on the Consent Form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Helena Cooper-Thomas – email: helena.cooper.thomas@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 7664.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Hansini Gunasekara

hansini.gunasekara@autuni.ac.nz / hansini.gunasekara@gmail.com (personal), 0279 500 756

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Professor Helena Cooper-Thomas

helena.cooper.thomas@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 7664

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 21.05.2024; AUTEK Reference number 24/65