

THE ROLE OF TOXIC LEADERSHIP AND EXCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE AGAINST INTENTION TO LEAVE WORK WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AS A MEDIATOR AND GRATITUDE AS A MODERATOR

Thalia Altamilano Pramudya¹, Rostiana², I Made Budiana³

Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta, Indonesia¹²³

Email: thalia.707231009@stu.untar.ac.id¹, rostiana@fpsi.untar.ac.id², imadebudiana8@gmail.com³

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of toxic leadership and workplace ostracism on employees' intentions to leave their jobs, with psychological distress as a mediator and gratitude as a moderator. Job turnover intention refers to an employee's desire to permanently quit their job, influenced by factors such as toxic leadership—characterized by authoritarian and unpredictable behavior—and ostracism, where individuals are ignored by colleagues. Both toxic leadership and ostracism can lead to psychological distress, which encompasses stress and emotional discomfort affecting mental well-being. Conversely, high levels of gratitude may mitigate the intention to leave. Utilizing an explanatory research design with a quantitative approach, the study employed five measurement instruments: a turnover intention questionnaire, a toxic leadership questionnaire, a workplace ostracism questionnaire, a psychological distress questionnaire, and a gratitude questionnaire. Conducted across three construction companies in West Jakarta, the study involved a sample of 150 employees. Findings indicate that toxic leadership and ostracism predict employees' turnover intentions, mediated by psychological distress. However, gratitude was not found to moderate the relationship between psychological distress and turnover intention in this model. The research highlights the importance of addressing toxic leadership and ostracism to reduce turnover intentions by developing improved policies and interventions that alleviate psychological distress among employees.

KEYWORDS turnover intention, workplace ostracism, psychological distress, toxic leadership.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International

How to cite:
E-ISSN:

Pramudya T.A et al. (2025). The Role of Toxic Leadership and Exclusion in The Workplace Against Intention to Leave Work With Psychological Distress as A Mediator And Gratitude as A Moderator. Journal Eduvest. 5(2): 2980-2999
2775-3727

INTRODUCTION

Employees are a very important component in a company. They are the main factors that affect the effectiveness and efficiency of a company. This makes almost all companies aware of the value of employee investment in achieving the company's vision, mission and goals. The importance of employees in a company makes most companies willing to spend a lot of money to carry out the recruitment and training process. The higher the employee turnover rate in a company, the greater the funds the company will spend to carry out the recruitment and training process (Suseno et al., 2023).

Turnover intention is an employee's desire or tendency to permanently quit their job, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Based on a survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of people who stop working is increasing every year. A total of 15,426,491 residents stopped working in 2020, an increase of 49.26% from the previous year, which was 10,335,653 residents. In the last five years, the highest spike in the number of people who stopped working occurred in 2019.

Every company certainly wants its employees to focus on working by devoting all their knowledge, abilities, expertise and time to get optimal work results. Work focus will be disrupted when employees have the intention to change workplaces. The intention to leave work is a very serious problem for companies because it will harm the company in terms of costs. The intention to leave work will cause low productivity, motivation, discipline, morals, and can even cause work accidents; So for most companies, the intention to leave work is more daunting than turnover. The heart and soul of employees with the intention of leaving work are no longer in the company, but their bodies are still in the company waiting for the time to change workplaces. Such employees can be ascertained that their performance is not optimal and can be very detrimental to the company (Karomah, 2020).

Based on research conducted by Adeline in 2022, leadership style is an important factor that affects employees' intention to leave work. The laissez-faire and autocratic leadership style can lead to less effective and less qualified levels of working relationships. Employee intention to leave work is influenced by bad leadership (Adeline, 2022). Meanwhile, according to Yingge Zhu, et al. (2021) the intention to leave work is influenced by exclusion factors in the workplace. Exclusion in the workplace can have an impact on psychological conditions, work productivity, work relationships, and physical health (Zhu & Zhang, 2021).

Leadership is an important aspect of managing and directing an organization or group to achieve the set goals. As the complexity of the work environment continues to evolve, the role of leaders in shaping organizational culture, employee motivation, and creating a productive work environment has taken center stage in many studies. Leadership styles are considered important in social science research because leaders are an essential part of an organization's success. Leadership styles come from the personality of leaders that reflect their behavior which ultimately affects work engagement and employee performance. Leaders who describe good characteristics such as competence, vision, integrity and perseverance can produce effective leadership and improve employee performance. Conversely, leaders who

describe negative traits, such as self-promotional, manipulative and dominant behaviors, produce unsatisfactory results in employee performance.

Based on research conducted by Coakley (2021), a combination of negative leadership characteristics makes a bad leadership style (toxic leadership). Toxic leadership is a form of bad leadership behavior because it behaves authoritarian, rude, self-promotional, narcissistic and has behavior that is difficult to predict (Coakley et al., 2021). According to (Hyson, 2016), toxic leadership can cause losses not only for its employees, but also for the company. Toxic leadership can result in adverse negative consequences such as decreased motivation, productivity, performance and engagement at work and increased financial losses, intention to leave, absenteeism and deviant behavior at work (Hyson, 2016).

According to (Lee et al., 2019), toxic leadership is a type of leadership that uses power and influence to demean, pressure, or harm their employees. This has become a particular concern in recent years. Based on a 2018 report from the labor consulting company "Life Meets Work", 56% of employees experience toxic leadership and negative leadership behaviors cause an uncomfortable work environment (Lee et al., 2019). The negative impact of toxic leadership affects mental health, motivation, employee performance and the overall organizational climate. According to (Hattab et al., 2022) who conducted research related to the influence of toxic leadership on the intention to change and counterproductive work behavior in public organizations in Indonesia, showed that there was a positive influence between toxic leadership on the intention to change workplaces (0.30, $p < 0.001$). However, the results of the study only show enough influence or correlation, so there is a relationship between toxic leadership and intention to change, but the relationship is not close (Hattab et al., 2022).

In addition to toxic leadership, the factor that affects employees' intention to leave work is exclusion in the workplace. Workplace isolation is a condition in which a person at work is ignored, isolated, or avoided by a coworker or group. This can create an uncomfortable work environment and can affect the well-being and productivity of affected individuals. Based on several previous studies, it has been shown that workplace exclusion can increase the percentage of employee intention to quit. Employees who are ostracized, shunned or verbally harassed will feel that the work environment has become psychologically unsafe. This encourages employees to avoid groups they perceive as a source of threat, until they eventually have the desire to leave their jobs (Lee et al., 2019).

The role of toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace can have a significant negative influence on the mental well-being of individuals in an organization. Toxic leadership, which includes behaviors such as bullying, manipulation, and lack of support for subordinates, as well as exclusion in the workplace in the form of acts of ignoring, isolating or being excluded by colleagues will create a work environment full of pressure, increase stress, and cause psychological distress in employees. Psychological distress is a condition in which an individual experiences stress or emotional discomfort that can affect his mental well-being. Psychological distress is a broader manifestation of mental health-related problems in the form of feelings of anxiety, depression, or significant psychological distress (Liang et al., 2020).

According to (Latama et al., 2022), psychological distress consists of two dimensions, namely, anxiety and depression, which will be seen in two forms, namely mood and malaise. Anxiety in the form of mood is characterized by a sense of anxiety, fear, worry, tension and irritability. Anxiety in the form of malaise is characterized by rapid heart palpitations, dizziness, trembling hands, heat all over the body, and fainting. Meanwhile, depression in the form of mood is characterized by depression, loneliness, sadness, a sense of failure in life, easy distraction, and wanting to die (Latama et al., 2022). Depression in the form of malaise is characterized by loss of appetite, difficulty concentrating, difficulty sleeping, difficulty remembering, and little speech. Psychological distress in the workplace can have various negative impacts such as decreased performance, increased absenteeism, decreased motivation, and contribution to the risk of mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. Additionally, it can disrupt interpersonal relationships in the workplace and affect overall job satisfaction. Creating a work environment that supports mental health can help reduce the impact of psychological distress and improve well-being (Fajarudin & Erwandi, 2022).

Gratitude (gratitude) is one of the factors that can reduce psychological distress caused by toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace. Gratitude is a feeling or attitude of gratitude and gratitude for something or someone. This involves recognition and appreciation for various things that have been received, whether in the form of help, support, opportunities, or various other kindness. An attitude of gratitude can have a positive impact on a person's mental and emotional well-being. Being aware of the positive things in life, even those that may seem small, can improve mood and create feelings of satisfaction. Practicing gratitude can also help reduce stress and improve social relationships by strengthening emotional bonds between individuals (Mujiati & Dewi, 2016).

Many studies have shown that practices such as making a list of things to be grateful for, expressing gratitude, or seeking kindness in each situation can have positive benefits for psychological well-being. Gratitude plays an important role in reducing psychological distress because it can reduce stress levels, improve emotional well-being, reduce symptoms of depression, improve sleep quality and increase resilience. Individuals who have a grateful attitude tend to be more emotionally strong and have a higher level of resilience to life's stress and challenges (Hidayah, 2019). The impact of the practice of gratitude can vary between individuals and one may find different benefits depending on the context of life and personal preferences. Nonetheless, many studies show that integrating gratitude into daily life can contribute positively to mental well-being and the reduction of psychological distress (Mujiati & Dewi, 2016).

Based on a preliminary study conducted by researchers at PT X engaged in construction located in the West Jakarta area, the results were obtained that the employee turnover rate in 2022 reached around 18% of the total 110 employees, then increased in 2023 with a percentage of 20% of the total 115 employees. The intention to change workplaces is the basis for employees to decide to leave the workplace. Based on the observations and approaches to employees conducted in this preliminary study, almost 50% of employees have the desire to leave PT X. The high intention to change workplaces is caused by the leadership style of

managers and even directors who are considered toxic, such as feeling that they are more capable than others, ridiculing and demeaning subordinates, opposing ideas that are contrary to their ideas, and drastically change his attitude when he has a boss. In addition, there is an unhealthy organizational climate condition, namely exclusion in the workplace. Employees who are considered incompetent in their work and unable to socialize well are often shunned by their colleagues. The exclusion of employees at PT X can reduce the comfort of work.

Research conducted by Hattab (2022) explains that there is an influence of toxic leadership on the intention to change workplaces. Research conducted by Zhu and Zhang (2021) explains that workplace exclusion has a significant relationship with intention to leave work. Based on research conducted by Fajarudin (2022), psychological distress in the workplace can increase the intention to leave work. Meanwhile, based on research conducted by Redo (2022), high gratitude for work can suppress the desire to change workplaces. Based on the results of a preliminary study at PT X, toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace affect psychological distress which can increase employees' intention to leave work. However, with high gratitude for work, employees will suppress the desire to change workplaces.

Therefore, this study aims to deepen the understanding of the influence of toxic leadership and isolation in the workplace on the intention to leave work with psychological distress as a mediator and gratitude as a moderator. The use of psychological distress variables as mediators aims to see if toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace cause employees to experience psychological distress so that it causes an intention to work outside of work. Meanwhile, the use of the gratitude variable as a moderator aims to see whether gratitude affects the strength or weakness of the intention to leave work caused by toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace mediated by psychological distress.

This research was conducted on active employees who work in a group of companies engaged in construction in West Jakarta using a questionnaire as a measuring tool. This study uses a quantitative research design and uses the path analysis method. The theoretical benefits in this study are, it can add insight and information about the influence of toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace on the intention to leave work with psychological distress as a mediator and gratitude as a moderator. And the practical benefits are that it can help organizations understand the negative impact of toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace that can cause psychological distress, thereby encouraging more positive organizational culture change and minimizing the occurrence of intention to leave work. In addition, it can help employees to increase their gratitude in each of them so that they can reduce psychological distress and intention to leave work. Based on the phenomenon that has been explained, the formulation of the problem in this study is "Does toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace play a role in the intention to leave work with psychological distress as a mediator and gratitude as a moderator between psychological distress and intention to leave work?"

Toxic leadership is a leadership style that is destructive and negatively affects the organization and the individuals involved in it, characterized by selfish, manipulative, authoritarian, and unempathetic behavior. Toxic leaders often create a stressful, unsupportive, and unhealthy work environment, which can degrade

employee morale and performance. They tend to prioritize personal interests over the interests of the team or organization, use their power for personal gain, and do not provide room for their subordinates to develop. Explains the definition of toxic leadership, by defining five dimensions, namely, abusive supervision, authoritarian leadership, narcissism, self-promotion, and unpredictability. Meanwhile, (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020) argues that toxic leadership refers to a form of destructive leadership that involves the behavior of leaders and followers that results in unhealthy environmental conditions. From this perspective, the characteristics of toxic leadership include leaders who make decisions without considering their subordinates and implement the wrong empowerment strategies (Smith & Fredricks, 2020).

Toxic leadership is one of the factors that causes the intention to leave work. Toxic leadership tends to create an unhealthy work environment, where employees may experience high levels of stress and dissatisfaction (Di Stefano et al., 2020). Intention is the intention that arises in a person to do something. On the other hand, it refers to the transfer of employees from one job to another. High intention to move indicates that employees do not like and are uncomfortable working at the company (Gravili et al., 2022). Based on research conducted by Hattab (2022), there is a significant relationship between toxic leadership and intention to leave work by 0.30 ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that toxic leadership has a significant positive influence on employee intention to quit. Therefore, employees who experience toxic leadership tend to have the intention to leave their jobs (Hattab et al., 2022).

The occurrence of intention to leave work caused by toxic leadership tends to be mediated by the variable psychological distress. When employees encounter toxic behaviors from leaders, such as insults, manipulation, or lack of support, they experience a significant increase in psychological distress. Toxic leaders are also often inconsistent in their behavior and decisions. They are capricious, manipulative, and unpredictable. This creates an unstable and uncertain work environment that can cause stress and anxiety (Fajarudin, 2022). Psychological distress, which includes stress, anxiety, and depression, makes the work environment uncomfortable and unhealthy. This condition decreases job satisfaction and increases the desire of employees to leave their jobs. Therefore, psychological distress is a strong mediating factor, where toxic leadership behavior increases psychological pressure which ultimately encourages employees to look for other jobs. So based on several previous studies, there is a relationship between toxic leadership and intention to leave work with psychological distress as a mediating factor.

H1: The role of toxic leadership in the intention to leave work mediated by psychological distress

Workplace exclusion is a situation in which a person is deliberately excluded, ignored, or isolated by a coworker or leader in the work environment. This exclusion can occur for a variety of reasons, such as cultural differences, opinions, personal characteristics, or even discrimination. Exclusion in the workplace negatively impacts employees because it can lead to stress and anxiety, depression, decreased productivity, mental health disorders and discomfort at work. In addition, exclusion in the workplace also has a negative impact on self-esteem because the

ostracized person feels that they have made a mistake or have a low self-quality. Isolation in the workplace can lead to feelings of isolation and discomfort that can affect employee motivation and engagement in their jobs (Gandolfi & Stone, 2022). Exclusion in the workplace can affect overall job satisfaction. Employees who feel unrecognized or ignored may look for other opportunities in the workplace that offer a more positive environment. Thus, the relationship between workplace exclusion and intention to leave work is complex, where the experience can stimulate feelings of dissatisfaction and isolation, thereby increasing the likelihood of employees looking for new job alternatives.

Exclusion in the workplace has a significant role in increasing employee intention to quit. The intention to leave work is an employee's desire to quit his job. The intention to leave work is the result of a person's assessment of the continuity of his working relationship with the company, which does not occur when he leaves the company. Employees who have the intention to leave work tend to be not focused on work, so the work results obtained will not be optimal (Liu & Xia, 2016). Exclusion in the workplace creates an unhealthy and unsupportive environment, which hinders the social interaction and collaboration necessary for the success of individuals and organizations. When employees experience exclusion, they feel ignored, excluded from important activities or conversations, and treated as if they don't exist. Exclusion in the workplace can severely damage employees' self-esteem and emotional well-being, which in turn increases their stress and anxiety levels (Gravili et al., 2022).

The occurrence of intention to leave work caused by exclusion in the workplace tends to be mediated by psychological distress variables. When employees feel excluded, they lose a sense of connectedness and social support from their coworkers, which can increase psychological distress. The psychological distress resulting from exclusion can affect employee performance and job satisfaction, making them more likely to consider leaving their jobs in search of a more supportive and inclusive work environment. This psychological distress not only affects the mental and physical health of employees, but also decreases their motivation and engagement at work. As a result, employees who experience high levels of exclusion and psychological distress tend to have higher intention to leave work, as they seek a more positive work environment and support their overall well-being. Based on the study, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the incidence of exclusion in the workplace and the intention to leave work with Psychological Distress as a mediating factor.

H2: The role of workplace exclusion on exit intentions mediated by psychological distress

Toxic leadership is a form of bad leader behavior because it behaves authoritarian, rude, self-promotional, narcissistic and has behavior that is difficult to predict (Coakley et al., 2021). Toxic leadership can result in negative adverse consequences such as decreased motivation, productivity, performance and engagement at work, increased financial losses, and the emergence of the intention to quit work. The negative impact of toxic leadership affects mental health, motivation, employee performance and the overall organizational climate (Hyson, 2016). Whereas workplace isolation is a condition in which a person at work is

ignored, isolated, or avoided by colleagues or groups. Employees who are ostracized, shunned or verbally harassed will feel that the work environment has become psychologically unsafe and may encourage employees to isolate or avoid individuals or groups they perceive as a source of threat, until they eventually have the desire to leave their jobs. Based on several previous studies it has been shown that workplace exclusion can increase the percentage of employee quitting intentions (Liu & Xia, 2016).

The role of toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace can have a significant negative role on the mental well-being of individuals in an organization. Toxic leadership, which includes behaviors such as bullying, manipulation, and lack of support for subordinates, as well as exclusion in the workplace in the form of acts of ignoring, isolating or being excluded by colleagues will create a work environment full of pressure, increase stress, and cause psychological distress in employees. Psychological distress is a condition in which an individual experiences stress or emotional discomfort that can affect his mental well-being. Psychological distress is a broader manifestation of mental health-related problems in the form of feelings of anxiety, depression, or significant psychological distress (Liang et al., 2020).

Toxic leadership behavior and exclusion in the workplace have a significant impact on the intention to leave work, which is mediated by psychological distress and moderated by gratitude. When employees experience toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace, they tend to feel high psychological distress, such as stress, anxiety, and depression. This psychological distress then increases their intention to leave work (Youssef-Morgan et al., 2022). However, gratitude can moderate this relationship. Gratitude is one of the factors that can reduce psychological distress caused by toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace. Gratitude is a feeling or attitude of gratitude and gratitude for something or someone. Employees who have high levels of gratitude may be able to cope better with the negative effects of psychological distress, thereby reducing their intention to quit work. Studies show that gratitude can act as an emotional buffer, helping individuals manage stress and maintain their well-being despite being in a toxic work environment (Redo, 2022).

Gratitude plays an important role in reducing psychological distress because it can reduce stress levels, improve emotional well-being, reduce symptoms of depression, improve sleep quality and increase resilience. Employees who have a high level of gratitude may be better able to deal with stressful situations and see positive aspects in their work environment, even if they are under toxic leadership (Adeline, 2022). Gratitude can act as a buffer against the negative effects of toxic leadership by helping employees maintain a positive perspective and reduce psychological distress. This can reduce the intention to leave work even if they experience toxic leadership. Research by (Hidayah, 2019) found that there is a relationship in employees who have a high level of gratitude, which can help these employees in overcoming difficult situations and reduce the negative impact of work stress (Fathul, 2021). So it can be concluded that there is a role of gratitude in the intention to leave work.

H3: The role of toxic leadership and workplace exclusion on intention to leave work mediated by psychological distress

H4: The role of toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace against the intention to leave work mediated by psychological distress and moderated by gratitude

RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used in this study is explanatory research. Explanatory research is often conducted after descriptive research or correlational research has been conducted, so that this research can provide a deeper understanding of previously observed relationships. The quantitative research method, which is a scientific research approach, prioritizes the collection of quantitative data (data in the form of numbers) and statistical analysis to test the description of dependent variables reviewed from demographic data, identify the research model, test the research fit model and explain the relationship between the variables studied. The research data processing uses the SmartPLS program.

Participants

The research was conducted in a group of companies engaged in construction in West Jakarta. Data collection was carried out in 3 companies by distributing questionnaires to all employees. A total of 163 employees were distributed to the questionnaire, but only 150 employees filled out the questionnaire. So that the participants in this study are 150 employees.

Table 1. Demographic Overview

Information	Sum	Percentage
Gender		
Man	99	66%
Woman	51	34%
Age		
18-25 years old	46	30,7%
26-35 years old	36	24%
36-45 years old	42	28%
> 45 years	26	17,3%
Last Education		
SMP	15	10%
High School/Vocational School	52	34,7%
D3	16	10,6%
S1	49	32,7%
S2	18	12%
Employee Status		
Contract/Probationary Period	94	62,7%
Remain	56	37,3%
Divided		
Technical	69	46%
Marketing	19	12,7%
Administration	31	20,7%
Operational	20	13,3%
Other	11	7,3%

Length of Work		
< 1 year		29 19,3%
1-3 Year		64 42,7%
> 3 years		57 38%
Intention to Leave Work		
Low		42 28%
Keep		53 35,3%
Tall		55 36,7%
Toxic Leadership		
Low		42 28%
Keep		39 26%
Tall		69 46%
Exclusion in the Workplace		
Low		52 34,7%
Keep		52 34,7%
Tall		46 30,6%
Psychological Distress		
Low		38 25,3%
Keep		73 48,7%
Tall		39 26%
Gratitude		
Low		35 23,3%
Keep		82 54,7%
Tall		33 22%

Based on Table 1, the majority of participants who filled out the questionnaire were male as many as 99 participants (66%), the most participants were in the age range of 18-25 years as many as 46 participants (30.7%). Most of the participants had the last education of high school/vocational school as many as 52 participants (34.7%), the majority of participants were still in the status of contract employees or in the probationary period as many as 94 participants (62.7%). Most of the participants came from the technical division as many as 69 participants (46%), the majority of participants had worked in the company for 1-3 years as many as 64 participants (42.7%).

The results showed that the majority of participants had the intention to leave work with a high category of 55 participants (36.7%), most of the participants experienced toxic leadership treatment with a high category of 69 participants (46%). The majority of participants experienced exclusion at work with low and medium categories of 52 participants (34.7%), most of the participants experienced Psychological Distress with moderate categories as many as 73 participants (48.7%). The gratitude of participants was in the medium category as many as 82 participants (54.7%).

Measurement

This study uses a survey method with a tool in the form of a questionnaire that is distributed both online and offline as a one-time data collection technique. The data obtained is in the form of primary data. The scale of measurement of work intention consists of 4 items from Mobley et al. (1978) in Gravili et al. (2022) which are translated into Indonesian. The questionnaire uses Likert scale measurements with a scale of 1-5 ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In this

study, the questionnaire of this study obtained a coefficient alpha of 0.868. An example of the item is: "I often think about leaving the company."

The questionnaire to measure toxic leadership uses a Likert scale measurement on a scale of 1-6 (1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree). The measurement of toxic leadership variables using a scale found by (Celebi Cakiroglu & Tuncer Unver, 2024) contains 30 statements. In this study, the questionnaire of this study obtained a coefficient alpha of 0.973. An example of the item is: "no responsibility for mistakes made in his unit."

The questionnaire to measure exclusion in the workplace uses a Likert scale measurement on a scale of 1-7 (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). The measurement of the exclusion variable in the workplace using a scale found by (Sharp et al., 2020) contains 13 statements. In this study, the questionnaire of this study obtained a coefficient alpha of 0.945. An example of the bullet point is: "Feeling that you are more capable than others."

The questionnaire to measure psychological distress used a Likert scale measurement with a scale of 1-5 (1 = never and 5 = always). The measurement of psychological distress variables uses a scale found by Kessler (1992) in Carolyn et al. (2022) which contains 10 statements. In this study, the questionnaire of this study obtained a coefficient alpha of 0.963. An example of a bullet point is: "Over the past 30 days, how often have you felt nervous?"

The questionnaire to measure gratitude for work uses a Likert scale measurement on a scale of 1-7 (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). The measurement of the gratitude variable using a scale found by Luthans et al. (2007) contains 10 statements. In this study, the questionnaire of this study obtained a coefficient alpha of 0.916. An example of the bullet point is: "Right now, there's a lot of work for me to be thankful for."

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test

	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Composite reliability (rho_a)</i>	<i>Composite reliability (rho_c)</i>	<i>Average variance extracted (AVE)</i>
Intention to Leave Work	0,868	0,87	0,91	0,717
<i>Toxic Leadership</i>	0,973	0,975	0,974	0,558
Exclusion in the Workplace	0,945	0,947	0,952	0,604
<i>Psychological Distress</i>	0,963	0,969	0,968	0,752
Gratitude	0,916	0,928	0,928	0,565

Based on Table 2, it was found that the validity value or average variance extracted (AVE) of all research variables was above 0.50. If the validity value or AVE > 0.50, then it can be stated that each variable is valid or has good discriminant validity. It can be concluded that all the research variables used are valid. Meanwhile, the reliability value or Cronbach's alpha based on table 2 is above 0.70. If the reliability value or Cronbach's alpha is between 0.70 – 0.90 then the reliability is high, if it is between 0.50 – 0.70 then the reliability is moderate and if the

Cronbach's alpha value < 0.50 then the reliability is low. So it can be concluded that all the research variables used are reliable.

Procedure

The research was carried out in a group of companies engaged in construction in West Jakarta. The research was carried out in February – June 2024. The research implementation stage starts from a preliminary study at the research location, then continues with online data collection by distributing questionnaires that have been made in the form of google forms, then the data that has been collected is processed using the SmartPLS program and then analyzed, so that the results will be interpreted and concluded. To maintain the confidentiality of the participants' identities, the researcher did not include the names and phone numbers of the participants in the questionnaire. So that the data provided will be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Intention to Leave Work Reviewed from Demographic Data

Table 3. Overview of Intention to Leave Work Reviewed from Demographic Data

Demographic Data	Intention to Leave Work			
	Low	Percentage	Tall	Percentage
Gender				
Man	42	28%	57	38%
Woman	21	14%	30	20%
Age				
18 – 25 years old	18	12%	28	18,7%
26 – 35 years old	17	11,3%	19	12,7%
36 – 45 years old	17	11,3%	25	16,7%
> 45 years	11	7,3%	15	10%
Education				
SMP	3	2%	12	8%
High School/Vocational	22	14,7%	30	20%
School	6	4%	10	6,7%
D3	21	14%	28	18,7%
S1	11	7,3%	7	4,6%
S2				
Employee Status				
Contract/Probationary	52	34,7%	42	28%
Period	11	7,3%	45	30%
Remain				
Divided				
Technical	28	18,7%	41	27,3%
Marketing	8	5,3%	11	7,3%
Administration	16	10,7%	20	13,4%
Operational	11	7,3%	15	10%
Length of Work				
< 1 year	5	3,3%	23	15,3%
1-3 Year	25	16,7%	33	22%
> 3 years	33	22%	31	20,7%

Based on Table 3, it shows that the high intention of employees to leave work is dominated by the male gender of 57 participants (38%). Meanwhile, when viewed from the age range, the highest intention to leave work was in employees with an age range of 18-25 years old with 28 participants (18.7%). If viewed from the last education of employees, the intention to leave work is dominated by employees with the last education of high school/vocational school of 30 participants (20%). Employees with higher permanent work status had an intention to leave work by 45 participants (30%) compared to employees with contract status or still on probation. When viewed from the work division, technical is the division with the highest intention to leave work with 41 participants (27.3%). High intention to leave work was dominated by the length of time working in the company in the range of 1-3 years by 33 participants (22%).

Univariate Test of Research Variables

Table 4. Univariate Test of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Intention to Leave Work	17,073	18	4	20	3,62
<i>Toxic Leadership</i>	124,44	132	38	172	39,994
Exclusion in the Workplace	67,067	76	18	87	19,727
<i>Psychological Distress</i>	44,873	48	11	50	9,114
Gratitude	66	68	20	70	6,862

Based on Table 4, the variable of work intention showed a mean value of 17.073, a median value of 18, a minimum value of 4, a maximum value of 20 and a standard deviation value of 3.62. The toxic leadership variable showed a mean value of 124.44, a median value of 132, a minimum value of 38, a maximum value of 172 and a standard deviation value of 39.994. The exclusion variable in the workplace showed a mean value of 67.067, a median value of 76, a minimum value of 18, a maximum value of 87 and a standard deviation value of 19.727. The Psychological Distress variable showed a mean value of 44.873, a median value of 48, a minimum value of 11, a maximum value of 50 and a standard deviation value of 9.114. The gratitude variable showed a mean value of 66, a median value of 68, a minimum value of 20, a maximum value of 70 and a standard deviation value of 6.862.

Uji Model Fit

Table 5. Fit Model Test

	<i>Saturated model</i>	<i>Estimated model</i>
SRMR	0,059	0,059
Chi-square	3021,183	3031,63
NFI	0,691	0,69

Based on Table 5, the SRMR value was obtained at 0.059. If the SRMR (Standardized Root Mean square Residual) value is below 0.08, it indicates that the research model is fit or suitable, while if the SRMR value is between 0.08 to 0.10, it indicates that the research model is not fit but still acceptable. The Chi-square value is 3031.63, if the Chi-square value > 0.05 indicates a model match. The NFI value is 0.69, if the NFI (Normed Fit Index) value > 0.90 indicates a good fit model, while the NFI value < 0.90 is expressed as marginal fit. Based on the results of the fit model test above, it can be concluded that the research model used is fit and meets the criteria for the suitability of the research model.

Correlation Test based on Hypothesis

Table 6. Direct Correlation Test

	<i>Original sampel (O)</i>	<i>Sample mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T statistics (O/STDEV)</i>	<i>P values</i>
Gratitude > Intention to Leave Work	0,198	0,220	0,115	1,724	0,085
<i>Psychological Distress ></i> Intention to Leave Work	0,275	0,240	0,079	3,494	0,000
<i>Toxic Leadership > Psychological Distress</i>	0,265	0,308	0,085	3,122	0,002
<i>Toxic Leadership > Intention to Leave Work</i>	0,409	0,422	0,075	5,419	0,000
Exclusion in the Workplace > <i>Psychological Distress</i>	0,205	0,198	0,103	1,988	0,047
Exclusion in the Workplace > Intention to Leave Work	0,427	0,408	0,068	6,264	0,000
Gratitude X <i>Psychological Distress ></i> Intention to Leave Work	0,072	0,065	0,068	1,061	0,289

Based on Table 6, the direct correlation test between variables shows that the p value of psychological distress on intention to leave work is 0.000, the p value of toxic leadership on psychological distress is 0.002, the p value of toxic leadership on intention to leave work is 0.000, the p value of exclusion in the workplace is 0.000, the p value of exclusion in the workplace is 0.000. Psychological distress was

0.047, and the P value of exclusion at work on the intention to leave work was 0.000. If the p value < 0.05 , then the result is said to be statistically significant to reject the null hypothesis. It can be concluded that there is a relationship between these variables.

Meanwhile, the p value of gratitude for the intention to leave work was 0.085 and the p value of gratitude and psychological distress for the intention to leave work was 0.289. It can be concluded that there is no relationship between these variables. If the gratitude variable does not have a relationship with other variables, then it can be interpreted that gratitude does not play a role as a moderator in this research model.

Table 7. Indirect Correlation Test

	Original sampel (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
<i>Toxic Leadership</i> > Intention to Leave Work	0,063	0,064	0,030	2,102	0,036
Exclusion at Work> Intention to Leave Work	0,102	0,101	0,046	2,218	0,027

Based on Table 7, the indirect correlation test shows that the p value of toxic leadership on the intention to leave work is 0.036 and the p value of exclusion in the workplace on the intention to leave is 0.027. Because the p value < 0.05 , it can be concluded that there is a relationship between these variables. Based on the results of the correlation test in tables 6 and 7, it can be concluded that hypothesis 1 is rejected which means that there is no role of toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace against the intention to leave work by being mediated by psychological distress and moderated by gratitude. Hypothesis 2 was accepted, which means that there is a role of toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace against the intention to leave work mediated by psychological distress. Hypothesis 3 was accepted, which means that there is a toxic leadership role in the intention to leave work mediated by psychological distress. Hypothesis 4 was accepted, which means that there is a role of exclusion in the workplace against the intention to leave work mediated by psychological distress.

The Role of Toxic Leadership in Intention to Leave Work Mediated by Psychological Distress

Based on the results of the first hypothesis test in this study, it shows that toxic leadership plays a role in employee exit intentions by being mediated by psychological distress. The results of the study prove that there is toxic leadership treatment from superiors to subordinates in the group of companies which increases psychological distress and intention to leave work. Based on the results of the toxic leadership questionnaire, there were three questions with the highest total scores, namely, superiors ridiculing subordinates, belittling subordinates in public and The Role of Toxic Leadership and Exclusion in The Workplace Against Intention to Leave Work With Psychological Distress as A Mediator And Gratitude as A Moderator

having uncontrollable emotions. The attitude of the boss causes employees to feel stressed and encourages the desire to leave the company. Toxic leadership can create an unhealthy and stressful work environment. Leaders who behave toxic often cause fear, anxiety, and insecurity among employees. When employees feel unappreciated or treated unfairly, they are more likely to seek out job opportunities elsewhere that are more supportive and appreciate their contributions. Toxic leadership often increases employees' psychological stress levels, including feelings of anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. This psychological distress then serves as a powerful mediating factor, which increases the employee's desire to leave the organization.

The results of this study are in line with previous research conducted by Liang et al. (2020) which found that there was a significant relationship between toxic leadership and intention to leave work. The study concluded that toxic leadership can cause stress in workers and increase workers' desire to leave their jobs (Liang et al., 2020). Studies show that employees who experience high stress tend to think more about quitting their jobs as a way to avoid those sources of stress. Studies have shown a significant correlation between toxic leadership and intention to quit. Employees who experience high toxic leadership treatment also show a higher rate of intention to leave work. Another study by Liu et al. (2012) showed that toxic leadership is positively related to psychological distress and increases the intention to leave work. Toxic leadership can be seen as the main source of stress in the workplace. This stress manifests itself in the form of psychological distress, which then affects the employee's decision to stay or leave their job. This theory is supported by many studies that show that stressful and unsupportive working conditions can increase employees' intention to leave work.

The Role of Exclusion in the Workplace on Intention to Leave Work Mediated by Psychological Distress

Based on the results of the second hypothesis test in this study, it is shown that exclusion in the workplace plays a role in employees' intention to leave work by being mediated by *psychological distress*. The results of the study prove that there is exclusion in the group of companies that causes *psychological distress* and increases the intention to leave work. Exclusion is carried out in various forms such as insults, ridicule, gossip, and rejection of the ideas given. The exclusion act causes employees to feel stressed and uncomfortable working in the company. This is supported by research conducted by (Mahfooz et al., 2017), which found that there is a role of exclusion in the workplace on the intention to leave work with the mediating variable of *psychological distress*. Exclusion in the workplace often triggers *psychological distress*, which includes symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. *This psychological distress* then becomes a key factor that encourages employees to have the intention to leave work. Based on

the results of previous research, it was found that employees who experience exclusion at work have a tendency to have a high level of *psychological distress* as well, so it can affect their level of intention or intention to leave the workplace (Mahfouz et al., 2017).

Research conducted by (Sharp et al., 2020) found that employees who experience exclusion at work report higher levels of *psychological distress*. Exclusion in the workplace can create feelings of isolation and unappreciated in employees. When employees feel neglected or isolated by their colleagues or superiors, this can lower and increase the pressure on employees. Feelings of not being recognized and ignored can reduce employees' sense of attachment and commitment to the organization, so they are more likely to consider looking elsewhere. Based on research conducted by Smith & Fredricks (2020), results were found that showed that exclusion at work was positively associated with *psychological distress* and negatively associated with job satisfaction, which then increased intention to leave work. Exclusion in the workplace often triggers feelings of stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion in employees. *This psychological distress* then functions as a strong mediating factor, increasing the employee's desire to leave the organization to avoid the source of stress.

The Role of Toxic Leadership and Exclusion in the Workplace on Intention to Leave Work Mediated by Psychological Distress and Moderated by Gratitude

Based on the results of the third hypothesis test in this study, it shows that there is a significant role in *toxic leadership* and exclusion in the workplace on employees' intention to leave work by being mediated by *psychological distress*. The results of the study show that *toxic leadership* attitudes from superiors and exclusion at work by fellow employees cause *psychological distress*. The role of *toxic leadership* and exclusion in the workplace can have a significant negative role on the mental well-being of individuals in an organization. *Toxic leadership*, which includes behaviors such as bullying, manipulation, and lack of support for subordinates, as well as exclusion in the workplace in the form of acts of ignoring, isolating or being excluded by colleagues will create a work environment full of pressure, increase stress, and cause *psychological distress* in employees.

The results of this study are in line with previous research conducted by Gravili (2022), which stated that there is a role of work stress variables on the intention to leave work. The pressure received from superiors and co-workers increases stress, lowers concentration and focus levels and lowers the quality of employees' work output. Employees will experience stress or emotional discomfort that can affect their mental well-being, giving rise to thoughts and desires to leave the company. Work stress has a positive role in the intention to leave work, this means that the higher the work stress, the higher the intention to leave work, and

vice versa, the lower the work stress, the lower the intention to leave work (Gravili, 2022).

Based on the results of the fourth hypothesis test in this study, it shows that there is no significant role in gratitude for employees' intention to leave work. *Toxic leadership* and exclusion in the workplace play a role in employees' intention to leave work by being mediated by *psychological distress*, but gratitude does not moderate the model. These results show that gratitude does not affect the strong or weak role of employees' *psychological distress* during work on the intention to leave work. The results of the study show that employee gratitude tends to be high, the majority of employees feel grateful for the work they have. Being grateful for the work you have will tend to make someone happier, keep motivated and enthusiastic at work.

The results of this study are in line with previous research conducted by Fathul (2021), which stated that there was no significant relationship between the variables of gratitude to work stress. The results of the hypothesis test show that the high or low level of employee gratitude does not play a role in work stress. The gratitude that employees have does not reduce work stress and is unable to take their minds off the pressure and problems of the work they are facing. So there is no role of gratitude for the intention to leave work. This shows that even though a person feels grateful for many things in their job, they still have a desire to seek new opportunities or changes in their career. In this context, one feels grateful for the opportunities they have right now, but still feels that there is an urge to seek a healthier environment than their current workplace. (Fathul, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study proves that toxic leadership has an effect on employees' intention to leave work by being mediated by psychological distress. The results of the study prove that there is toxic leadership treatment from superiors to subordinates in the group of companies which increases psychological distress and intention to leave work. Then exclusion in the workplace also affects the intention of employees to leave work by being mediated by psychological distress. The results of the study prove that there is exclusion in the group of companies that causes psychological distress and increases the intention to leave work.

Furthermore, the results were obtained that there was a significant influence of toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace on employees' intention to leave work mediated by psychological distress. The role of toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace can have a significant negative influence on employees' mental well-being. However, gratitude did not moderate this research model. The results showed that gratitude did not affect the strong or weak influence of employees' psychological distress during work on the intention to leave work. Employee gratitude tends to be high, the majority of employees feel grateful for the work they have. If employee gratitude is high, it should be able to reduce psychological distress and suppress high employee work intention. It can be concluded that the gratitude variable does not play a role as a moderator in this research model.

With the proven toxic leadership and exclusion in the workplace have a significant effect on psychological distress that causes the intention to leave the company, it is hoped that superiors and colleagues can provide positive behavior so that they can encourage employee motivation to improve performance and work comfortably at the company. In addition, because in this study it is proven that gratitude does not play a role as a moderator in the research model, so it is hoped that future researchers will not use these variables in a similar model.

REFERENCES

- Adeline, K. (2022). Dampak Gaya Kepemimpinan Terhadap Loyalitas Karyawan Dan Turnover Intention (Studi Kasus Pt Bank Xyz Tbk). *Jurnal Bina Manajemen*, 10(2), 42–63.
- Celebi Cakiroglu, O., & Tuncer Unver, G. (2024). Toxic leadership, mental well-being and work engagement among nurses: A scale adaptation study and structural equation model approach. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 38(1), 49–69.
- Coakley, K. E., Lardier, D. T., Holladay, K. R., Amorim, F. T., & Zuhl, M. N. (2021). Physical activity behavior and mental health among university students during COVID-19 lockdown. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 3, 682175.
- Di Stefano, G., Venza, G., & Aiello, D. (2020). Associations of job insecurity With perceived work-related symptoms, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions: The mediating role of leader–member exchange and the moderating role of organizational support. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1329.
- Fajarudin, K., & Erwandi, D. (2022). Analisa Faktor Psikosial Terhadap Gejala Distress Pada Karyawan Perusahaan Geothermal PT. X. *National Journal of Occupational Health and Safety*, 2(2), 3.
- Gandolfi, F., & Stone, S. (2022). Toxic leadership: Behaviors, characteristics, and consequences. *Journal of Management Research*, 22(1), 19–27.
- Gravili, G., Manuti, A., & Meirinhos, V. (2022). When power hurts: An explorative study on the relationship between toxic leadership, emotional exhaustion, turnover intention and job satisfaction. *ECMLG 2022 18th European Conference on Management, Leadership and Governance*, Academic Conferences and Publishing Limited.
- Hattab, S., Wirawan, H., Salam, R., Daswati, D., & Niswaty, R. (2022). The effect of toxic leadership on turnover intention and counterproductive work behaviour in Indonesia public organisations. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 35(3), 317–333.
- Hidayah, F. (2019). Gratitude as Predictor of Turnover Intention: In the Context of Javanese. *Psikologia: Jurnal Psikologi*, 4(1), 1–11.
- Hyson, C. M. (2016). Relationship between destructive leadership behaviors and employee turnover. *Walden University*.
- Karomah, K. (2020). Pengaruh kepuasan kerja dan job insecurity terhadap turnover intention pada pegawai kontrak sekolah X. *Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen*, 17(1), 38–47.
- Latama, Z. N., Muhardi, M., & Aspiranti, T. (2022). Pengaruh Psychological The Role of Toxic Leadership and Exclusion in The Workplace Against Intention to Leave Work With Psychological Distress as A Mediator And Gratitude as A Moderator

- Distress Dan Beban Kerja Terhadap Work-Life Balance Perawat Di Pandemi-Covid-19. *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Bisnis Performa*, 19(1), 10–19.
- Lee, M. C. C., Idris, M. A., & Tuckey, M. (2019). Supervisory coaching and performance feedback as mediators of the relationships between leadership styles, work engagement, and turnover intention. *Human Resource Development International*, 22(3), 257–282.
- Mahfooz, Z., Arshad, A., Nisar, Q. A., Ikram, M., & Azeem, M. (2017). Does workplace incivility & workplace ostracism influence the employees' turnover intentions? Mediating role of burnout and job stress & moderating role of psychological capital. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(8), 398–413.
- Mujiati, N. W., & Dewi, A. (2016). Faktor-faktor yang menentukan intensi turnover karyawan dalam organisasi. *Jurnal Ilmiah Forum Manajemen*, 14(2), 56–63.
- Sharp, O. L., Peng, Y., & Jex, S. M. (2020). Exclusion in the workplace: a multi-level investigation. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 13(3), 291–300.
- Smith, N., & Fredricks-Lowman, I. (2020). Conflict in the workplace: A 10-year review of toxic leadership in higher education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 23(5), 538–551.
- Suseno, B. D., Nuryanto, U. W., Fidziah, F., Silalahi, S., Saefullah, E., Saleh, M., Tabroni, T., Abduh, E. M., Salapudin, S., & Quraysin, I. (2023). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia*.
- Youssef-Morgan, C. M., van Zyl, L. E., & Ahrens, B. L. (2022). The work gratitude scale: development and evaluation of a multidimensional measure. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 795328.
- Zhu, Y., & Zhang, D. (2021). Workplace ostracism and counterproductive work behaviors: the chain mediating role of anger and turnover intention. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 761560.