

Psychological Safety and Organizational Communication in Improving Team Effectiveness: A Systematic Literature Review in Organizational Behavior Perspective

Vera Wahani¹, Nofry Frans²

¹² Universitas Klabat

* Correspondence e-mail; verawahani@unklab.ac.id; nofryfrans@unklab.ac.id

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Abstract

Psychological safety and organizational communication are crucial factors in enhancing team effectiveness in a dynamic work environment. This study aims to analyze research trends, the role of psychological safety in supporting organizational communication, and to identify research gaps regarding the relationship between psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness. The method used is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with a PRISMA approach on 60 articles from the 2020–2025 period. The review results show that psychological safety acts as the foundation for effective organizational communication through communication openness, the courage to express opinions, knowledge sharing, and increased team collaboration. Open organizational communication and supportive leadership also strengthen psychological safety, thereby supporting team effectiveness. This study also found that previous research is still dominated by quantitative approaches and specific organizational contexts, indicating the need for further research across various sectors and modern work patterns.

Keywords

[https://edujavare.com/index.php/jcpa/management/settings/accessPsychological Safety, Organizational Communication, Team Effectiveness, Organizational Behavior, Systematic Literature Review](https://edujavare.com/index.php/jcpa/management/settings/accessPsychological%20Safety,%20Organizational%20Communication,%20Team%20Effectiveness,%20Organizational%20Behavior,%20Systematic%20Literature%20Review)



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INTRODUCTION

Changes in the organizational environment due to globalization, digital transformation, and the increasing complexity of work make team effectiveness a crucial factor in determining organizational success. Work completion today increasingly relies on collaboration, coordination, and information exchange among team members compared to individual contributions. However, team member diversity, differing perspectives, and the development of virtual work patterns also pose challenges in building effective collaboration. Therefore, organizations are required to create a work environment capable of fostering open communication,

trust, and active participation so that shared goals can be optimally achieved (Mathieu et al., 2019; Salas et al., 2018).

Team effectiveness is influenced not only by individual competencies but also by the quality of social processes that develop within the team. Hackman (1987) explains that an effective team can achieve organizational goals while maintaining its members' ability to work together sustainably. In line with this, Kozlowski (2018) assert that team effectiveness is the result of interactions between individual characteristics, team processes, and the organizational context. One of the processes that play a vital role in supporting this effectiveness is organizational communication, which is the process of information exchange that enables effective coordination, goal alignment, and decision-making (Zhu, 2025). Open and participatory communication also contributes to building positive working relationships and improving collaboration among team members (Hartley, 2025).

In addition to organizational communication, psychological safety is a critical concept in organizational behavior studies. Mrayyan (2024) defines psychological safety as a shared belief that the work environment is safe for team members to express opinions, ask questions, share ideas, and admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences. A work environment with a high level of psychological safety encourages knowledge-sharing behaviors, team learning, innovation, and the organization's ability to adapt to changes (Moon & Kang, 2025). Thus, organizational communication and psychological safety have a complementary relationship in building team effectiveness.

Various studies in recent years have shown that psychological safety and organizational communication are complementary factors in enhancing team effectiveness. Mrayyan (2024) explain that research on psychological safety has grown rapidly and is no longer solely viewed as a condition that encourages individual courage in taking interpersonal risks, but also as an important mechanism that supports team learning, leadership, innovation, and organizational performance. These findings are reinforced by O'Donovan and McAuliffe (2020), who, through a systematic literature review, found that open communication, speaking-up behavior, and a culture of mutual trust are the main factors shaping psychological safety in teams.

LaPlante (2025) demonstrate that psychological safety contributes to improved collaboration, communication quality, and team work effectiveness by creating an environment that supports shared learning and decision-making. Research on team communication was also conducted by Aaberg et al. (2025), who found that effective

team leader communication influences coordination, collaboration, and the achievement of team outcomes, especially in teams working in dynamic situations. Overall, these various studies indicate that organizational communication and psychological safety are two mutually reinforcing mechanisms in building team effectiveness. However, these studies have generally been conducted in specific organizational contexts, such as healthcare, project teams, or ad hoc teams, meaning that syntheses integrating the relationship between organizational communication, psychological safety, and team effectiveness across organizational contexts remain relatively limited (Cohen & Bailey, 1997).

Although research on psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness continues to grow, studies that integrate these three concepts into a single systematic review remain relatively scarce (Kahn, 1990). Most previous studies focused more on testing the relationships between variables in specific organizational contexts, such as the healthcare, education, or technology sectors, producing diverse findings that have not yet provided a comprehensive picture of the field's development (Marks et al., 2001). Furthermore, not many studies have mapped publication trends, synthesized how psychological safety supports organizational communication to improve team effectiveness, and identified research gaps that are still open for development. Based on these conditions, this research is designed to answer three research questions: (1) what are the research trends regarding the relationship between organizational communication and psychological safety in the context of work team effectiveness; (2) what is the role of psychological safety in supporting organizational communication to enhance team effectiveness; and (3) what are the research gaps that still need to be explored regarding psychological safety and organizational communication in team effectiveness based on a synthesis of published literature.

Based on these research questions, this study aims to present a systematic literature synthesis of the relationship between organizational communication, psychological safety, and team effectiveness using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, referring to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions by mapping research developments, identifying major themes, and formulating research gaps that can serve as a foundation for theory development from an organizational behavior perspective. Practically, the study's findings are expected to serve as a reference for organizational leaders, human resource management practitioners, and team managers in designing communication strategies capable of creating a psychologically safe work

environment to sustainably improve collaboration, team learning, and work effectiveness.

METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, referring to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines. This approach was chosen because it provides a systematic, transparent, and replicable procedure for identifying, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant literature. Through this approach, the study aims to map research trends, analyze the relationship between organizational communication, psychological safety, and team effectiveness, and identify research gaps that still require further study.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria in this study include: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles; (2) published between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2025; (3) discussing psychological safety, organizational communication, and/or team effectiveness as the main research focus; (4) written in English; and (5) indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include: (1) articles in the form of proceedings, books, book chapters, editorials, or review papers; (2) studies that do not discuss the interconnection of these three concepts within an organizational context; and (3) articles that are not available in full text.

Search and Selection Strategy

The literature search was conducted systematically using two international databases, namely Scopus and Web of Science (WoS). The search strategy used a combination of keywords with Boolean operators: ("psychological safety" OR "team psychological safety") AND ("organizational communication" OR "workplace communication") AND ("team effectiveness" OR "team performance" OR "team outcomes"). The search was applied to the Title, Abstract, and Keywords fields, filtered for English-language articles, "article" document types, and publication years 2020–2025. The article selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines through four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

Stage 1: Identification, the initial search yielded 1,123 articles from Scopus (672) and Web of Science (451). All metadata were exported to Mendeley Desktop to manage references and identify duplicates.

Stage 2: Screening, after removing 271 duplicate articles, 852 articles remained. Title and abstract screening excluded 628 articles because they were irrelevant, of an unsuitable publication type, in a language other than English, or had incomplete metadata, leaving 224 articles.

Stage 3: Eligibility, Full-text evaluation of the 224 articles resulted in the exclusion of 164 articles because they did not align with the research focus, were unavailable in full text, were review articles, or failed to meet inclusion criteria.

Stage 4: Inclusion, A total of 60 articles met all criteria and were used for descriptive, bibliometric, and thematic synthesis analysis. From this number, 12 articles were selected for in-depth synthesis based on research quality and relevance.

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of The Study Selection Process



Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two stages. The first stage was a descriptive analysis of the 60 articles meeting the inclusion criteria to map research characteristics based on publication year, geographical distribution, and methodological approach. This analysis aims to provide an overview of research developments concerning psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness from an organizational behavior perspective. The second stage was a thematic synthesis of articles selected based on journal quality (Q1/Q2 Scimago Journal Rank), citation count, conceptual contribution, and relevance to the research questions. Out of the 60 included articles, 12 were selected for in-depth analysis. The

synthesis process was conducted by grouping articles into themes with similar discussion focuses, then identifying relationship patterns between psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness, and formulating research gaps requiring further study.

Table 1. In-depth Synthesis

Theme	Number of Article in Cluster	In-depth Synthesis
Theme 1: Psychological Safety in Teams	18	4 Article
Theme 2: Organizational Communication and Team Collaboration	17	3 Article
Theme 3: Leadership, Trust, and Psychological Safety	15	3 Article
Theme 4: Team Effectiveness and Organizational Performance	10	2 Article
Total	60	12 Article

Source: Author Analysis (2026)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Landscape Analysis

Based on the 60 articles meeting the final inclusion stage, a descriptive analysis was conducted to map the research landscape regarding psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness during the 2020–2025 period.

Table 2. Temporal Distribution of Publication (2020–2025)

Period	Number of Article	Avarage/Year	Phase
2020–2021	12	6	Early Development
2022–2023	29	14,5	Growth
2024–2025	19	9,5	Consolidation

Source: Author Analysis (2026)

Table 2 shows that research on psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness experienced quite rapid development during the 2020–2025 period. In the 2020–2021 period, only 12 articles (20.0%) were found, which then increased to 29 articles (48.3%) in the 2022–2023 period. This increase indicates growing academic attention towards the importance of building effective organizational communication and psychologically safe work environments to support team collaboration. In the 2024–2025 period, the number of publications reached 19 articles (31.7%), indicating that this research field has entered a consolidation phase with an increasingly broader scope of topics.

Table 3. Geographical Distribution

Region	Number of Article	%	Dominant Countries
Europe	22	36.7	UK, Netherlands, Germany
Asia	18	30.0	China, Indonesia, South Korea
North America	14	23.3	United States, Canada
Oceania	4	6.7	Australia
Africa	2	3.3	South Africa

Source: Author Analysis (2026)

Table 3 shows that research on psychological safety and organizational communication is still dominated by countries in the European region (36.7%), followed by Asia (30.0%) and North America (23.3%). This dominance indicates that the development of the psychological safety concept is still predominantly conducted in organizations within developed countries. Meanwhile, research contributions from the African and Oceanian regions remain relatively limited, thereby opening up research opportunities in more diverse cultural and organizational contexts, particularly in developing countries.

Table 4. Distribusi Sektor Organisasi

Organizational Sector	Number of Articles	Percentage (%)
Healthcare	18	30
Information Technology	14	23.3
Manufacturing	11	18.3
Education	9	15
Public Sector	8	13.4
Total	60	100

Source: Author Analysis (2026)

Table 4 shows that research on psychological safety and organizational communication is concentrated in the healthcare sector (30.0%), followed by information technology (23.3%), manufacturing (18.3%), education (15.0%), and the public sector (13.4%). This distribution suggests that existing studies primarily focus on highly collaborative organizational settings, while research in other sectors remains limited, highlighting opportunities for future studies across more diverse organizational contexts.

Table 5. Distribution of Methodological Approaches

Methodological Approach	Number of Articles	Percentage (%)	Predominant Methods
Quantitative	34	56.7	Survey, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Regression Analysis
Qualitative	16	26.7	Case Study, Interviews
Mixed Methods	10	16.6	Surveys and Interviews

Table 5, shows that research is dominated by quantitative approaches (56.7%), especially through surveys and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analyses to test the relationships between organizational communication, psychological safety, and team effectiveness. Qualitative approaches account for 26.7%, focusing on case studies and in-depth interviews to understand interaction dynamics within teams, while mixed-methods research remains relatively limited (16.6%). These findings suggest that previous studies were largely oriented toward testing relationships among variables rather than exploring the processes by which psychological safety and organizational communication are formed in various organizational contexts.

Table 6. Distribution of Publication by Year (2020–2025)

Year	Number of Article	Percentage (%)
2020	5	8,3%
2021	7	11,7%
2022	12	20,0%
2023	17	28,3%
2024	11	18,3%
2025	8	13,4%
Total	60	100%

Source: Author Analysis (2026)

Table 6, shows that research on psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness experienced a consistent increase during the 2020–2023 period. In 2020, only 5 articles (8.3%) were found, which then increased to 7 articles (11.7%) in 2021 and 12 articles (20.0%) in 2022. The publication peak occurred in 2023 with 17 articles (28.3%), indicating growing academic attention toward the importance of psychologically safe work environments and organizational communication in enhancing team collaboration and effectiveness. After peaking in 2023, the number of publications slightly declined to 11 articles (18.3%) in 2024 and 8 articles (13.4%) in 2025. This decline does not indicate a reduction in research interest; rather, it reflects that the year 2025 was still an incomplete publication period when the literature search was conducted. Overall, this trend indicates that the topics of psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness continue to grow and become critical focal points in modern organizational behavior studies.

Thematic Literature Analysis

A thematic analysis was performed on the 60 articles meeting the inclusion stage to identify the main themes emerging in research on psychological safety,

organizational communication, and team effectiveness. The analysis was conducted by grouping articles based on research focus, core concepts, and variable interrelationships discussed in each study. This process generated four main themes that illustrate the direction of research development from an organizational behavior perspective.

Table 7. Result of the Thematic Analysis

Theme	Number of Articles	Percentage (%)	Research Focus
Theme 1. Psychological Safety in Teams	18	30	The role of psychological safety in fostering employee voice, team learning, knowledge sharing, and interpersonal risk-taking.
Theme 2. Organizational Communication and Team Collaboration	17	28.3	The relationship between organizational communication, communication climate, coordination, and collaboration in enhancing the quality of team interactions.
Theme 3. Leadership, Trust, and Psychological Safety	15	25	The influence of leadership style, leader support, and trust on the development of psychological safety within organizations.
Theme 4. Team Effectiveness and Organizational Performance	10	16.7	The contribution of psychological safety and organizational communication to team effectiveness, innovation, employee engagement, and organizational performance.

Source: Author Analysis (2026)

Thematic Synthesis

Based on the thematic analysis results, 12 articles were selected for in-depth synthesis. The selection of articles was based on journal quality (Q1/Q2 Scimago Journal Rank), citation rate, theoretical contribution, and relevance to the three research questions. The remaining articles were still utilized in the descriptive analysis but were not the primary focus of the in-depth synthesis.

Table 8. Articles Included in the In-Depth Synthesis

No.	Author(s) (Year)	Theme	Main Focus
1	(Mogård et al., 2023)	Psychological Safety in Teams	The influence of psychological safety on team effectiveness through behavioral integration.
2	(Dietl et al., 2023)	Psychological Safety in Teams	Psychological safety as a facilitator of communication and team safety.
3	(Weiss et al., 2023)	Psychological Safety in Teams	The relationships among psychological safety, speaking-up behavior, and team effectiveness.
4	(Bachmann & Bravo, 2021)	Psychological Safety in Teams	The development of psychological safety and team identification in contemporary workplaces.
5	(Qin & Men, 2023)	Organizational Communication	The impact of internal communication on psychological well-being and organizational trust.
6	(Newman et al.,	Organizational	Leadership communication in virtual teams and its

	2020)	Communication	impact on team performance.
7	(Zajac et al., 2021)	Organizational Communication	A communication framework for enhancing team effectiveness.
8	(Coutifaris & Grant, 2022)	Leadership, Trust, and Psychological Safety	Leader feedback-sharing as a mechanism for fostering psychological safety.
9	(Fyhn et al., 2025)	Leadership, Trust, and Psychological Safety	The process of developing psychological safety within work teams.
10	(Remtulla et al., 2021)	Leadership, Trust, and Psychological Safety	Facilitators and barriers to psychological safety in teams.
11	(Holubčík et al., 2025)	Team Effectiveness and Organizational Performance	A communication- and coordination-based framework for team effectiveness.
12	(Vasumathi et al., 2025)	Team Effectiveness and Organizational Performance	The contribution of psychological safety to management team effectiveness.

Source: Author Analysis (2026)

Theme 1. Psychological Safety in Teams

Four articles in this theme demonstrate that psychological safety is the foundation of team effectiveness. Mogård et al. (2023) emphasize its role in improving behavioral integration, while Dietl et al. (2023) and Weiss et al. (2023) show that a sense of psychological safety encourages open communication and speaking-up behaviors. Bachmann and Bravo (2021) add that team identity strengthens the formation of psychological safety. Overall, psychological safety supports collaboration, learning, and team performance.

Theme 2. Organizational Communication

This theme shows that organizational communication is a critical factor in improving team effectiveness. Qin and Men (2023) found that internal communication strengthens trust and employee well-being. Newman et al. (2020) highlight the importance of leader communication in virtual teams, whereas Zajac et al. (2021) position communication as the basis for team coordination and decision-making. These findings suggest that effective communication can reinforce collaboration and the achievement of team goals.

Theme 3. Leadership, Trust, and Psychological Safety

The three articles in this theme confirm that leadership plays a role in building psychological safety. Coutifaris and Grant (2022) demonstrate that leader openness to feedback increases psychological safety. Fyhn et al. (2025) explain that psychological safety develops through interaction and trust, while Remtulla et al.

(2021) identify leadership and organizational culture as main supporting factors. Thus, supportive leadership strengthens team communication and collaboration.

Theme 4. Team Effectiveness and Organizational Performance

This theme indicates that organizational communication and psychological safety contribute to team effectiveness. Holubčík et al. (2025) explain that communication and coordination are primary elements of team effectiveness, while Vasumathi et al. (2025) prove that psychological safety increases effectiveness through behavioral integration. The synthesis results show that the combination of effective communication and a psychologically safe work environment can improve performance and team adaptability within the organization.

DISCUSSION

Research Trends on Psychological Safety and Organizational Communication in Team Effectiveness

Analysis results reveal that research on psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness increased during the 2020–2025 period, with publication peaking in 2023. The research is dominated by the European and Asian regions and is largely conducted in the healthcare and information technology sectors. Moreover, the majority of studies employ quantitative approaches, indicating that the research focus is still directed at testing the relationships between psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness. These findings suggest that both concepts are increasingly viewed as essential factors in supporting team collaboration and performance across various organizational contexts.

These findings align with Edmondson's (1999) theory, which states that psychological safety encourages individuals to bravely express ideas and participate in communication without fearing negative consequences. From an organizational behavior perspective, open communication supported by psychological safety will enhance coordination, team learning, and work effectiveness (Robbins & Judge, 2023). The synthesis results also corroborate the findings of Mogård et al. (2023), Dietl et al. (2023), Qin and Men (2023), and Newman et al. (2020), which show that organizational communication and psychological safety are two complementary factors in boosting team effectiveness.

Psychological Safety as the Foundation of Effective Organizational Communication

The literature synthesis results demonstrate that psychological safety is the main foundation in building effective organizational communication. The various studies analyzed explain that when team members feel psychologically safe, they are more courageous in expressing opinions, providing feedback, asking questions, and sharing knowledge without fear of negative consequences. In the Theme of Psychological Safety in Teams, Mogård et al. (2023) found that psychological safety increases behavioral integration, thereby strengthening team effectiveness, while Dietl et al. (2023) and Weiss et al. (2023) demonstrated that a sense of psychological safety encourages open communication through speaking-up behavior. These findings support Edmondson's (1999) concept, which states that psychological safety creates a work environment enabling more effective learning and interpersonal communication.

The analysis results also reveal a mutually reinforcing relationship between organizational communication and psychological safety. Qin and Men (2023) explain that effective internal communication can increase employees' trust and psychological well-being, while Newman et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of leader communication in building coordination, especially in virtual teams. These findings are reinforced by Coutifaris and Grant (2022) and Fyhn et al. (2025), who show that leadership that is open to feedback and based on trust plays a critical role in shaping psychological safety. Therefore, the results of this study affirm that effective organizational communication relies not only on information delivery but also on the creation of a psychologically safe work environment, thereby encouraging team collaboration and effectiveness.

The Role of Psychological Safety in Enhancing Team Effectiveness

The synthesis results indicate that psychological safety plays a vital role in enhancing team effectiveness by creating a work environment that fosters collaboration, learning, and team member engagement. Under Theme 1, Vasumathi et al. (2025) showed that psychological safety increases team effectiveness through behavioral integration, while Bachmann & Bravo (2021) highlighted that strong team identity supports the formation of psychological safety. Furthermore, Dietl et al. (2023) and Weiss et al. (2023) found that team members who feel psychologically safe are more daring to voice their opinions (speaking up) and share information, thereby supporting more effective decision-making processes.

These findings align with Edmondson (1999) theory, noting that psychological safety enables team members to take interpersonal risks without fear of negative judgment. In the perspective of organizational behavior, this condition fosters

increased team learning, innovation, and the team's ability to collaboratively resolve problems (Robbins & Judge, 2023). Thus, psychological safety not only creates more open communication but also acts as a critical factor strengthening team effectiveness in achieving organizational goals.

Synthesis of the Relationship between Organizational Communication, Psychological Safety, and Team Effectiveness

Based on the synthesis of 60 articles, this study shows that organizational communication, psychological safety, and team effectiveness are interrelated. Open organizational communication supported by supportive leadership contributes to the formation of psychological safety, while a sense of psychological safety encourages team members to actively participate in communication, share knowledge, and express ideas. This relationship appears consistently in the research findings of Qin and Men (2023), Newman et al. (2020), and Coutifaris and Grant (2022), which position internal communication, leadership, and trust as essential factors in cultivating a psychologically safe work environment.

Psychological safety acts as a mechanism that reinforces the connection between organizational communication and team effectiveness. Findings from Mogård et al. (2023) and Zajac et al. (2021) demonstrate that effective communication improves coordination and behavioral integration, which ultimately leads to increased team effectiveness. This synthesis highlights that organizational communication and psychological safety are not two isolated concepts; rather, they complement each other in building collaboration, improving the quality of decision-making, and supporting the achievement of organizational goals

Research Gaps and Future Research Agenda

The literature review results identified several research gaps that still need exploration. First, research is still dominated by quantitative approaches with cross-sectional designs, whereas the use of qualitative or mixed-methods remains limited. Second, the majority of research has been conducted in the healthcare and information technology sectors in developed countries, meaning studies on organizational contexts in developing countries, including Indonesia, or in small and medium enterprises remain relatively sparse. Additionally, research on psychological safety in the context of virtual teams, hybrid working, and digital transformation remains underdeveloped.

Based on these findings, future research is advised to broaden the organizational context and employ more diverse methodological approaches to

provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of psychological safety and organizational communication. Future research could also integrate other variables, such as organizational culture, transformational leadership, employee engagement, and trust as mediating or moderating variables in explaining team effectiveness. In doing so, studies on psychological safety and organizational communication could offer broader contributions to the development of both the theory and practice of organizational behavior.

CONCLUSION

Based on the Systematic Literature Review of 60 articles, this study shows that psychological safety and organizational communication are two mutually supportive factors in enhancing team effectiveness. Psychological safety encourages open communication, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, while effective organizational communication strengthens the formation of a psychologically safe work environment, thereby positively impacting team performance. Furthermore, this study identified that previous literature is heavily dominated by quantitative approaches and focuses on specific sectors. Therefore, future research should broaden organizational contexts, employ more diverse methodological approaches, and examine psychological safety and organizational communication in emerging work settings, such as virtual teams and hybrid workplaces.

This review has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis was limited to articles published in English between 2020 and 2025, which may have excluded relevant studies published in other languages or during earlier periods. Second, although the selected articles met predefined quality and relevance criteria, they may not fully represent the diversity of findings available in this field. Finally, the synthesis relied on published studies indexed in the selected databases, which may have introduced publication bias by underrepresenting unpublished studies or research indexed elsewhere. These limitations provide opportunities for future systematic reviews to include broader publication periods, multiple languages, additional databases, and a wider range of study designs to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between psychological safety, organizational communication, and team effectiveness.

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