



## **Destructive Leadership and Psychological Distress in Indonesian Multisector Companies: A Narrative Review Through the Lens of Psychological Safety Theory (2024–2026)**

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### **Abstrak**

*Destructive leadership is increasingly recognized as a workplace risk that can damage employee well-being, weaken voice behavior, and intensify psychological strain. In Indonesian multisector organizations, leadership-related harm is often discussed through adjacent constructs such as abusive supervision, toxic leadership, hostile leadership climate, and unfair managerial practices. This narrative review examines whether destructive leadership–psychological distress is a recurring phenomenon in Indonesian multisector companies during 2024–2026, and whether Psychological Safety Theory provides a credible explanation for this relationship. The review synthesizes open-access evidence from Indonesian studies and closely related international literature published during the target period, with emphasis on organizations in service, manufacturing, education, hospitality, and mixed-sector settings. Across the reviewed studies, destructive or psychologically unsafe leadership climates are consistently associated with work stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, burnout, reduced job satisfaction, lower performance, and withdrawal tendencies. The review finds that the destructive leadership–distress linkage is recurrent enough to warrant serious organizational concern, although direct Indonesian studies using the label “destructive leadership” remain limited. Instead, the strongest evidence appears through studies of toxic work culture, abusive leadership, unsupportive supervision, and low psychological safety. Psychological Safety Theory helps explain why destructive leadership produces distress: when employees do not feel safe to speak up, ask for help, admit mistakes, or challenge unfair treatment, they allocate more cognitive and emotional energy to self-protection than to task accomplishment. The review concludes that the theory remains applicable in Indonesian organizational contexts in 2026, especially when combined with social control perspectives that illuminate fear, silence, and compliance as mechanisms that intensify distress. The article ends with implications, limitations, and future research directions for scholars and practitioners.*

**Keywords:** *destructive leadership, psychological distress, psychological safety, toxic leadership, Indonesia, narrative review, multisector organizations*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is a deal in organizations because leaders have a lot of influence over what is important what is okay and what is not and how resources are used. They also decide if people feel safe and supported at work or if they feel scared and threatened. These days people who study management do not just think of leadership as something that helps the organization do well or makes sense of things. They also think of it as something that affects how employees feel about themselves. This is because people are starting to realize that workers are not just robots who do what they are told they are people who have feelings and react to how they're treated.

People are talking more about what happens when leadership goes wrong. This is called leadership. Harmful leadership is when leaders do things that hurt their followers or the organization on purpose. This can include being mean, yelling, blaming others harassing people leaving them out manipulating their feelings being unfair all the time being a dictator and not caring about people. These things are not bad management they create environments where people are scared and do not trust each other. This can really hurt peoples health. This article is about leadership and includes things like abusive supervision, toxic leadership and hostile or tyrannical management. Leadership, like this is very bad.

Can cause a lot of problems. Harmful leadership is a concept that covers many different types of bad leadership behaviors.

The relevance of this issue in Indonesia has increased during 2024–2026 because organizational well-being has become more visible in the context of employee retention, service quality, burnout, and mental health concerns. Across sectors, Indonesian organizations have been reporting leadership problems that resemble destructive leadership climates, even when the studies use other terms. Recent open-access work has described toxic work culture as involving negative leadership practices, interpersonal conflict, lack of support, and organizational injustice, with corresponding increases in psychological distress among employees (Makhmanazarova et al., 2026). A 2026 study in Ambon found that a toxic work environment had a positive and significant effect on work stress in a manufacturing company (Siahaya et al., 2026). A 2026 qualitative study in Medan reported that toxic work culture contributed to work stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion among employees (Sinaga, 2026). A 2024 systematic literature review also concluded that toxic workplaces significantly increase job stress and reduce employee life satisfaction and productivity (Sari & Dudiya, 2024). These findings indicate that the dark side of leadership and organizational climate is not an abstract concept in Indonesia; it is a lived organizational reality across sectors.

The main focus of this review is not about how important leadership's but about whether bad leadership is a big problem in many different types of organizations in Indonesia from 2024 to 2026. We want to know if it is a problem that we should pay attention to. We also want to know if bad leadership can cause people a lot of pain through something called psychological safety. To answer these questions we are looking at three things. Do studies in Indonesia show that bad leadership is a common problem? Second what kind of problems are people more likely to have when they have a bad leader? Third can something called Psychological Safety Theory help us understand why people who have leaders often feel emotionally hurt?

This article is written in a way that tells a story with the information we found of just looking at numbers and data. We did it this way on purpose. The information we have from Indonesia is not all the same. It comes from areas uses different words and was gathered in different ways. Some studies looked at how bad the work environment is some looked at leaders who're mean or do not support their workers and some looked at how people feel when they are stressed, anxious or tired. By telling a story with the information we can bring all these pieces together and try to understand what they mean. We are not trying to say that one thing causes another or that a certain number of people have a problem. We just want to see if what we found makes sense and is consistent, with what we know.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Destructive Leadership**

Destructive leadership is an umbrella concept used to describe leader behaviors that systematically harm followers, teams, or the organization. The destructive element lies not merely in poor competence but in relational harm. The leader may use fear, humiliation, intimidation, manipulation, favoritism, excessive control, or deliberate exclusion. In day-to-day organizational life, destructive leadership often appears less as a single dramatic event and more as a pattern of small but repeated acts: public criticism, dismissive communication, impossible demands, inconsistent standards, blame shifting, and the withholding of support.

For the purposes of this review, destructive leadership includes behaviors commonly discussed in adjacent literatures such as abusive supervision, toxic leadership, tyrannical leadership, and authoritarian or hostile managerial behavior. This broader framing is appropriate because many Indonesian studies do not use the exact phrase “destructive leadership,” but they do describe the same underlying relational climate. For example, toxic workplace culture studies in Indonesia emphasize negative leadership practices, interpersonal conflict, lack of support, and organizational injustice, all of which are compatible with destructive leadership as a conceptual label (Makhmanazarova et al., 2026; Sinaga, 2026).

### **2.2 Psychological Distress**

Psychological distress refers to a state of emotional suffering and impaired psychological functioning. It may manifest as chronic stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, emotional exhaustion, helplessness, irritability, sleep disturbance, concentration problems, or general mental strain. In



organizational research, psychological distress is frequently measured indirectly through related constructs such as work stress, burnout, exhaustion, or anxiety. This is especially relevant in the Indonesian literature reviewed here, where direct measures of psychological distress are still relatively rare compared with stress-related proxies.

The reviewed studies consistently point to this distress domain. The manufacturing study in Ambon found that toxic work environment increased work stress (Siahaya et al., 2026). The Medan qualitative study reported stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion (Sinaga, 2026). The teacher-focused review identified psychological distress as a key outcome of toxic workplace culture (Makhmanazarova et al., 2026). The systematic review by Sari and Dudija (2024) also concluded that toxic workplaces increase job stress and reduce life satisfaction and productivity. These are not isolated symptoms; together they represent a broader pattern of psychological burden.

### 2.3 Psychological Safety Theory

Psychological Safety Theory helps us understand what is going on here. This theory comes from Edmondson's work on how teams learn and take risks with each other. Many studies still use Edmondson's ideas to study safety. Psychological safety is when employees feel they can ask questions, say they made a mistake, or express worries without getting in trouble, laughed at, or punished. People are more likely to learn and work together openly in an environment. When they do not feel safe, they get careful, quiet, and protective of themselves. In a space where people feel free to share their thoughts, the idea of safety is really important here. It helps us see how teams work together.

Edmondson's research on safety is essential to this. This theory is particularly pertinent to destructive leadership, as such leaders often diminish interpersonal safety. When leaders belittle employees, penalize disagreement, or instill fear of errors, the workplace transforms into an environment where voicing opinions seems dangerous. Employees subsequently transition from learning and contributing to focusing on self-preservation. The mental toll of this change can be significant.

### 2.4 Social Control as a Complementary Perspective

The title of this review emphasizes Psychological Safety Theory, but social control is also important. Destructive leadership often works through informal social control mechanisms: fear, surveillance, blame, exclusion, silence, and reputational threat. In such environments, employees are not merely unsupported; they are actively managed through threat-based regulation. Social control pressures can be subtle. A manager may not openly threaten subordinates, but repeated criticism, public correction, or selective exclusion can teach workers that voice is dangerous and compliance is safer.

This matters because psychological distress in destructive leadership climates is not caused only by task overload. It is also produced by social insecurity. Employees become hypervigilant, uncertain about expectations, and reluctant to communicate honestly. Over time, this sustained vigilance can manifest as chronic stress, anxiety, and exhaustion. Psychological Safety Theory explains the missing protective condition, while social control explains the coercive mechanism that suppresses that protection.

## LITERATUR REVIEW

### 3.1 Destructive Leadership and Employee Well-Being in the Broader Literature

The extensive literature on organizational behavior has consistently shown that aggressive supervisory actions correlate with adverse employee results, including diminished job satisfaction, decreased well-being, heightened stress, intentions to leave, and disengagement. Research on toxic leadership, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership, even beyond Indonesia, consistently indicates that detrimental leadership environments are far from neutral. They relate to worse psychological and behavioral results, particularly when the behavior is ongoing and unchallenged.

Recent open-access studies further this line of thought. Research on psychological safety in teamwork settings suggests that safety is connected to learning habits, performance, and ongoing involvement. A systematic review of research on psychological safety in software work environments revealed that most studies are based on Edmondson's framework, with leadership behaviors identified as significant predictors of psychological safety. The same review also found that psychological safety

promotes innovation, learning, and team performance. While that review doesn't specifically focus on destructive leadership, it emphasizes the principle: leadership influences safety, and safety influences results.

### **3.2 Indonesian Evidence on Toxic or Hostile Work Climates**

The Indonesian literature during 2024–2026 does not always use the exact label “destructive leadership,” but it repeatedly documents climates that are theoretically equivalent or strongly adjacent. The 2024 systematic literature review on toxic workplace environments concluded that bullying, ostracism, and incivility are common manifestations of workplace toxicity and that such environments significantly increase job stress, reduce life satisfaction, and lower productivity (Sari & Dudija, 2024). This is important because destructive leadership often manifests through precisely these forms of hostile interaction.

A 2026 study in a manufacturing firm in Ambon found that toxic work environment positively and significantly affected employee work stress (Siahaya et al., 2026). The authors concluded that the worse the work environment, the higher the stress level experienced by employees. The finding is conceptually simple, but it is important because it shows that harmful climates are not limited to knowledge work or public sector organizations. They also occur in more traditional industrial settings. A qualitative study in Medan found that toxic work culture contributed to increased work stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion, which then reduced productivity (Sinaga, 2026). Unlike a purely survey based study, the qualitative evidence gives voice to employees’ subjective experience. Workers described the workplace not just as demanding but as emotionally draining and psychologically unsafe. This is especially relevant for understanding destructive leadership because the emotional harm often begins with how employees experience supervisory interaction.

The 2026 teacher-focused study by Makhmanazarova et al. further strengthens the argument. The study reports that toxic workplace culture manifested through negative leadership practices, interpersonal conflict, lack of support, and organizational injustice significantly exacerbates psychological distress and turnover intention. The authors explicitly recommend fostering supportive, equitable, and psychologically safe workplace environments. This is one of the clearest recent references connecting the toxic climate problem to psychological distress and the language of safety.

### **3.3 Evidence from Multisector Indonesian Contexts**

The multisector nature of the evidence matters. Destructive leadership and psychological distress should not be treated as problems isolated to one industry. The reviewed literature spans manufacturing, service, education, hospitality, and mixed urban employee settings. That breadth suggests that the relationship is organizational rather than sector-specific.

In jobs where people deal with customers a lot the staff has to handle pressure from customers pressure to meet targets. They are always being evaluated. If the people in charge are not supportive it can make the workers feel really stressed out. In factories if the managers are too strict and use fear and blame of working together and being respectful it can be very bad. Teachers have to deal with a lot of emotions in their work so if the leaders are not good it can be especially bad for them. In cities where people work in kinds of jobs a bad work environment can make people feel really stressed out anxious and exhausted. The main thing to remember is that bad leaders are not a problem for work performance they are also a problem, for peoples mental health.

### **3.3 Why Psychological Distress May Be a More Accurate Outcome Than Burnout Alone**

Many organizational studies in Indonesia use stress or burnout rather than psychological distress as the dependent variable. This should not be viewed as a weakness. Instead, it may reflect the fact that psychological distress is often distributed across several measurable symptoms. Stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and reduced concentration are all part of that broader state.

This matters for interpretation because destructive leadership may not produce one single outcome. In some employees, the primary response may be stress; in others, exhaustion or anxiety; in others, withdrawal or reduced performance. Psychological distress is therefore a useful integrative outcome because it captures the shared mental strain underlying these visible outcomes. The reviewed



studies suggest that destructive leadership is associated with that broader strain, even when authors choose different labels.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Review Design**

This article uses a narrative review design. Narrative review is appropriate when the evidence base is heterogeneous, conceptually broad, and not yet mature enough for a clean meta-analytic synthesis. The present topic meets all three conditions. First, Indonesian studies on destructive leadership are dispersed across sectors and terminology. Second, some studies focus on direct destructive leadership, whereas others use adjacent concepts such as toxic culture, abusive supervision, incivility, or lack of support. Third, direct psychological distress measures are relatively limited, so the literature requires conceptual integration.

### **4.2 Scope and Time Frame**

The review prioritizes literature published between 2024 and 2026. This time window is important because it captures the most recent organizational evidence and aligns with the user's request to evaluate whether the phenomenon is sufficiently frequent in 2026. The sectoral focus is multisector Indonesian organizations, including manufacturing, service, hospitality, education, and mixed organizational settings.

### **4.3 Source Prioritization**

Sources were prioritized when they were open access, empirically grounded, and relevant to the concepts of destructive leadership, toxic leadership, psychological safety, or psychological distress. The review also includes foundational theoretical work on psychological safety because theoretical framing is necessary for explaining the empirical pattern. The article is therefore a theory-guided narrative review rather than a simple summary of isolated findings.

### **4.4 Inclusion Logic**

The review includes studies that meet at least one of the following conditions: they directly address destructive leadership or abusive supervision; they analyze toxic work culture or hostile leadership climates; they report outcomes relevant to psychological distress; or they contribute theoretical insight into psychological safety as a mechanism. Studies focused on positive leadership are included only when they help clarify the contrast between supportive and destructive climates.

### **4.5 Analytical Strategy**

The literature was synthesized thematically. The review asks three core questions of each source: what leadership behavior is being described; what mental or psychological outcome is reported; and how does the evidence help explain the relationship through psychological safety? The final synthesis is organized around sectoral patterns, theoretical mechanisms, and the implications for organizational practice.

## **FINDINGS AND SYNTHESIS**

### **5.1 Destructive Leadership as a Recurrent Organizational Climate Problem**

The evidence indicates that harmful leadership is not a singular anomaly in Indonesian organizations. Instead, it seems to manifest as a persistent climate issue in various sectors. The consistent themes found in the examined literature include detrimental leadership behaviors, ineffective communication, inadequate support, relational disputes, organizational unfairness, and emotionally unsafe management conduct. These represent the tangible signs of harmful leadership, even if the article employs a different term.

Sari and Dudija (2024) found that toxic workplace environments significantly increase job stress and reduce life satisfaction and productivity. This is important because job stress is often the first visible

symptom of a destructive leadership climate. Employees in such settings are forced to manage not only tasks but also fear, uncertainty, and interpersonal strain. The review by Makhmanazarova et al. (2026) similarly identifies negative leadership practices and organizational injustice as key drivers of psychological distress. Together, these sources imply that destructive leadership is a persistent organizational issue with measurable psychological consequences.

### **5.2 Multisector Pattern: Service and Contact-Center Settings**

Service-intensive organizations are especially vulnerable to destructive leadership effects because employees already face high emotional demands from clients, customers, and performance monitoring. When leadership adds blame, indifference, or excessive control, employees have fewer psychological resources available to cope. Although the literature on service sectors often uses terms like toxic workplace or unhealthy work atmosphere, the underlying process is consistent with destructive leadership. Employees report poor communication, lack of support, and heightened stress. These conditions are consistent with a climate in which leaders fail to protect psychological safety. The result is not only reduced service quality but also mental strain.

### **5.3 Multisector Pattern: Service and Contact-Center Settings**

The manufacturing evidence is important because it shows that destructive leadership is not exclusive to people-oriented occupations. In the Ambon manufacturing study, toxic work environment had a positive and significant effect on work stress (Siahaya et al., 2026). A hostile or punitive leadership style in such settings may not always be dramatic. It can be embedded in daily routines, supervision practices, and communication norms.

Industrial settings often rely on clear hierarchy and procedural compliance. That structure can be productive when it is fair and predictable. It becomes destructive when hierarchy is used as a tool of intimidation rather than coordination. Employees then experience limited voice and elevated tension, which fits the psychological safety framework: if speaking up will lead to punishment or humiliation, the worker becomes silent, anxious, and mentally strained.

### **5.4 Multisector Pattern: Education and Knowledge-Intensive Environments**

The teacher study adds a valuable dimension because educational settings are emotionally demanding and socially interactive. Makhmanazarova et al. (2026) found that toxic workplace culture exacerbates psychological distress and turnover intention among teachers. They describe toxic culture in terms of negative leadership practices, interpersonal conflict, lack of support, and organizational injustice. These are not merely style issues; they are conditions that shape how safe employees feel.

The educational environment often requires openness, cooperation, and psychological resilience. A destructive leader undermines these requirements by creating fear or unfairness. The teacher study's emphasis on psychologically safe environments is particularly important because it demonstrates that distress is not just the result of workload or emotional labor. It is also the result of a relational climate that makes employees feel exposed and unsupported.

### **5.5 Mixed-Sector and Urban Employee Samples**

The Medan qualitative study by Sinaga (2026) provides a direct narrative of psychological harm. Employees reported that toxic work culture contributed to stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. This is valuable because it illustrates the subjective experience behind the quantitative relationship. Destructive leadership is often visible in the way employees speak about being drained, fearful, or mentally blocked.

Qualitative evidence helps answer a question that quantitative studies sometimes leave implicit: what does the leader's destructiveness actually do to the employee? The answer is that it drains mental energy, triggers worry, and reduces the capacity to function with confidence. In this sense, psychological distress is not an abstract variable; it is the lived consequence of a harmful leadership climate.



### **5.6 Why the Phenomenon Can Be Considered “Frequent” in 2026**

The review does not support a claim that destructive leadership is universal across Indonesian companies. That would be too strong. But it does support a cautious claim that the phenomenon is recurrent enough to be treated as an active organizational concern in 2026. The evidence appears across sectors and methodologies, and the outcomes are strikingly similar: stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, reduced life satisfaction, and lower productivity.

What makes the phenomenon “frequent” in a narrative review sense is not a prevalence percentage but a pattern of recurrence across independent studies. When the same relationship appears in manufacturing, education, services, and mixed employee settings, the phenomenon cannot be treated as isolated. It becomes a structural concern. The evidence therefore suggests that destructive leadership is sufficiently common in the Indonesian organizational literature to justify focused managerial and scholarly attention.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 Does Psychological Safety Theory Explain the Relationship?**

Indeed, Psychological Safety Theory offers a compelling rationale for how harmful leadership results in psychological turmoil. The fundamental process is simple: toxic leaders decrease the perceived interpersonal security of the work environment. When workers sense insecurity, they cease to engage in interpersonal risks. They don't ask questions openly, acknowledge errors candidly, or express concerns readily. Instead, they turn cautious and defensive.

This mode of self-protection comes at a psychological cost. Workers need to observe language, predict reactions, and control genuine responses. That takes up mental capacity and causes emotional stress. The outcome is emotional turmoil. In the Indonesian studies examined here, recurring themes of inadequate communication, absence of support, conflict, and injustice serve as signs of low psychological safety. Consequently, the theory aligns closely with the empirical pattern.

The theory is beneficial as it shifts accountability from personal vulnerability to the organizational environment. Workers are not troubled merely because they are fragile. They feel troubled due to the hazardous surroundings. This difference is significant for both academic work and practical application. It signifies that the answer isn't simply instructing workers to enhance their resilience. It involves rethinking leadership conduct and environment to enable employees to engage, express themselves, and acquire knowledge safely.

### **6.2 The Role of Social Control in Intensifying Distress**

Destructive leadership often operates as a form of social control. Leaders regulate behavior through fear, silence, and dependence. Employees learn that dissent may be punished, that mistakes may be used against them, and that difficult truths may be unwelcome. This social control is powerful because it is often informal. It does not always appear in official policy. It is enacted through tone, reaction, and repeated interaction. In such settings, psychological safety collapses. Employees begin to adapt not by learning but by avoiding exposure. The leader's control over information, feedback, and recognition becomes a mechanism of psychological pressure. This is why destructive leadership is so closely linked with distress. The employee is not only overloaded with tasks; the employee is also trapped in a relational structure that discourages openness and increases fear.

### **6.3 Why Direct Measures of Psychological Distress Are Still Limited in Indonesia**

One important finding from the review is not only that destructive leadership is related to distress, but also that direct psychological distress measures are still relatively limited in Indonesian management research. Many studies prefer stress, burnout, or emotional exhaustion. This likely reflects both measurement tradition and practical survey convenience.

The implication is that the actual distress burden may be broader than the published label suggests. When a study reports work stress, emotional exhaustion, and anxiety, it is effectively describing psychological distress even if the exact term is not used. Future studies would benefit from using direct distress measures alongside these related constructs so that the field can move beyond proxy outcomes.

#### **6.4 Sectoral Interpretation**

The sectoral interpretation matters because destructive leadership behaves differently across work settings. In service settings, destructive leadership amplifies emotional labor and customer pressure. In manufacturing, it converts operational hierarchy into psychological threat. In education, it undermines high-trust relational work that teachers need to sustain. In mixed urban samples, it produces generalized anxiety and emotional depletion. Across all settings, however, the pattern is the same: when leaders are destructive, the workplace loses psychological safety and employees become distressed. The sector changes the pathway's texture, but not its direction.

#### **6.5 Is the Theory Applicable in Indonesian Companies?**

The answer appears to be yes. Psychological Safety Theory is applicable because it explains a mechanism that is visible in the Indonesian evidence: unsafe leadership climates lead to silence, fear, and distress. The theory is not culturally irrelevant. On the contrary, it may be especially relevant in hierarchical contexts where employees are sensitive to authority, respect, and face-saving. When destructive leadership exploits these cultural patterns, psychological safety is further weakened. This does not mean the theory should be applied mechanically. Cultural context matters. But the Indonesian studies reviewed here suggest that the basic logic of safety versus threat remains intact. Employees across sectors appear to respond to destructive leadership in ways consistent with the theory: they withdraw, feel distressed, and become less effective.

### **IMPLICATION**

#### **7.1 Theoretical Implications**

This review contributes to theory in three ways. First, it shows that Psychological Safety Theory is useful not only for team learning and innovation, but also for explaining mental health outcomes in toxic leadership contexts. Second, it suggests that destructive leadership should be studied together with social control, because the leader's harm often operates through fear-based regulation. Third, it indicates that the Indonesian evidence base is rich enough to support more theory-driven work on the dark side of leadership.

#### **7.1 Practical Implications**

For managers and organizations, the implication is direct: destructive leadership is not simply a personality problem; it is a mental health risk. Organizations should therefore build systems that reduce fear and increase voice. Leadership development programs should include respectful communication, feedback discipline, fairness, and non-punitive error handling. HR systems should provide confidential reporting channels, anti-bullying mechanisms, and manager accountability.

The practical response must be sector-sensitive. Service organizations need to reduce emotional overload and improve supervisory support. Manufacturing organizations need clearer anti-hostility norms and more stable communication. Educational institutions need leadership behavior that protects trust and professional dignity. Across sectors, psychological safety should be treated as an organizational asset rather than an optional cultural ideal.

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### **LIMITATION**



This review has several limitations. First, the evidence base is still fragmented. Many Indonesian studies do not use the exact term destructive leadership, so the review necessarily relies on adjacent constructs. Second, some studies measure stress, anxiety, or emotional exhaustion rather than psychological distress directly. Third, most available studies are cross-sectional or qualitative, which limits causal claims. Fourth, the literature remains sector-specific rather than nationally representative.

## CONCLUSION

This narrative review examined whether destructive leadership–psychological distress is a sufficiently recurrent phenomenon in Indonesian multisector organizations during 2024–2026, and whether Psychological Safety Theory explains that relationship. The evidence suggests that the phenomenon is indeed recurrent enough to warrant serious attention. Direct destructive leadership studies remain limited, but closely related literature on toxic workplace culture, abusive supervision, unsupportive leadership, and organizational injustice consistently shows links to work stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, burnout, and reduced productivity.

Psychological Safety Theory offers a convincing explanation for these patterns because destructive leadership lowers interpersonal safety, suppresses voice, and pushes employees into self-protection. Social control mechanisms reinforce this process through fear and silence. The review therefore concludes that the theory remains applicable in Indonesian companies in 2026, especially when the leadership climate is hostile or unsupportive. In practical terms, organizations that want to reduce psychological distress must address leadership behavior, not only employee resilience..

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