



# The mediating role of psychological well-being: Job stress on turnover intention

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effect of job stress on turnover intention with psychological well-being as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach is used with PLS-SEM analysis techniques. Data was obtained through a questionnaire that included three main constructs, namely job stress, psychological well-being, and turnover intention with a total sample of 65 employees. The results prove that job stress has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention, as well as a significant negative effect on psychological well-being. Psychological well-being was also found to have a significant negative effect on turnover intention. In addition, the results showed that psychological well-being significantly mediated the influence of job stress on the intention to leave work. These findings confirm the importance of organizational interventions in managing job stress and improving psychological well-being to reduce the risk of turnover intention.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the midst of the dynamics of modern organizations that are full of demands, the issue of employee psychological well-being is the main spotlight in human resource management practices (Boulet, 2025; Hameed et al., 2022; Loon et al., 2019). The complexity of the ever-changing work environment, increased productivity pressure, and high expectations from organizations often cause significant job stress for employees (Salama et al., 2022; Vuori et al., 2019). This condition not only affects individual performance, but also has an impact on deeper emotional and mental aspects. Job stress that is allowed to drag on has been proven to be the main trigger for increased intention to leave work or *turnover intention* (Dodanwala et al., 2023). This phenomenon becomes even more crucial in the post-pandemic era, when many organizations report increased psychological *exhaustion* and *employee burnout*.

Working conditions during the pandemic, characterized by work from home, intensive virtual communication, and economic uncertainty, have created multiple layers of psychosocial pressure. However, instead of easing after the pandemic, this pressure has transformed into a new expectation of productivity without sufficient psychological recovery. It is in this context that the

lack of organizational support is the main trigger for the post-pandemic surge in burnout. According to a Deloitte survey (2024), as many as 48% of workers and 53% of worker managers report experiencing significant burnout, which causes 59% of workers globally to eventually terminate their jobs with the company. This data reflects the importance of research on the mechanisms that link job stress to the tendency of turnover intention, especially through the mediating role of psychological well-being. Therefore, this research departs from the need to dig deeper into how psychological well-being plays a role in reducing the impact of stress on employee turnover intentions. The building materials processing industry, such as that run by PT Perlite Indonesia Abadi, has a number of structural and operational characteristics that directly impact the work experience of employees, especially in terms of work stress levels and the desire to change jobs. In this context, it is important to understand that this company operates in the heavy manufacturing sector with a dense, routine, and highly standardized production base. This kind of character provides a distinctive pressure, different from the service sector and the technology sector. In addition, the high production demands inherent in the processing industry also add to the psychological burden. Workers are required to achieve strict targets within a limited time, often without adequate resource support, both in terms of technology and management. This creates an imbalance between job demands and job resources as described in Job Demands-Resources Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This imbalance has the potential to cause emotional exhaustion and burnout, which are strong predictors of the desire to change jobs.

Turnover intention itself is defined as the tendency of employees to consider leaving their jobs, which is an early indicator of actual turnover behavior (Wong & Cheng, 2020). Various studies state that turnover intention is often triggered by a combination of internal and external factors (Krishnan & Rathakrishnan, 2025; Takase, 2010), including prolonged negative work experiences. This shows the importance of understanding psychological aspects as predictors of intention to quit a job, where stress is a trigger and psychological well-being is a determining factor for the sustainability of the employment relationship. So, in this context, it is necessary to examine how the relationship between job stress and turnover intention can be explained more deeply through the role of psychological well-being as a mediator.

*Psychological well-being* in the context of an organization reflects a condition in which individuals feel satisfied, are able to manage stress, and have a positive perception of their work (Blasco-Belled & Alsinet, 2022; Čančer & Šarotar Žižek, 2015). Psychological well-being can be seen as a mental shield that maintains an individual's psychological stability when facing work pressure (Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2022). This relationship becomes even more relevant when considering the high turnover rates in various strategic industries, including the manufacturing and technology sectors, which rely heavily on the continuity of the skilled workforce. This confirms that the existence of psychological well-being is not just an additional attribute, but rather a central element in employee retention strategies. Therefore, this study aims to answer the extent to which psychological well-being can mediate the influence of job stress on employees' intention to leave the organization.

Job stress is a condition that arises when job demands exceed an individual's ability to deal with it adaptively (Schwarzer & Reuter, 2023). Sources of stress can come from excessive workload pressure, lack of social support from superiors and colleagues, unclear roles, and conflicts of personal values with organizational culture (Labrague et al., 2018). As the complexity of tasks and work expectations increases, the prevalence of job stress has increased sharply, even becoming the main cause of absenteeism and decreased productivity. When stress is not controlled, there are further psychological impacts such as decreased job satisfaction, reduced engagement, and increased turnover intention (Ahmad, 2022; Wu et al., 2021).

This research cannot be separated from global trends that show a growing awareness of the importance of wellbeing in the workplace as part of a sustainable business strategy. Well-being not only impacts individuals, but also on the performance of the organization as a whole (Nielsen

et al., 2017; Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019). In an increasingly competitive employment situation, retaining the best talent is the key to long-term success, and one approach is to mitigate job stress through strengthening psychological well-being.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causality design to test the cause-effect relationship between the variable job stress as an independent variable, turnover intention as a dependent variable, and psychological well-being as a mediating variable. The causality approach was chosen because this study does not only aim to describe a phenomenon, but to test the extent to which job stress affects employees' intention to leave the organization through the role of psychological well-being as an intermediary mechanism.

This research was conducted at PT Perlite Indonesia Abadi with a sample used by 65 employees. This sampling is in accordance with the recommendations of Ferdinand (2014), in the PLS-SEM model, the researcher can determine the sample based on the indicators used, which is at least five respondents per indicator. In this study, the number of indicators used was 13 indicators. Data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires that were distributed directly to respondents using random sampling techniques. The instrument used in the questionnaire is a 5-point Likert scale, which is compiled based on indicators from the validated literature where work stress variables are measured using a scale from Fong et al. (2018) with three indicators, psychological well-being is measured using a scale from Hardjanti et al. (2017) with six indicators, and turnover intention is measured using indicators from Dodanwala et al. (2023) with four indicators.

Data analysis was carried out using the PLS-SEM method through SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was chosen for its ability to handle complex models with latent variables and is suitable for mediation analysis with moderate sample counts (Hair et al., 2019). Meanwhile, data analysis is carried out in two main stages. The first stage is the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the second stage is the evaluation of the structural model (inner model), as well as the significance test through bootstrapping with 5,000 resampling.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To test the validity and reliability of the instrument as well as the strength of the relationship between variables in this research model, the PLS-SEM approach was used. The analysis process began with testing the measurement model (outer model) which included the outer loadings test, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), before proceeding to structural model testing (inner model) through the R-Square value and hypothesis test using the bootstrapping method. Each test is carried out with reference to the thresholds recommended by the literature and credible previous studies, in order to ensure the accuracy and empirical feasibility of the developed model.

According to Legate et al. (2023), the recommended minimum outer loading value is  $\geq 0.70$ , although values between 0.60–0.70 are still acceptable if AVE and reliability remain met the criteria; The minimum accepted Cronbach's Alpha value is  $\geq 0.70$ ; The recommended CR value is  $\geq 0.70$ ; The minimum AVE value is  $\geq 0.50$ ; and the value of  $R^2$  indicates how much variation of the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variable.

**Table 1.** Validity and Reliability

Variable/Indicator	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	R2
Job Stress (JS)		0,781	0,872	0,695	
JS1	0,858				

Variable/Indicator	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	R2
JS2	0,818				
JS3	0,825				
Psychological Well-being (PW)		0,802	0,858	0,506	0,553
PW1	0,795				
PW2	0,788				
PW3	0,707				
PW4	0,745				
PW5	0,704				
PW6	0,783				
Turnover Intention (TI)		0,704	0,830	0,518	0,414
TI1	0,722				
TI2	0,813				
TI3	0,727				
TI4	0,702				

Based on Table 1, the results of the outer loadings test show that all indicators have values above 0.70, which indicates that each indicator is able to represent the construct consistently. Internal reliability test via Cronbach's Alpha (JS=0.781; PW=0.802; TI=0.704) and Composite Reliability ((JS=0.872; PW=0.858; TI=0.830) also yields adequate to very good values, with the overall construct recording values above the minimum limit of 0.70. This indicates that the instruments used in the study have a strong internal consistency. Furthermore, convergent validity testing through AVE values showed that all constructs had values above 0.50 (JS=0.695; PW=0.506; TI=0.518), indicates that the indicators used have a considerable correlation with their respective constructs.

The analysis continued with the testing of structural models through the R<sup>2</sup> value, which showed that the psychological well-being variable could be explained by 55.3% by job stress, while turnover intention was explained by 41.4% by the combination of the influence of job stress and psychological well-being. These values show that the model has a fairly strong explanatory power in the socio-psychological context of the work environment. Furthermore, to test the significance of the relationship between variables, a bootstrapping test was carried out which produced t-statistics and p-values on all relationship paths that exceeded the significance threshold of 5% ( $t > 1.96$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), including indirect mediation pathways through psychological well-being (Legate et al., 2023).

**Table 2.** Hypothesis

Hypothesis	T statistics	P values	Result
Job Stress -> Turnover Intention	2,551	0,011	Significant
Job Stress -> Psychological Well-being	3,288	0,000	Significant
Psychological Well-being -> Turnover Intention	2,708	0,007	Significant
Job Stress -> Psychological Well-being -> Turnover Intention	2,640	0,008	Significant

Based on Table 2, the test results show that all relationship paths in the model have t-statistical values above 1.96 and p-values below 0.05, which is significant at a 95% confidence level. The first track, namely the direct effect of Job Stress on Turnover Intention, showed a t-statistic value of 2.551 and a p-value of 0.011. These results confirm that the higher the level of job stress experienced by employees, the greater their tendency to have the intention to leave their job (turnover intention). Furthermore, the pathway between Job Stress and Psychological Well-being recorded a t-statistic value of 3.288 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a very strong significance. This indicates that job stress has an impact on the psychological well-being of employees, where increased work pressure tends to reduce the mental and emotional condition of workers.

In the next track, the influence of Psychological Well-being on Turnover Intention was also proven to be significant with a t-statistic value of 2.708 and a p-value of 0.007. This means that high psychological well-being is negatively correlated with the desire to leave work. Interestingly, the

indirect mediation pathway test also showed significant results. The Job Stress → Psychological Well-being → Turnover Intention pathway produced a t-statistic of 2.640 and a p-value of 0.008, indicating that psychological well-being mediates the effect of job stress on turnover intention. In other words, most of the negative effects of job stress on employee resignation intentions are channeled through a decrease in psychological well-being. This demonstrates a strong partial mediation model, in which psychological well-being is not only influenced by job stress, but also becomes an important mechanism that explains how the stress drives exit intent behavior.

The results of this study reveal that job stress has a positive and significant influence on *employee turnover intention* to leave the organization. These findings indicate that the higher the level of stress experienced by individuals in the work environment, the more likely they are to consider leaving their jobs. The strong correlation between these two variables reflects complex psychological and organizational dynamics, in which stress is not just a purely physiological or emotional response, but also a strong predictor of a person's career decisions.

Job stress tends to increase when job demands are high but control or autonomy over work is low (Akbari et al., 2017). In this context, employees not only feel mentally depressed, but also feel out of control over their work situation, which ultimately decreases job satisfaction and increases the desire to resign. Research conducted by (Dodanwala et al., 2023) states that the relationship between job stress and turnover intention is strong and directed. Unaddressed stress at work creates an internal urge in individuals to leave their jobs, especially when accompanied by low job satisfaction and high role pressure. Based on research by Fong et al. (2018), the relationship between job stress and turnover intention is presented very clearly and interestingly in the context of the casino industry, specifically in the role of employees called casino hosts. This study presents empirical evidence that job stress not only plays a role in directly influencing turnover intention but also has a significant mediating role in the relationship between customer relationship perception and turnover intention.

Empirically, a meta-analysis conducted by Podsakoff et al. (2007) also showed that job stress, especially derived from *hindrance stressors* such as role conflicts and task ambiguity, significantly contributed to increased *turnover intention*. From a theoretical point of view, stress arises when individual resources, be they energy, time, or emotions, are threatened or are constantly depleted without adequate recovery (Hobfoll, 2011; Prapanjaroensin et al., 2017). In such a situation, leaving work is a form of self-protection to restore the balance of personal resources. Therefore, high *turnover intention* can be understood as an adaptive mechanism that arises due to exposure to chronic work stressors. The finding that job stress has a positive and significant effect on *turnover intention* does not only reaffirm the results of previous research (Dodanwala et al., 2023; Fong et al., 2018), but also provides a new urgency for modern organizations to address job stress as part of a holistic employee retention strategy.

The findings in this study show that job stress has a significant influence on the psychological well-being of employees. Conceptually, these results reinforce the assumption that excessive workload, time pressure, role conflicts, and lack of control over work are the main sources of job stress that have a direct impact on the decline of individuals' mental, emotional, and social conditions in the work environment. In this context, the higher the level of job stress felt, the lower the level of psychological well-being experienced, including satisfaction, a sense of having meaning in life, and the ability to develop personally. From the point of view of Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, job stress arises when job demands exceed available resources, thus triggering emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and ultimately eroding psychological well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Lesener et al., 2019). These results also reflect the reality in today's world of work, where the acceleration of technology, high performance expectations, and lack of work-life balance are the dominant triggers of job stress, especially in highly competitive industrial sectors.

This study is in line with research conducted by (Yoo, 2023), emphasizing the importance of understanding job stress not just as a result of a harsh work environment, but as a tipping point that connects various stressors to turnover intention and psychological well-being. Organizational strategy is not enough to focus only on reducing workload or emotional adjustment, but must focus on actively and systematically managing job stress. Similarly, research by Kim et al. (2022) shows that the relationship between job stress and psychological well-being is a reflection of the balance between work demands and personal capacity. The decline in psychological well-being is not a consequence solely of a high workload, but a mirror of the system's failure to provide adequate support for the mental well-being of its workers. Therefore, interventions that target strengthening self-efficacy, training proactive coping strategies, and providing consistent social support in the workplace, will be a strategic step to break the chain of negative impacts of job stress on well-being. Job stress that is not managed properly has an impact on decreased life satisfaction, loss of work morale, and the appearance of psychosomatic symptoms such as chronic fatigue, insomnia, and even mild depression (Jeong et al., 2020).

The findings that *psychological well-being* has a negative and significant effect on *turnover intention* provide important empirical evidence in understanding the dynamics of modern employment. Conceptually, these results suggest that the higher the level of psychological well-being felt by employees, the lower their tendency to leave the organization. This negative correlation is in line with the basic principle of *affective events theory* which states that affective experiences in the workplace have a strong influence on work attitudes and behaviors, including decisions to stay or leave the organization (Nam et al., 2024; Nimon et al., 2023). These results reinforce the view that psychological well-being is not just a personal aspect, but a strategic element in human resource management. When individuals feel emotionally satisfied, have a sense of meaning in their work, and are able to manage psychological stress, they tend to build stronger bonds with the organization.

This study is consistent with the findings from Yuniasanti et al. (2019) which reveal that the relationship between psychological well-being and turnover intention in employees provides in-depth insights that are relevant to today's workforce dynamics. This study specifically investigated how psychological well-being (psychological well-being) affects an employee's intention to leave his job (turnover intention). In other words, psychological well-being acts as a psychological buffer against the urge to resign. When employees feel that their work is meaningful, valued, and personal growth, their commitment to the organization is strengthened, and the desire to leave the job is significantly reduced. In a study conducted by De los Santos & Labrague (2020), one of the important findings that was studied in depth was the relationship between psychological well-being (in the form of psychological distress) and turnover intention among community nurses in the Philippines. This relationship reveals the complex dynamics between psychological distress and the tendency to leave work. In particular, the results showed that the feeling of fear of COVID-19 significantly increased distress levels, which in turn had a significant contribution to the intention to resign both from the institution where they worked (organizational turnover intention) and from the nursing profession itself (professional turnover intention). This shows that when psychological well-being declines, the individual's desire to stay in their job also weakens.

The results of this study show that psychological well-being mediates significantly and negatively the relationship between job stress and turnover intention, indicating that high levels of job stress tend to decrease employees' psychological well-being, and ultimately increase their desire to leave work. These findings reinforce the importance of the role of psychological well-being as a *buffer* or reducer against the negative impact of intense work pressure. Stress can drain an individual's energy and psychological balance, while personal resources such as psychological well-being act as a protector against the negative consequences of workload. When psychological well-being is disrupted by excessive stress, individuals tend to experience emotional exhaustion

and loss of attachment to the organization, which then triggers turnover intention. Thus, the role of psychological well-being as a mediator paves the way for more strategic and focused interventions, which are not only curative, but also preventive in dealing with the impact of job stress that is increasing in the modern era. Therefore, organizational interventions can be focused on providing work resources such as social support from superiors and colleagues, increasing autonomy, and providing work flexibility that allows employees to balance the demands of work and personal life. In this way, the organization not only reduces the source of stress but also strengthens the psychological resilience of employees in the face of work pressure.

## CONCLUSION

This study comprehensively highlights the relationship between job stress, psychological well-being, and turnover intention in the context of modern employment. The findings show that job stress has a positive and significant influence on turnover intention, indicating that the higher the level of stress that employees feel, the more likely they are to leave the organization. On the other hand, psychological well-being has been shown to have a negative and significant effect on turnover intention, and acts as a mediator that connects job stress with the intention to resign. In other words, psychological well-being is able to reduce the destructive impact of job stress on employees' intentions to leave the organization.

The imbalance between work demands and psychological resources is at the root of various organizational problems, including high turnover rates. Decreased employee well-being due to chronic work stress illustrates a systemic failure to maintain emotional stability and employee commitment to work. Therefore, interventions that are conducive to psychological well-being are essential for organizations that want to retain talent and increase retention. A human resource management strategy that can be implemented is to develop a regular psychological welfare monitoring system, such as through work welfare surveys, feedback forums, and open counseling sessions. This data serves as the basis for preventive policies and targeted interventions, enabling organizations to be not only reactive to job stress but also proactive in managing potential turnover risks. The practical implications of this study lead to the need for organizational policies that are more humanistic and adaptive to the psychological condition of employees. Companies are advised to design integrated stress management programs, strengthen social support in the workplace, and create a more flexible and supportive work environment. Strengthening psychological capital through coping strategy training and increasing self-efficacy can also play an important role in mitigating the negative impact of job stress.

However, this study has limitations, where research is limited to one company which can reduce the generalization of results to a wider population. Therefore, further research needs to be carried out to expand the research context to various industry sectors and different work areas. The addition of moderator variables such as organizational support, personality, or work culture can also provide a more complete understanding of the complexity of the relationship being studied.

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