Dissertation Final Defense

VERNON BROWN

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DR. PHILLIP GWALTNEY

DR. WES SCOTT

DR. TONY BUCHANAN

The Relationship Between Supervisors' Transformational Leadership Behaviors and Employees' Psychological Safety Climate Among U.S. Department of the Navy Civilians

Agenda

Introduction

Leaders' behavior and actions within the organization determine the level at which employees engage or remain silent when faced with a critical decision to share negative information or any information.
(Dillon et al., 2023)

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.
(*King James Bible*, 1769/2021, Proverbs 11:14)

Background: Problem

Leaders set the tone — Bainade et al., 2023

Leadership behavior is influential — De Simone & Franco, 2023

Transformational leaders foster positivity — Ravet-Brown et al., 2023

Psychological safety impacts interpersonal risk — Edmondson & Bransby, 2022

Transformational leaders foster psychological safety — Al Marshoudi et al., 2023; Karimi et al., 2023

Government agencies are volatile, complex, and uncertain — Baran & Woznyj, 2021
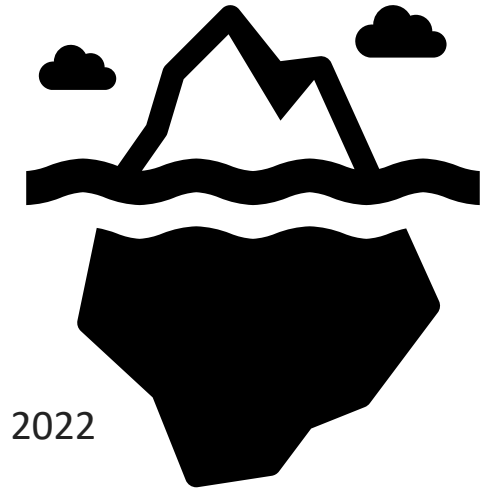
The problem is that it is not known if and to what extent there is a relationship between supervisors' transformational leadership behaviors and employees' psychological safety climate among U.S. Department of the Navy civilians.

Background: Purpose (Objective)

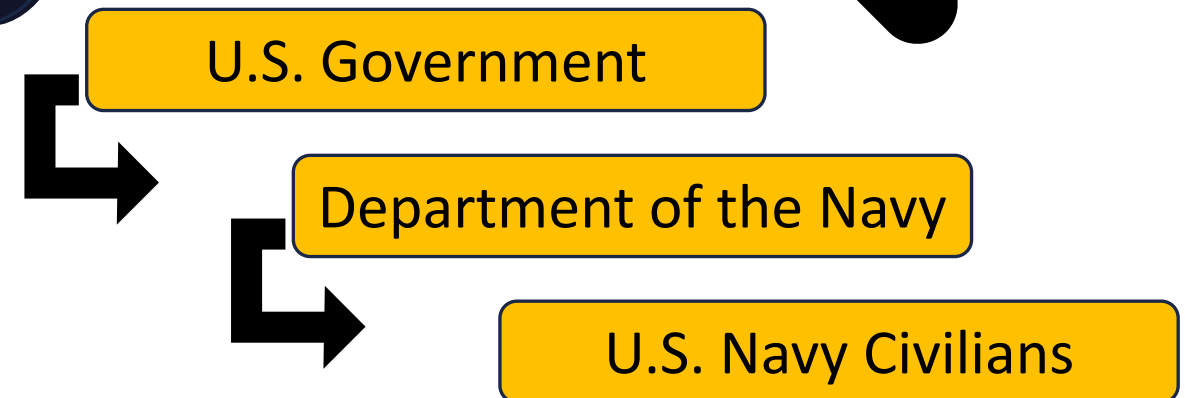The purpose of this quantitative non-experimental correlational study is to determine if and to what extent there is a relationship between supervisors' transformational leadership behaviors and employees' psychological safety climate among U.S. Department of the Navy civilians.

U.S. Government

Department of the Navy

U.S. Navy Civilians

Research Questions & Hypotheses

RQ1: To what extent is there a relationship between supervisors' transformational leadership behaviors and employees' psychological safety climate among United States Department of the Navy civilians?

RQ2: To what extent is there a relationship between supervisors' idealized influence and employees' psychological safety climate among United States Department of the Navy civilians?

RQ3: To what extent is there a relationship between supervisors' inspirational motivation and employees' psychological safety climate among United States Department of the Navy civilians?

RQ4: To what extent is there a relationship between supervisors' individualized consideration and employees' psychological safety climate among United States Department of the Navy civilians?

RQ5: To what extent is there a relationship between supervisors' intellectual stimulation and employees' psychological safety climate among United States Department of the Navy civilians?

H_0#: There is not a statistically significant relationship between supervisors' [...] and employees' psychological safety climate among United States Department of the Navy civilians.

H_A#: There is a statistically significant relationship between supervisors' [...] and employees' psychological safety climate among United States Department of the Navy civilians.

Theoretical Framework
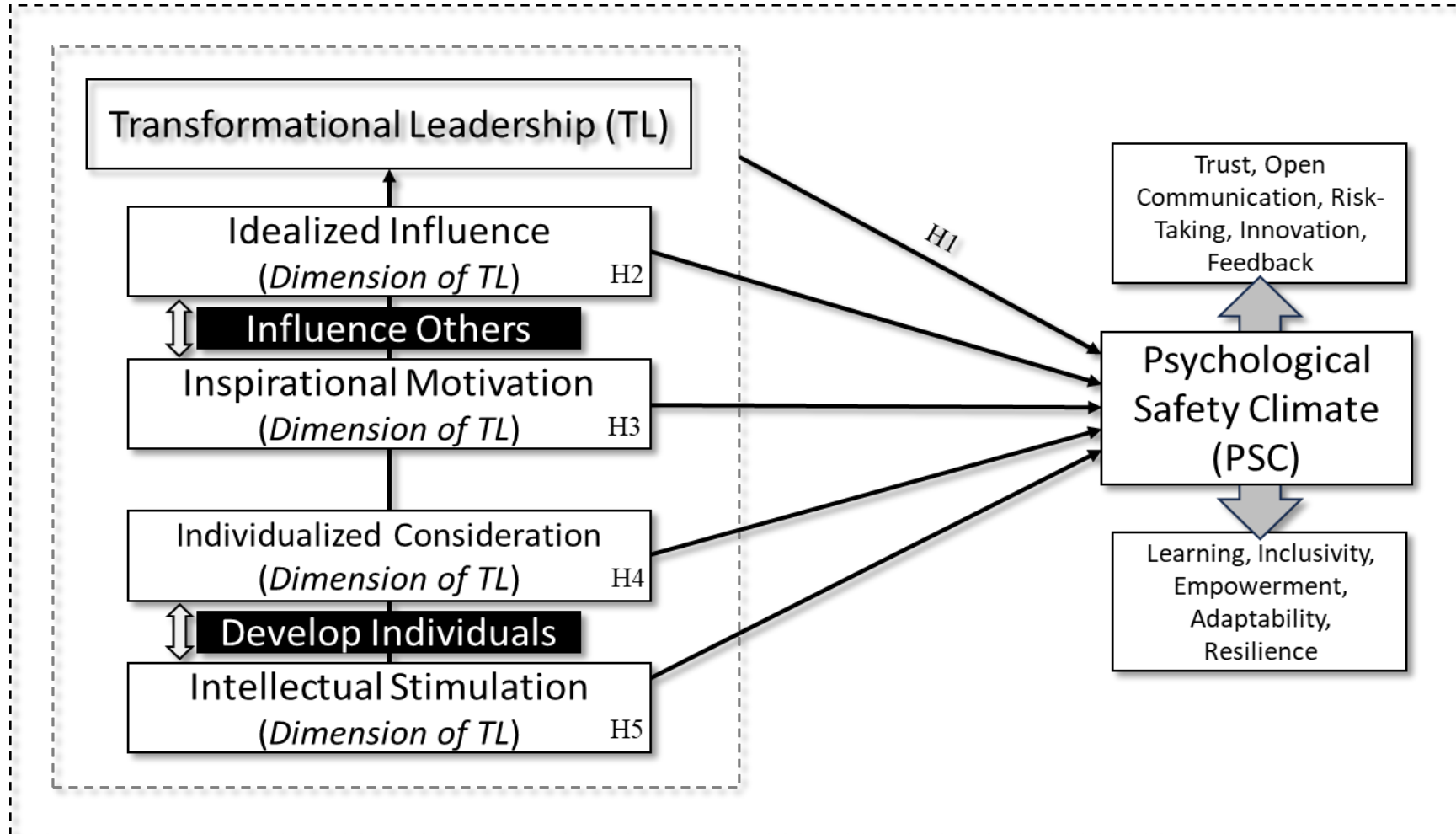

Note. Illustration of the study theoretical foundation created by author: Vernon S. Brown.

Literature Review

Organizational Leadership

- Transactional
- Transformational
- Transformational 4 - I's
- Leadership Behaviors
- Public Sector
- Antecedents
- Outcomes
- Trust
- Organizational Citizenship

Psychological Safety

- History
- Concept & Belief
- Aspects
- Climate
- Antecedents
- Outcomes
- Importance
- Leadership Impact
- Employee Silence
- Organizational Silence

Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, & Ambiguous

- Geopolitical landscape
- Uncertainty in the adversarial context
- Interdependencies & Complexity
- Priorities of Government
- Public Opinion of Government
- Government & VUCA
- Leadership Behavior in Government

Research Method & Design

Methodology	Design	Instrument	Participants
➢ Quantitative	➢ Non-experimental	➢ FEVS	➢ U.S. Navy Civilians
	➢ Correlational	➢ Validity + Reliability	➢ n = 9,160 (actual)
		➢ Multi-scale	➢ n = 384 (min.)
		➢ 5-point Likert	➢ Anonymous
		➢ 91 individual items	➢ Confidential
		➢ 5 indices	➢ Voluntary
		➢ 19 demographic Qs	
		➢ OPM Administered	
		➢ Permission Granted	

Data Collection
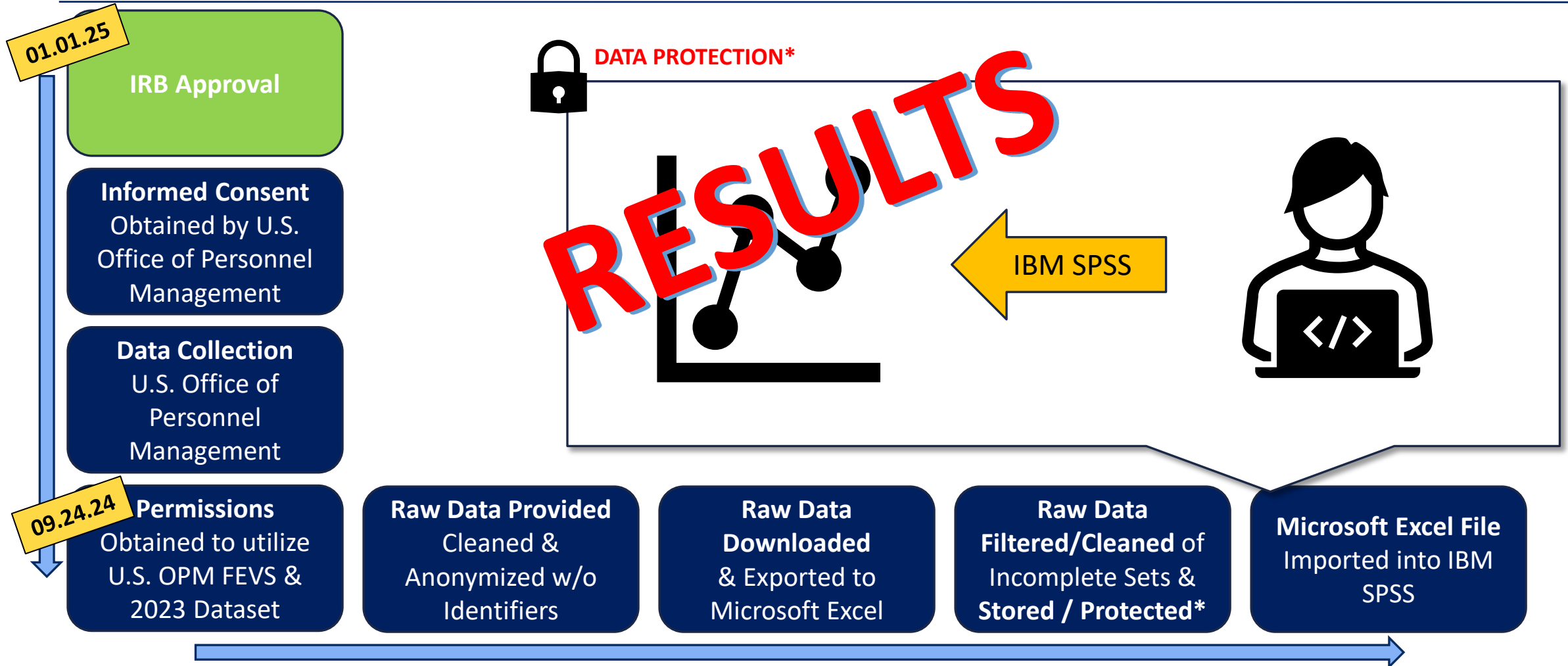
Data Analysis

➤ Descriptive analysis conducted on participant demographics

➤ Cronbach's alpha (α) analysis for reliability conducted

➤ Test of assumptions conducted for correlation & regression (8 total test)

➤ Determination of appropriate statistical measures following assumptions

➤ RQ1: TL = Independent Variable (IV) / PSC = Dependent Variable (DV)

➤ RQ2–RQ5: $TLII^{RQ2}$, $TLIM^{RQ3}$, $TLIC^{RQ4}$, $TLIS^{RQ5}$ = IV / PSC = DV

Regression Models

➤ $PSC = b_o + b_1\,TL$

➤ $PSC = b_o + b_1\,TLII + b_2\,TLIM + b_3\,TLIC + b_4\,TLIS$

Correlation
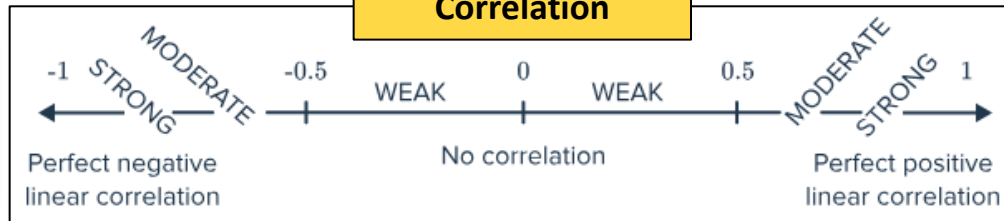
Glossary
TL: Transformational Leadership
PSC: Psychological Safety Climate
TLII: TL (Idealize Influence)
TLIM: TL (Inspirational Motivation)
TLIC: TL (Individualized Consideration)
TLIS: TL (Intellectual Stimulation)

Results: RQ1 (pg. 181)

RQ1

To what extent is there a relationship between supervisors' <u>transformational leadership</u> behaviors and employees' <u>psychological safety climate</u> among United States Department of the Navy civilians?

➢ Supervisors' TL behaviors to employees' PSC
  ➢ *Statistically significant, Null rejected* [r_s(9160) = 0.796, *p* < 0.001]
  ➢ Strong positive correlation

➢ Regression: TL and PSC (*R* = .809, *p* = < .001)
  ➢ Statistically significant contribution to PSC
  ➢ TL accounted for 65.5% of the variability in PSC (R^2 = .655)

Conclusions: RQ1 (pg. 200)

What does this mean?

TL behaviors influence psychological safety

Supervisor behaviors matter in cultivating a climate of psychological safety

Perceived TL is important to openness, trust, and inclusion in the workplace

TL & PSC

Employees perceive supervisor behaviors as a catalysts to their well-being in the workplace

TL behaviors are meaningful to PSC, but causation is undetermined

The underlying dimensions of TL influence the climate of the workplace

Transformational leadership is important in a VUCA environment

Results: RQ2 (pg. 184)

RQ2
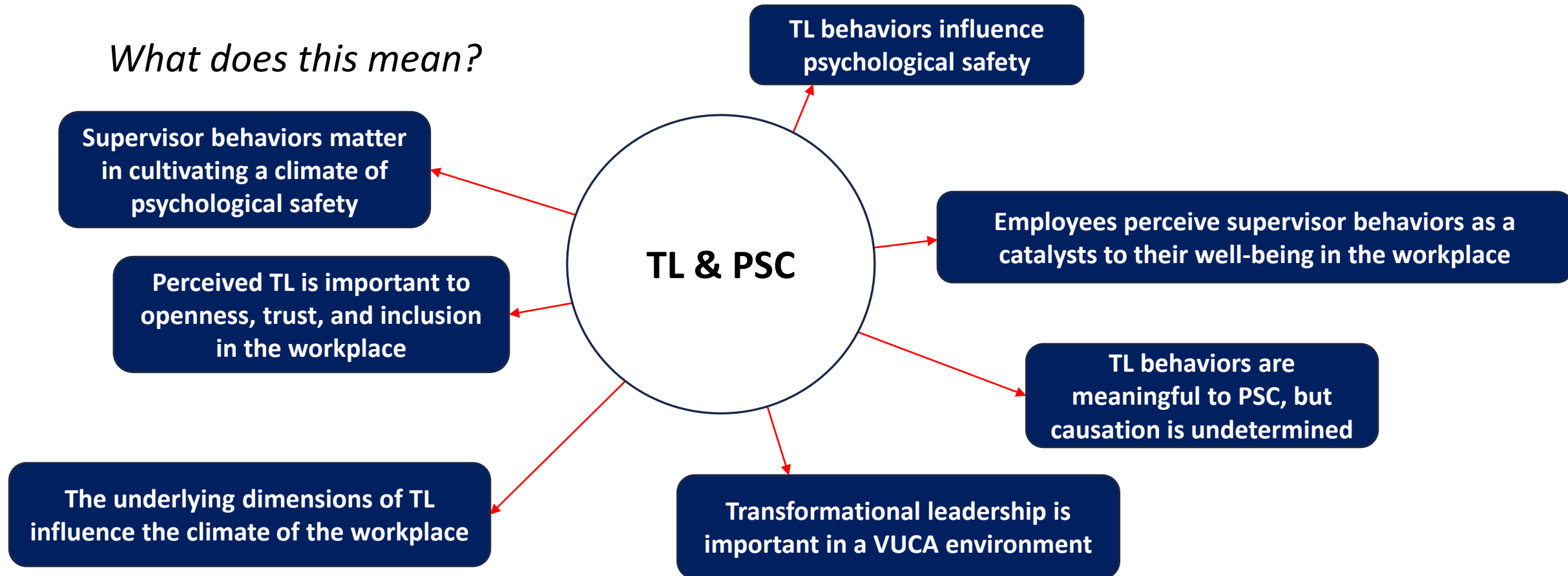
To what extent is there a relationship between supervisors' <u>idealized influence</u> and employees' <u>psychological safety climate</u> among United States Department of the Navy civilians?

- ➤ Supervisors' TLII behaviors to employees' PSC
  - ➤ *Statistically significant, Null rejected* [$r_s(9160) = 0.728$, $p < 0.001$]
  - ➤ Strong positive correlation

- ➤ Regression: TLII and PSC
  - ➤ $B = 0.061$, $β = 0.074$, $p < 0.001$
  - ➤ 95% BCa CI for B = [0.030, 0.088]
  - ➤ TLII was a statistically significant weak contribution to the prediction of PSC

Conclusions: RQ2 (pg. 201)

What does this mean?

TLII & PSC

How supervisors act may be seen as somewhat important to employees

Idealized influence is small but significant in the prediction of PSC

Supervisors who serve as ethical role models to employees promote PSC

Setting an example is important to cultivate trust and admiration

Leader authenticity and setting a good example is important to employees

Leaders have the power of influence over followers through their direct actions
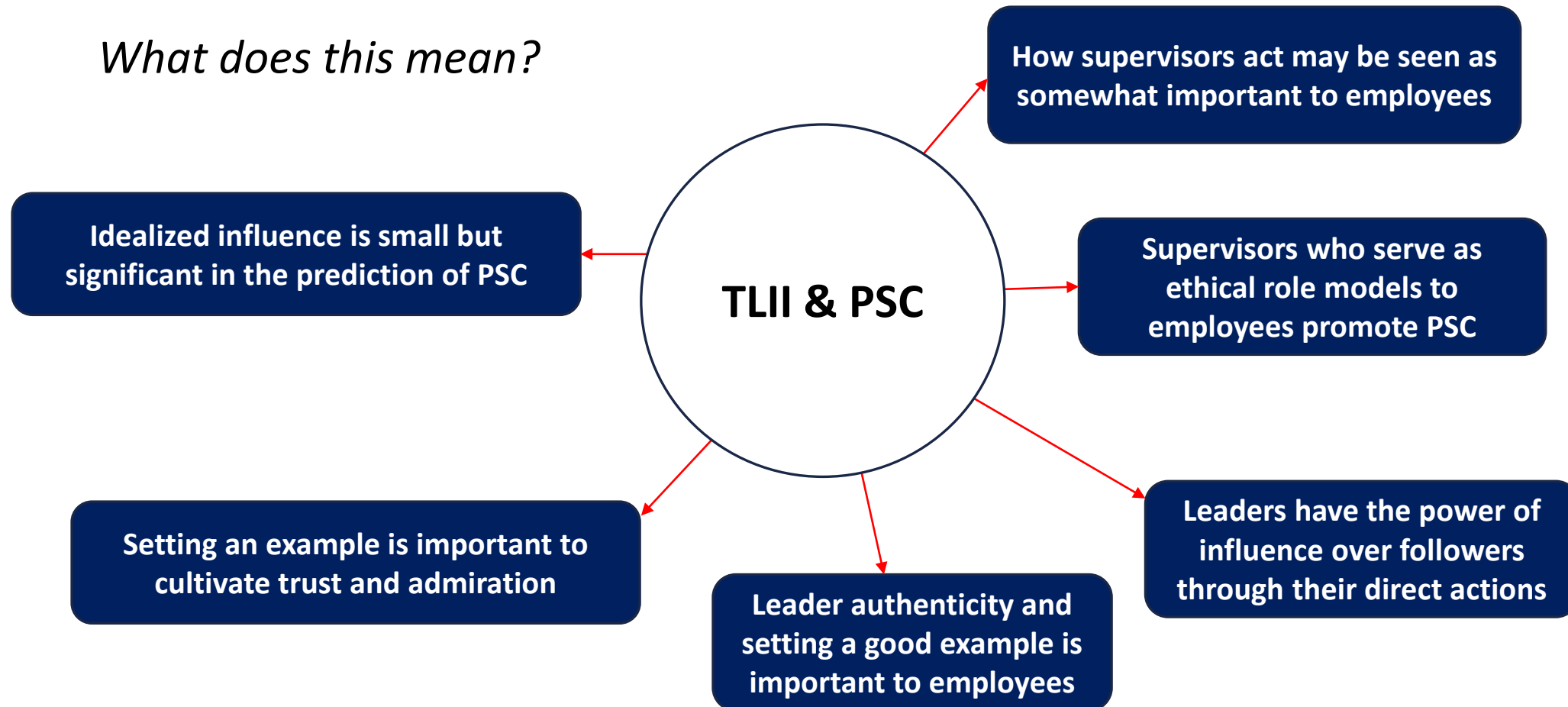
Results: RQ3 (pg. 186)

RQ3

To what extent is there a relationship between supervisors' <u>inspirational motivation</u> and employees' <u>psychological safety climate</u> among United States Department of the Navy civilians?

➢ Supervisors' TLIM behaviors to employees' PSC
  ➢ *Statistically significant, Null rejected* [r_s(9160) = 0.724, $p < 0.001$]
  ➢ Strong positive correlation

➢ Regression: TLIM and PSC
  ➢ B = -0.008, $β$ = -0.009, $p < 0.561$
  ➢ 95% BCa CI for B = [-0.041, 0.028]
  ➢ TLIM was not a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of PSC

Conclusions: RQ3 (pg. 203)

What does this mean?

TLIM & PSC

Exerting confidence in employees may be a missing element in government if inspirational motivation is perceived to be lacking in government organizations

Perhaps proper methods of inspirational motivation are not known or taught to leaders

Inspirational motivation as an aspect of TL is important, but alone it may make little to no difference if leaders are not well-rounded

Motivation alone is not a winner; it requires actions and setting an example

To inspire requires that leaders set an example, exercise "soft skills," and develop the 4 I's of TL in their behavior

The findings align with prior research that asserts to be inspirational requires additional elements of communicating goals, sharing vision, and framing challenges as opportunities; inspirational motivation may not stand alone

Results: RQ4 (pg. 187)

RQ4

To what extent is there a relationship between supervisors' individualized consideration and employees' psychological safety climate among United States Department of the Navy civilians?

➢ Supervisors' TLIC behaviors to employees' PSC
  ➢ *Statistically significant, Null rejected* [$r_s(9160) = 0.705$, $p < 0.001$]
  ➢ Strong positive correlation

➢ Regression: TLIC and PSC
  ➢ $B = 0.281$, $\beta = 0.311$, $p < 0.001$
  ➢ 95% BCa CI for B = [0.258, 0.305]
  ➢ TLIC was a statistically significant weak contribution to the prediction of PSC

Conclusions: RQ4 (pg. 205)

What does this mean?

TLIC & PSC

Knowing your people makes a difference and may be perceived as vital in a supportive environment of psychological safety

May indicate that employees desire to be recognized and thrive on this recognition; more of this?

Individualized consideration or paying attention to the needs of each employee has an influence on how employees engage or perceive their value

Showing genuine concern for those you lead encourages openness and collaboration

Individualized consideration is a top two predictor of the level of psychological safety and the PSC of a workplace; this may be a result of the empathy that leaders display towards their followers to encourage a safe space
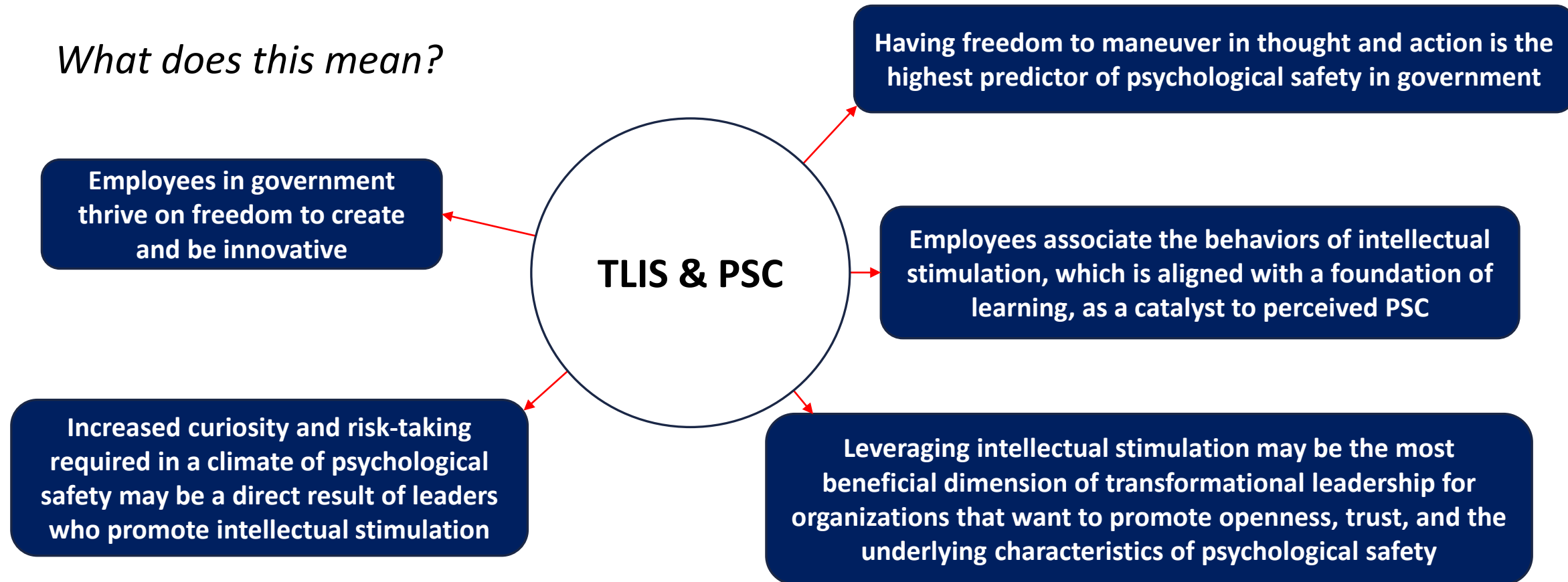
Results: RQ5 (pg. 189)

RQ5

To what extent is there a relationship between supervisors' <u>intellectual stimulation</u> and employees' <u>psychological safety climate</u> among United States Department of the Navy civilians?

- Supervisors' TLIS behaviors to employees' PSC
  - *Statistically significant, Null rejected* [r_s(9160) = 0.783, *p* < 0.001]
  - Strong positive correlation

- Regression: TLIS and PSC
  - *B* = 0.424, *β* = 0.520, *p* < 0.001
  - 95% BCa CI for B = [0.394, 0.455]
  - TLIS was a statistically significant moderate contribution to the prediction of PSC

Conclusions: RQ5 (pg. 207)

What does this mean?

TLIS & PSC

Having freedom to maneuver in thought and action is the highest predictor of psychological safety in government

Employees in government thrive on freedom to create and be innovative

Employees associate the behaviors of intellectual stimulation, which is aligned with a foundation of learning, as a catalyst to perceived PSC

Increased curiosity and risk-taking required in a climate of psychological safety may be a direct result of leaders who promote intellectual stimulation

Leveraging intellectual stimulation may be the most beneficial dimension of transformational leadership for organizations that want to promote openness, trust, and the underlying characteristics of psychological safety

CIU

Theoretical & Practical Implications

➢ **Theoretical**

  ➢ *Confirms TL Applicability to Public Sector*

  ➢ *Supports TL as a PSC Driver*

  ➢ *Highlights TL Dimension-Specific Impacts*

  ➢ *Provides Robust Quantitative Evidence*

➢ **Practical**

  ➢ *Invest in TL Training*

  ➢ *Integrate TL into HR Processes/Onboarding*

  ➢ *Promote Transparent Decision-Making*

  ➢ *Data-Driven Leadership Selection*

  ➢ *Policy Reform for Psychological Safety*

Future Research Recommendations

➤ **Longitudinal Studies**

   ➤ *Establishing causality between TL and PSC over time; account for dynamic nature of government organizations.*

➤ **Qualitative & Mixed-Methods Approaches**

   ➤ *Gain deeper insights into employee perceptions of TL and psychological safety in a VUCA environment.*

➤ **Expand to Other Agencies**

   ➤ *Replicate the study across diverse federal agencies and state/local governments to assess generalizability.*

➤ **Isolate TL Dimensions**

   ➤ *Investigate each of the four TL dimensions independently to understand their unique effects on PSC.*

➤ **Explore Inspirational Motivation**

   ➤ *Further research is needed to understand why inspirational motivation did not emerge as a significant predictor in this study.*

# Organizational & Kingdom Impact

Organizational

Provides insight into leadership behaviors that enhance employee voice and innovation while reducing organizational silence. Understanding this could lead to more effective public service delivery and improved organizational performance throughout government and various context (Miao et al., 2020; Dillon et al., 2023).

The Kingdom

Promotes environments where individuals feel valued and safe to voice concerns, aligning with biblical principles of servant leadership and treating others with dignity (*King James Bible*, 1769/2021, Philippians 2:3-4). Through this knowledge, leaders can foster more ethical, transparent, and people-centered leadership practices that reflect God's love through how organizations treat and develop their people.

Comments & Discussion
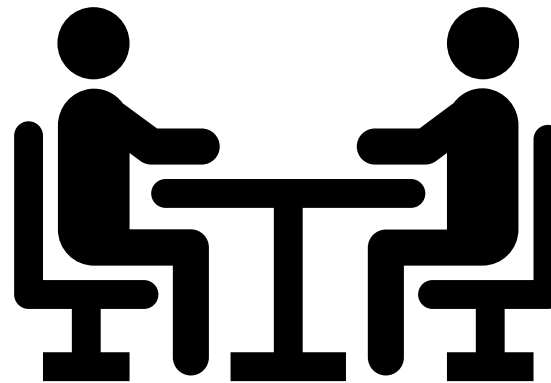
Thank you for your time and support!

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