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Psychological Capital and Turnover Intention: The Mediating Role of Burnout among Employees

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Abstract: High turnover intention remains a persistent challenge for organizations operating in high-demand work environments due to its adverse consequences for performance, service quality, and human resource sustainability (Hom et al., 2017). Drawing on Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) theory, this study examines the effect of psychological capital on turnover intention through burnout as a mediating mechanism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were collected from 110 employees in a service-oriented organization in Indonesia. Psychological capital was measured using the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12), burnout was assessed with the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), and turnover intention was measured using the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) (Luthans et al., 2015; Demerouti et al., 2010; Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and mediation analysis with Jamovi. The results indicate that psychological capital has a significant negative effect on burnout, burnout has a significant positive effect on turnover intention, and burnout fully mediates the relationship between psychological capital and turnover intention. These findings extend JD–R theory by clarifying the mechanism through which personal resources reduce withdrawal intentions and offer practical implications for human resource management in high-demand organizations.

Keyword: Psychological Capital, Burnout, Turnover Intention, Job Demands–Resources Theory

INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover has long been recognized as a critical issue affecting organizational effectiveness, particularly in industries characterized by high job demands and sustained performance pressure (Hom et al., 2017). Elevated turnover intention increases recruitment and training costs, disrupts workflow continuity, and undermines service quality, especially in service-oriented organizations that rely heavily on human capital (Griffeth et al., 2000). Empirical evidence from Indonesia indicates that turnover intention is prevalent in high-demand sectors, underscoring the need to identify psychological mechanisms that support employee retention (Karatepe & Karadas, 2022).

Turnover intention refers to an employee's conscious and deliberate desire to leave an organization voluntarily and is widely regarded as the most proximal predictor of actual turnover behavior (Bothma & Roodt, 2013; Hom et al., 2017). Rather than emerging abruptly, turnover intention develops gradually as employees experience prolonged strain, emotional exhaustion, and dissatisfaction with their work environment (Griffeth et al., 2000). Consequently, understanding the antecedents of turnover intention is essential for designing effective human resource interventions.

Recent research in organizational behavior has increasingly emphasized the role of personal psychological resources in shaping employees' responses to demanding work conditions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Psychological capital, defined as a positive psychological state characterized by self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, has been identified as a key personal resource that enhances employees' capacity to cope with stress and adversity (Luthans et al., 2015). Employees with high psychological capital tend to display adaptive coping strategies and emotional regulation, which may protect them from burnout.

Burnout is a psychological syndrome resulting from chronic exposure to work-related stressors and is commonly manifested through exhaustion and disengagement from work (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Extensive research has demonstrated that burnout is a strong predictor of turnover intention, particularly in high-demand occupations (Bakker et al., 2023). Within the JD–R framework, burnout represents a strain outcome that emerges when job demands exceed available resources, while personal resources such as psychological capital can buffer this process (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Although prior studies have examined the relationships among psychological capital, burnout, and turnover intention, empirical evidence testing burnout as a mediating mechanism in the Indonesian context remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to examine the mediating role of burnout in the relationship between psychological capital and turnover intention, thereby extending the application of JD–R theory in an emerging economy context.

Turnover intention is defined as an individual's conscious and deliberate intention to leave an organization voluntarily (Griffeth et al., 2000). It is considered a reliable antecedent of actual turnover behavior and has been associated with reduced job performance, lower organizational commitment, and increased organizational costs (Hom et al., 2017). Research consistently shows that turnover intention is heightened in environments characterized by sustained workload and limited recovery opportunities (Bakker et al., 2023).

Psychological capital represents a higher-order construct comprising self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2015). As a personal resource, psychological capital enhances motivation, perseverance, and the ability to manage stress effectively. Empirical studies have demonstrated that psychological capital is negatively associated with burnout and turnover intention across diverse occupational settings (Avey et al., 2011; Karatepe & Karadas, 2022).

Burnout is a psychological response to prolonged exposure to work-related stressors and is typically manifested through exhaustion and disengagement (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Within the JD–R model, burnout is conceptualized as a strain outcome resulting from excessive job demands in the absence of sufficient resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Numerous studies have identified burnout as one of the strongest predictors of turnover intention (Hom et al., 2017).

The Job Demands–Resources theory posits that employee well-being and performance are shaped by the balance between job demands and available resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). When job demands exceed available resources, employees are more likely to experience burnout, whereas personal resources such as psychological capital can mitigate this effect and promote positive work outcomes (Bakker et al., 2023).

Based on the theoretical framework and prior empirical findings, the following hypotheses are proposed: H1: Psychological capital has a negative effect on burnout (Avey et al., 2011). H2: Burnout has a positive effect on turnover intention (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). H3: Psychological capital has a negative effect on turnover intention (Karatepe & Karadas, 2022). H4: Burnout mediates the relationship between psychological capital and turnover intention (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design, which is appropriate for examining relationships among psychological and organizational variables (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The participants consisted of 110 employees working in a service-oriented organization in Indonesia. A convenience sampling technique was applied due to accessibility constraints.

Psychological capital was measured using the 12-item Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-12), which has demonstrated strong psychometric properties across occupational contexts (Luthans et al., 2015). Burnout was assessed using the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, capturing exhaustion and disengagement dimensions (Demerouti et al., 2010). Turnover intention was measured using the six-item Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6), which has been validated in multiple organizational settings (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). All instruments demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019).

Data were analyzed using Jamovi statistical software. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize variable distributions. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine bivariate relationships among psychological capital, burnout, and turnover intention. Mediation analysis was performed using regression-based procedures to test the indirect effect of psychological capital on turnover intention through burnout (Hayes, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis indicated that psychological capital was at a moderate level ($M \approx 3.8$ on a six-point scale), a pattern commonly observed in high-demand service organizations (Luthans et al., 2015). Burnout levels were also moderate ($M \approx 3.4$ on a five-point scale), suggesting noticeable but not extreme exhaustion and disengagement (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Turnover intention demonstrated a moderate-to-high level ($M \approx 3.5$ on a five-point scale), consistent with prior findings in burnout-prone work environments (Hom et al., 2017).

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between psychological capital and burnout ($r \approx -0.45$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the conceptualization of psychological capital as a buffering personal resource (Avey et al., 2011). Burnout was significantly and positively correlated with turnover intention ($r \approx 0.50$, $p < 0.001$), consistent with prior empirical evidence (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Psychological capital also demonstrated a significant negative correlation with turnover intention ($r \approx -0.30$, $p < 0.01$).

Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis showed that psychological capital had a significant negative effect on burnout ($\beta < -0.40$, $p < 0.001$), while burnout had a significant positive effect on turnover intention ($\beta > 0.45$, $p < 0.001$). When burnout was included in the model, the direct effect of psychological capital on turnover intention became non-significant, whereas the indirect effect

through burnout remained significant. This pattern indicates full mediation, suggesting that psychological capital reduces turnover intention primarily by alleviating burnout (Hayes, 2018).

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that psychological capital indirectly reduces turnover intention through its effect on burnout, consistent with the JD–R framework (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Employees with higher psychological capital are better equipped to cope with job demands, thereby reducing exhaustion and disengagement (Luthans et al., 2015). The strong relationship between burnout and turnover intention underscores burnout as a central psychological mechanism driving withdrawal cognitions (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

The full mediation effect observed in this study extends JD–R theory by clarifying that personal resources influence turnover intention primarily through strain reduction rather than direct attitudinal pathways (Bakker et al., 2023). This finding is particularly relevant in high-demand environments, where structural job demands limit the direct impact of positive psychological states on retention decisions (Karatepe & Karadas, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that psychological capital reduces turnover intention indirectly by mitigating burnout. The findings contribute to the JD–R literature by elucidating the mediating role of burnout and offer practical implications for human resource management. Organizations are encouraged to invest in interventions that strengthen employees' psychological capital, such as resilience training and supportive leadership, to prevent burnout and reduce turnover intention (Luthans et al., 2015).

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