

JMHRP-25-041

Psychological Safety in Division Two Soccer Teams in The Central Region of Ghana: Exploring the Impact of Transformational Leadership on Player Well-Being and Performance

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Abstract

This research examines how transformational leadership affects psychological safety in soccer teams by emphasising its influence on players' well-being and performance in Ghana. Soccer teams encounter various stresses and obstacles that impact the mental health of players and the overall dynamics of the team. Psychological safety is vital to team cohesion, trust and individual efficacy. Transformational leadership, defined by its inspirational motivation, individualised attention and intellectual stimulation, is proposed as a significant leadership style that could improve psychological safety in soccer teams. This study employed a qualitative research method with 30 participants, consisting of 20 players, five coaches and five team managers from different soccer teams in Ghana. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were performed to understand the participants' experiences and views regarding leadership behaviours and their effects on psychological safety and performance. The results indicate that transformational leadership favours player well-being by establishing trust, open dialogue and support. Players expressed higher confidence, decreased anxiety and increased motivation due to the practices associated with transformational leadership. Additionally, team managers and coaches observed enhancements in team cohesion and performance, which they credited to the psychological safety fostered by transformational leadership. The implications of these findings are extensive and indicate that soccer teams in Ghana could greatly gain from implementing transformational leadership to create a nurturing environment that boosts both player well-being and performance. This research adds to the expanding literature on leadership in sports, particularly in the context of African soccer, providing insights that can guide coaching practices and team management strategies in Ghana and other regions.

Keywords: Player well-being, Psychological safety, Soccer, Team performance, Transformational leadership

Introduction

In competitive sports, the mental state of athletes plays a crucial role in their ability to perform optimally. Shanmugaratnam and colleagues highlighted that psychological safety, which is defined as the collective belief that a team environment allows for interpersonal risk-taking, has emerged as a key factor in sports performance and athlete development [1]. In Ghana, where soccer is both culturally and economically significant, prioritising players' psychological well-being is essential. However, the application of strategies to improve psychological safety within soccer teams is an area that requires further investigation. The significance of psychological safety in sports has garnered substantial attention in recent years. Ghana boasts a vibrant soccer culture and the Ghana Football Association has highlighted the importance of coaches focusing on player well-being and development [2].

On an international scale, the notion of psychological safety has evolved from the business world to various fields, of which sport is not excluded. Research has indicated that teams with high levels of psychological safety typically display better communication,

enhanced innovation and improved overall performance [3]. Transformational leadership, noted for its inspirational motivation, individualised attention, intellectual stimulation and idealised influence, has been recognised as a crucial element in promoting psychological safety. In the realm of sports, coaches significantly shape team dynamics and impact player results. Studies in developed countries have found that transformational leadership can boost psychological safety, resulting in improved athlete performance and well-being [4].

Nevertheless, the particular dynamics of psychological safety within soccer teams in Ghana remain insufficiently explored. The distinctive socio-cultural context of Ghanaian sports may present unique challenges and opportunities for cultivating psychological safety compared to other areas. The current knowledge regarding how coaches' transformational leadership affects players' psychological safety, well-being and performance is limited in Ghana. Filling this gap is essential for developing focused interventions that can enhance team results and player experiences in soccer. This study aims to explore the connection between transformational leadership behaviours demonstrated by coaches and psychological safety among

soccer players in Ghana. It seeks to understand how these leadership behaviours impact player well-being and performance. The following questions will guide this research study:

1. In what ways do the transformational leadership behaviours demonstrated by coaches affect the psychological safety of players?
2. What connection exists between psychological safety and the well-being of players?
3. How does psychological safety influence player performance within soccer teams?

Literature integration

This research is grounded in two main theories, namely transformational leadership theory and psychological safety theory.

Transformational Leadership Theory, as articulated by Bass, cited in Passakonjaras and Hartijasti highlights the importance of leaders in motivating and inspiring their team members by creating a climate of trust, respect and admiration [5]. Leaders who adopt this approach are known for their capacity to motivate a shared vision, provide intellectual stimulation and address individual needs, thus improving both individual and team outcomes.

Psychological Safety Theory, introduced by Edmondson as cited in Bahrudin and Garde, describes an environment where individuals feel secure to voice their ideas and take risks without the fear of retribution or embarrassment [6]. This concept is crucial in settings requiring high levels of collaboration and innovation, such as sports teams, where performance relies on both individual and collective efforts. The combination of these theories suggests that transformational leadership can foster psychological safety within teams, leading to enhanced well-being and performance among athletes. The interconnected nature of these theories offers a holistic framework for analysing how leadership styles influence team dynamics and individual results in sports environments.

Prior research has thoroughly investigated the impact of transformational leadership in corporate and educational contexts; however, its relevance to sports teams, especially within Ghanaian soccer, has not been sufficiently explored. Studies by Baird, Martin and Benson have illustrated that transformational leadership has a positive effect on team cohesion and performance in Western sports environments [7]. However, the cultural intricacies and varying leadership dynamics in African sports teams require further scrutiny.

This study tests the applicability of previous findings by concentrating on a distinct cultural and environmental context. It aims to determine whether the beneficial outcomes associated with transformational leadership in Western sports teams are observed in Ghanaian soccer teams or if unique factors influence this relationship. Additionally, this research aspires to expand the existing literature by examining the mediating role of psychological safety, a variable that is frequently neglected in sports leadership discussions.

Despite the growing interest in leadership styles within sports psychology, significant research gaps persist. Particularly, there is a lack of investigation into the interaction between transformational leadership and psychological safety in sports teams beyond Western contexts. While studies like those conducted by Yildirim, Yildiz, Bozkurt, Bilgin, Yüksel and Kuruç have emphasised the effectiveness of transformational leadership, minimal focus has been placed on how

this leadership style nurtures psychological safety within culturally diverse teams [8].

Furthermore, most current studies have focused on adult professional teams, overlooking the experiences of youth and amateur teams, which have distinct developmental and psychosocial needs [9]. The influence of cultural factors on leadership perceptions and their subsequent effects on psychological safety and performance remains another essential area that has not been adequately explored.

Addressing these gaps is vital for various stakeholders, including coaches, sports psychologists and policymakers. Gaining insights into how transformational leadership impacts psychological safety and performance in Ghanaian soccer teams can contribute to the development of more effective leadership training programs tailored to the specific requirements of African athletes. This understanding is particularly useful in creating environments that foster the holistic growth of players, thereby improving both their psychological well-being and athletic performance [10].

For coaches, the findings of this research can inform the implementation of leadership strategies that cultivate a supportive and inclusive team environment. For sports psychologists, grasping the dynamics of psychological safety within teams can assist in crafting interventions that enhance mental health and resilience among players. Policymakers can utilise these insights to endorse leadership training programs that emphasise psychological safety, ultimately facilitating the formation of more cohesive and successful teams.

Materials and Methods

Research design

This study takes a qualitative research approach to examine how transformational leadership contributes to psychological safety and subsequently affects player well-being and performance among soccer teams in Ghana [11]. The selection of qualitative research stems from its capacity to collect rich, detailed information that can offer profound insights into complex human experiences. As stated by Kim and Cruz, transformational leadership involves leaders inspiring and motivating their teams through a collective vision and personal connection, making it a valuable framework for analysing dynamics within soccer teams [12]. Psychological safety, understood as a common belief that it is safe to engage in interpersonal risks, is crucial in influencing team behaviour and individual player performance.

The qualitative method facilitates the examination of individual and group perceptions, experiences and behaviours. This approach is appropriate for examining how leadership styles affect psychological safety, as it considers the subjective nature of player experiences. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were identified as the most suitable methods for data collection. These techniques enable an open-ended and flexible exploration of participants' thoughts and emotions while keeping the research questions in clear focus [13].

The structure of this study is rooted in the constructivist paradigm, which posits that knowledge is created through social interactions and personal experiences [14]. By utilising this approach, the research emphasises the viewpoints of the participants and seeks to understand the relationship between leadership, psychological safety and performance outcomes within soccer teams in Ghana.

Population, sampling and sample size

The study's population includes soccer players, coaches and team managers associated with both top-tier and lower-tier soccer teams in Ghana. These individuals were chosen due to their firsthand involvement with soccer team dynamics and leadership frameworks. The inclusion criteria were that players should have been part of a league team for a minimum of one season, while coaches and team managers needed at least two years of experience in leading or managing a soccer team. Those players, coaches, or managers who have less than one season of experience or are not currently engaged in active competition or coaching are excluded from the study.

A purposive sampling method was employed to guarantee that participants possess the necessary background to offer valuable insights into the phenomenon. This approach was preferred because it allows for the selection of individuals who can provide rich and pertinent data based on their experiences with transformational leadership and psychological safety within soccer teams. It was crucial to include a diverse array of participants in terms of positions, playing experience and coaching experience to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how leadership influences psychological safety across different team roles [15].

The final sample consisted of 20 soccer players, five coaches and five team managers, making a total of 30 participants. This sample size was deemed sufficient for qualitative research as it facilitated an in-depth study while still allowing for manageable data collection and analysis. Data saturation was reached when no new themes or sub-themes were being identified.

Tools and protocols

The research instruments used for gathering data comprised a semi-structured interview guide and protocols for focus group discussions. The semi-structured interviews aimed to explore the experiences of players, coaches and team managers regarding leadership styles, team cohesion and their views on psychological safety. Separate focus group discussions were conducted for players, coaches and team managers to prevent group dynamics from affecting the data collected. A research assistant led the discussions, prompting participants to express their opinions on team leadership, psychological safety and the impact of these factors on both individual and collective performance. All interviews and focus groups were recorded with the consent of participants and transcripts were created verbatim to ensure an accurate depiction of the data. Furthermore, the recorded discussions were transcribed and analysed to uncover recurring themes related to leadership style, psychological safety and the well-being and performance of players.

Analytical plan

The study used a thematic analysis approach to analyse data because this is effective for recognising, examining and presenting patterns within qualitative data. This analysis proceeded in several phases, including data familiarisation, coding, theme development and interpretation. Interview transcripts and focus group discussions were carefully reviewed multiple times to gain familiarity with the data. Initial thoughts and observations were recorded. Two independent research assistants coded the transcripts to maintain consistency and reliability. Both deductive and inductive coding approaches were used. Deductive codes were derived from the research questions, such as leadership style and psychological safety,

while inductive codes emerged from the data, which encompassed player-specific issues and team dynamics. The codes were categorised into themes reflecting significant patterns identified in the data. These themes were further refined through team discussions to ensure an accurate representation of participants' experiences. The main themes included Leadership Style and Psychological Safety, the Influence of Psychological Safety on Well-Being, the Effect of Psychological Safety on Performance and Team Cohesion and Collaboration.

The final themes were analysed to explore the connection between transformational leadership, psychological safety and player performance. The research team implemented constant comparison and put side-by-side data from various participants to uncover similarities and differences in their perceptions. This method facilitated a deeper comprehension of both individual and collective elements that influence team dynamics and player performance.

Key assumptions in the analysis recognised that perceptions of leadership styles and psychological safety are subjective and dependent on context, with participants' interpretations shaped by their distinct experiences. The analysis also assumes that participants' responses genuinely reflect their feelings and experiences despite possible biases related to social desirability and group dynamics. The methods used in this study were selected for their capacity to produce detailed insights into the role of transformational leadership in promoting psychological safety among soccer teams in Ghana. This approach offers an understanding of how leadership affects player well-being and performance, providing valuable contributions to the domains of sports psychology and leadership.

Results and Findings

The qualitative examination of this research centred on how transformational leadership can promote psychological safety within soccer teams and its consequent effect on player well-being and performance in Ghana. Interviews were carried out with players, coaches and team managers from various soccer teams. The collected data was transcribed and thematically analysed to reveal key insights. The main objective was to explore the dynamics of leadership and its effect on the psychological climate of the teams.

The findings showed that the experience of psychological safety differed among teams. Players at various levels consistently identified leadership style as a crucial factor in creating an environment where they felt secure enough to express themselves, take risks and perform without fear of negative repercussions. Players who viewed their leaders as transformational spoke positively about their feelings of trust, confidence and emotional well-being within their teams. In contrast, those on teams led by more authoritarian figures reported increased anxiety, self-doubt and emotional distress, with some indicating that these feelings occasionally impaired their performance.

Participants were asked to recount their most recent experiences with leadership during both training and matches. A majority of players on teams with transformational leaders highlighted the open communication, supportive feedback and mutual respect that defined their team interactions. These players noted being encouraged to voice their concerns freely, discuss strategies openly and make mistakes without the fear of being ridiculed. On the other hand, players from teams with less transformational leadership described a

more rigid framework, where communication was often hierarchical and errors were met with harsh criticism.

Theme 1: Leadership style and psychological safety

One of the major themes highlighted in the data was the link between transformational leadership and the creation of psychological safety. Transformational leaders were seen as individuals who prioritised their players' well-being. This cultivated an inclusive team culture and actively promoted personal and professional development. This leadership approach, which emphasises inspiring and motivating players through vision, empathy and attention, was found to significantly enhance the players' feelings of safety and belonging. A player who remarked:

"Our coach has an incredible ability to connect with us on a deeper level. He genuinely listens to our thoughts and feelings, establishing an environment where we feel appreciated and acknowledged. This reciprocal respect nurtures a sense of belonging, reminding us that we are part of something meaningful that goes beyond the game of football. It's the recognition and validation of our contributions that sparks a fire within us, reinforcing the notion that we all play a vital role in the team's larger mission."

On the other hand, players on teams lacking transformational leadership frequently mentioned insufficient emotional support and anxiety over negative assessments as obstacles to psychological safety. One player explained:

"When we make errors in practice or during a match, our coach doesn't provide guidance or support. Instead, I can sense his frustration building and it feels as if we are letting him down. This burden of disappointment looms over me, causing me to be cautious on the field. I often find myself pulling back, worried that if I fail, I'll disappoint someone I hold in high regard even more."

Theme 2: The influence of psychological safety on well-being

The emotional and psychological wellness of players was closely associated with the leadership style present in their teams. Players from teams with transformational leaders reported enhanced levels of job satisfaction, confidence and motivation. These players expressed feeling more connected to both their teammates and coaches, which contributed to improved overall well-being both during practices and outside of sports. One participant shared:

"I experience a deeper sense of fulfilment in my performance, primarily because my coach and teammates have an unwavering belief in my abilities. Their faith in me builds a foundation of trust, allowing me to candidly share my vulnerabilities without fear. This nurturing environment encourages me not only to accept my weaknesses but also to aim for growth, knowing that I have a strong team supporting me throughout the journey."

On the other hand, players from teams with non-transformational leaders often indicated lower motivation levels, elevated stress and feelings of loneliness. These athletes were less inclined to approach training with enthusiasm and more vulnerable to burnout. One player said:

"Training often becomes a draining obligation when the coach cannot inspire and motivate you, leaving you feeling disinterested and alienated from the process. The absence of passion and

encouragement can turn each session into a monotonous chore rather than a chance for development and excitement."

Theme 3: The effect of psychological safety on performance

The findings suggest that transformational leadership directly affects both individual and team performance. Players who experienced psychological safety were more inclined to take well-considered risks on the field, demonstrate creativity and perform without the fear of being judged. These actions were regarded as essential to team success, with players crediting their performance to the environment adopted by their leaders. A captain reflected:

"When my coach shows trust in my abilities and gives me the autonomy to make my own decisions during the match, it shifts my mindset. This level of trust enables me to concentrate on executing plays rather than being preoccupied with the possible consequences of my actions. Experiencing this empowerment creates a significant positive impact on my performance, allowing me to fully engage in the game, respond instinctively and play with greater creativity and effectiveness. Ultimately, this encouraging environment promotes not only my personal development but also enhances the overall team dynamic."

On the contrary, players from teams with a lack of transformational leadership expressed feeling constrained in their gameplay. They concentrate more on evading mistakes than on refining their skills or aiding in the team's success. They noted that their team's absence of transformational leadership contributed to anxiety, which negatively influenced their performance.

"When I am always anxious about being criticised or yelled at for making errors, it greatly hinders my ability to perform optimally. The dread of receiving negative feedback overshadows me, generating pressure that diverts my attention from fully engaging in the game. Rather than relying on my instincts and playing with freedom, I start to hesitate, doubting every choice I make. This anxiety eventually prevents me from achieving my full potential"

Theme 4: Team cohesion and collaboration

Psychological safety was also found to enhance team cohesion and collaboration. When players felt emotionally secure, they were more inclined to communicate honestly with each other, exchange ideas and collaborate towards shared objectives. Teams guided by transformational coaches exhibited stronger bonds and greater levels of teamwork both during and outside of matches. A player stressed that:

"When we have confidence that our coach is devoted to facilitating our development, our support for each other deepens considerably. This cultivates an environment where every team member feels appreciated and inspired to develop their skills. Ultimately, our focus expands beyond merely securing victories in games; it's about nurturing collective advancement and progress as a united group, reinforcing our connections and learning from our experiences together."

Key findings

The examination of the data revealed several important discoveries, with each illuminating the crucial impact of leadership and team dynamics on both individual well-being and overall

performance. Initially, it became clear that transformational leadership directly affects the psychological safety of a team. Coaches who guide with empathy, individual attention and encouragement foster a nurturing environment where players feel secure in expressing themselves without the fear of being judged or failing. This feeling of safety is vital as it enhances emotional well-being and cultivates a positive attitude towards training and competition by enabling players to excel both mentally and physically.

Additionally, the findings emphasised the significant effect of psychological safety on players' well-being and their performance levels. Players who perceive their team setting as safe tend to have greater confidence, experience reduced stress and show improved performance during games. In an environment where psychological safety is prioritised, players are more inclined to take risks, innovate and work collaboratively, which contributes to higher performance on the field. This study indicated that transformational leadership enhances team dynamics. When coaches exhibit trust, respect and emotional support, they nurture a strong sense of unity within the team, which promotes better collaboration and collective effectiveness. Teams that foster a culture of psychological safety are more likely to work together harmoniously and concentrate on common objectives and achieving success collectively. The data highlights the strong connection between transformational leadership, psychological safety and team achievement by demonstrating how these factors contribute to a healthier and more efficient team environment.

By exploring the impact of transformational leadership on psychological safety in soccer teams, this study emphasises the significance of leadership in influencing both player well-being and team performance. Teams led by transformational leaders exhibited greater levels of psychological safety, leading to enhanced emotional well-being and improved performance. The findings stress the necessity for coaches to adopt leadership styles that prioritise empathy, open communication and emotional support to create a psychologically safe atmosphere for their players. Such environments not only aid in the development of individual players but also improve the unity and success of the entire team.

Discussion

The examination of how transformational leadership affects psychological safety within soccer teams highlights several important insights that bear significant consequences for theory, policy and practice. These results enhance our comprehension of how leadership styles can impact player well-being and performance in the realm of soccer by underlining the vital importance of psychological safety. The outcomes of this research provide strong evidence that transformational leadership has a positive effect on psychological safety among soccer players. This is consistent with existing scholarship on leadership theory, particularly Bass's work referenced in the transformational leadership model, which emphasises the role of leaders in motivating and inspiring their followers [5]. Within soccer teams, practices associated with transformational leadership, such as individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation, help cultivate a culture of trust and open dialogue, which promotes psychological safety. This aligns with the concept of psychological safety described by Fransen, McEwan and Sarkar, in which team members feel secure in taking interpersonal risks without the fear of adverse outcomes [3].

From a policy standpoint, this study indicates that soccer clubs and sports organisations should prioritise programs aimed at developing transformational leadership qualities. Such policies may include offering training for coaches and team managers on creating supportive and inclusive team atmospheres. By highlighting the significance of psychological safety, organisations can enhance player well-being and team performance. The players will be more inclined to give their best when they feel respected and appreciated.

Practically speaking, the findings suggest that coaches and leaders who display transformational leadership behaviours can foster a positive team culture. This entails nurturing an environment where players are motivated to voice their opinions, share suggestions and participate in constructive feedback. Implementing such practices could lead to increased enthusiasm, improved communication and better performance on the field of play. Strategies that emphasise psychological safety may contribute to higher levels of player satisfaction and decreased burnout, which has been recognised as a major concern in professional sports [10].

The outcomes of this research are in line with earlier studies on transformational leadership and psychological safety in sports settings. For instance, the work of Baird, Martin and Benson indicated that transformational leadership had a positive effect on athletes' perceptions of their coach and the overall team atmosphere, which was correlated with enhanced engagement and performance [7]. Similarly, Garde discovered that there was an association between transformational leadership and elevated levels of player satisfaction as well as lower anxiety, reinforcing the notion that effective leadership behaviours enhance the psychological safety of players.

Nonetheless, the findings of this study differ in some ways from other previous research. For example, while many studies emphasise the influence of leadership on performance results this research places a stronger focus on the role of psychological safety as an intermediary factor [4]. It was found to be a significant predictor of both well-being and performance in building upon the work of Kim and Cruz by linking it more directly to soccer player outcomes [12]. This distinction offers a more refined understanding of how leadership and player results interact in sports environments, which suggests that psychological safety may serve as a critical mechanism through which transformational leadership influences performance.

Additionally, while earlier research has predominantly centred on contexts in developed countries, this study offers a distinctive viewpoint by investigating soccer teams in Ghana, which contributes to a more comprehensive global perspective on leadership in sports. This adds important contextual depth as cultural differences in leadership may vary from one nation to another. The cultural context of Ghana places a strong emphasis on respecting authority, which may affect how leadership styles are viewed and implemented within teams. This supports the findings of Murray, Dugdale, Habeeb and Arthur, who posited that cultural factors can influence the relationship between leadership and performance [11].

The results of this study contribute to the growing literature regarding leadership in sports and psychological safety. It highlights the necessity of creating a safe and supportive atmosphere for athletes, which can positively impact their well-being and performance. The study challenges conventional perspectives on leadership in athletics, which typically emphasise authoritarian or transactional styles, by showcasing the effectiveness of transformational leadership in enhancing psychological safety.

The implications for sports leadership are substantial. This study implies that coaches and managers should receive training in not only technical skills and strategies but also in leadership behaviours that promote trust, respect and open dialogue. Prioritising transformational leadership in sports management education could result in a shift in how leadership is perceived and practised within sports teams, especially in regions where hierarchical and authoritarian leadership styles prevail.

Additionally, the findings indicate that psychological safety ought to be part of the discourse surrounding players' well-being and performance. Establishing environments where players feel secure to voice their thoughts and take risks can foster improved team cohesion, creativity and overall performance. This may deeply influence how teams are operated and how leadership development is approached within sports organisations.

This study advocates for a wider acknowledgement of the significance of leadership in nurturing psychological safety, which is a vital component for both individual and team achievement in sports. The findings suggest that transformational leadership can be a potent means of promoting psychological safety by enhancing player well-being and boosting performance in soccer teams in Ghana. These insights can be utilised by sports organisations and coaching practices globally to advocate for a more comprehensive understanding of leadership in sports.

Conclusion

This research examined how transformational leadership contributes to psychological safety within soccer teams regarding its effects on player well-being and performance in Ghana. The results indicated that behaviours associated with transformational leadership, such as offering personalised support, promoting intellectual growth and providing encouragement, significantly enhanced psychological safety among players. This subsequently resulted in better mental health and improved performance levels by emphasising the important impact of leadership on soccer team dynamics.

The practical implications of this study are relevant to sports policy and practice. Sports organisations and coaches in Ghana and other African countries might consider implementing transformational leadership approaches to cultivate environments where players feel secure in expressing themselves, taking risks and fully participating in training and competitions. By promoting a culture of psychological safety, teams can achieve greater mental well-being and optimal performance. Policymakers could incorporate these leadership concepts into national sports initiatives to enhance player welfare and maximise team success. Future investigations should focus on longitudinal studies that explore the sustained effects of transformational leadership on player growth and team dynamics across various competitive levels.

Going forward, researchers, coaches and policymakers are urged to work together in developing leadership training programs aimed at fostering transformational leadership abilities among soccer coaches. Attention should be directed toward educating coaches about the significance of psychological safety and its direct influence on player performance and mental health. By maintaining focus on these aspects, the beneficial impact of transformational leadership on player well-being can be enhanced to cultivate a healthier and more successful sporting atmosphere.

Limitations

The study's cross-sectional design restricts the capacity to make causal conclusions. Although the research establishes connections between transformational leadership, psychological safety and player outcomes, it cannot definitively ascertain the direction of these relationships. Future longitudinal research is essential to evaluate whether transformational leadership continuously enhances psychological safety over time and whether this leads to sustained improvements in performance. The dependence on self-reported data was affected by biases such as social desirability or recall bias. While efforts were made to reduce these biases through anonymous surveys and interviews, the subjective nature of self-reported data influenced the precision of the findings. Future studies could integrate objective performance metrics to complement the self-reported data by offering a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of leadership on player performance.

Furthermore, the research was carried out in the context of soccer, which may restrict the applicability of the findings to other sports. The leadership dynamics in soccer vary significantly from those in other team sports and cultural differences in leadership styles can change how psychological safety is nurtured in different settings. Comparative research across various countries and sports could yield valuable insights regarding the universality of the findings.

Acknowledgements

I want to express my deep appreciation to everyone who has contributed to the success of this study. I deeply appreciate the input of all those whose knowledge, advice and steadfast support have been indispensable to this work. Without your support and your insightful feedback, this study would not be complete. I am very grateful to the participants for their willingness to share their insights and perspectives.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participants

This research study complied with the highest ethical standards as described in the Institutional Guidelines on Ethics in Research. Participation in the study was strictly voluntary. All participants were given written informed consent after having been provided with comprehensive information on the purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits and their rights about the study. Participants were assured that they could leave the study at any time without any impact on their roles or standing in the team. Throughout the research process, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly preserved. No identifying information was used in the analysis, reporting or disclosure of the results. The data collected was securely stored and available only to the lead researcher. All electronic data was password protected and the hard copies were locked in secure cabinets. In order to further ensure ethical compliance, consent of younger players under 18 years of age, together with written parental or guardianship consent, was also sought. The study avoided any form of coercion, discrimination or psychological harm and sought to create a respectful and inclusive environment for open and honest participation. By participating, individuals contributed to a better understanding of how transformational leadership can improve psychological security and improve both individual well-being and overall team performance in Ghanaian football.

Declaration

I declare that this study is the result of my original research.

Data Availability Statement

Data are obtainable in a public, open-access repository.

Competing Interests

The author declares no competing interests.

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