The Influence of Toxic Workplace Environment and Workload on Turnover Intention Through Work Stress at PT. MWB

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini meneliti pengaruh lingkungan kerja toksik dan beban kerja terhadap turnover intention, dengan stres kerja berperan sebagai variabel mediasi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa baik lingkungan kerja toksik maupun beban kerja secara signifikan meningkatkan stres kerja karyawan, yang pada akhirnya berkontribusi pada meningkatnya turnover intention. Hasil penelitian juga mengungkap bahwa stres kerja secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara lingkungan kerja toksik dan turnover intention, serta hubungan antara beban kerja dan turnover intention. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa efek tidak langsung melalui stres lebih kuat dibandingkan efek langsung. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menyoroti peran krusial stres psikologis dalam menghubungkan kondisi kerja yang negatif dan tuntutan pekerjaan dengan keinginan karyawan untuk meninggalkan organisasi. Implikasi penelitian menunjukkan pentingnya organisasi dalam mengelola budaya kerja dan distribusi beban kerja untuk mengurangi stres serta turnover intention.

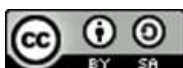**Kata Kunci:** lingkungan kerja toksik; beban kerja; stres kerja; turnover intention.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of toxic workplace environment and workload on turnover intention, with job stress acting as the mediating variable. The findings reveal that both toxic workplace environment and workload significantly increase employees' job stress, which in turn contributes to higher turnover intention. The results also indicate that job stress significantly mediates the relationship between toxic workplace environment and turnover intention, as well as the relationship between workload and turnover intention. The indirect effects through job stress were found to be stronger than the direct effects. Overall, this research highlights the critical role of psychological stress in linking negative workplace conditions and job demands to employees' intention to leave the organization. The study suggests that organizations should improve workplace culture and manage workload distribution to reduce job stress and turnover intention.

Keywords: toxic workplace environment; workload; job stress; turnover intention.

INTRODUCTION

Turnover intention is a strategic issue in human resource management because employees' increasing tendency to leave an organization directly affects operational stability, recruitment expenses, and overall business continuity. This issue is even more

critical in service industries, including the food and beverage sector, which is characterized by high work intensity and a strong dependence on workforce quality.

PT. Meksiko Waktu Bagus (PT. MWB), a food and beverage service provider located in Badung Regency, has experienced a rise in turnover rates over the past three years. Internal company data indicate turnover rates of 10.84% in 2022, 11.83% in 2023, and 13.33% in 2024, with an annual average of 12%, exceeding the normal threshold of 5–10%. This upward trend reflects an unstable work environment and suggests the presence of substantial internal pressures.

Preliminary observations and interviews with the HR Manager of PT. MWB reveal that the primary drivers of increased turnover intention are an unhealthy workplace environment and an imbalanced workload. Several employees reported unsupportive behaviors, poor communication, unfair treatment, and job demands disproportionate to the available workforce. These conditions have triggered moderate to high levels of work stress. Prolonged stress may escalate anxiety, reduce motivation, and ultimately encourage employees to seek employment opportunities elsewhere.

Previous studies have examined the influence of toxic workplace environments, workload, work stress, and turnover intention. Most findings show that unhealthy work environments and high workloads increase employee stress and strengthen turnover intention. However, some studies reveal contrasting results: (1) certain research indicates that workload does not significantly influence turnover intention, (2) several studies conclude that toxic workplace environments do not affect turnover, and (3) other findings show that work stress does not significantly influence turnover intention.

These inconsistencies indicate the presence of a research gap, particularly concerning: (1) differences in the direct effects of toxic workplace environments and workload on turnover intention, and (2) the mediating role of work stress, which continues to produce varied findings.

The novelty of this study lies in: (1) re-examining the relationships among toxic workplace environment, workload, work stress, and turnover intention within the context of the food and beverage service industry, which operates under labor-intensive conditions; (2) positioning work stress as a mediating variable to determine whether its role remains consistent in an organization experiencing continuous increases in turnover; and (3) providing an integrative model that simultaneously incorporates these variables unlike previous studies that examined them partially.

This study aims to refine and revalidate inconsistent findings from previous research and support empirical evidence that toxic workplace environment and workload contribute to work stress and turnover intention, with validation in the context of PT. MWB.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to examine the direct and indirect effects of toxic workplace environment (X1) and workload (X2) on turnover intention (Y2) through work stress (Y1) as a mediating variable. Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is used because the model involves latent constructs, mediation relationships, multiple indicators, and does not require normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2017).

The study population consists of all 70 employees of PT. MWB. Since the population is small and all employees are potentially exposed to the working conditions under investigation, a saturated sampling (total sampling) technique is applied, resulting in 70 respondents. Inclusion criteria include employees with a minimum

tenure of ≥1 year, while exclusion criteria include employees on extended leave or not actively working during the research period.

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire with a 1–5 Likert scale based on indicators from the literature: toxic workplace environment (Shelvy et al., 2023), workload (Koesomowidjojo, 2017), work stress (Robbins & Judge, 2017), and turnover intention (Rofik, 2021). The instrument was tested for validity (outer loading and AVE ≥ 0.50) and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (≥ 0.70)

Data analysis was conducted in two stages: (1) evaluation of the measurement model to assess convergent validity, discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker, cross-loadings, HTMT), and construct reliability; and (2) evaluation of the structural model to assess R^2, f^2, Q^2, and path significance using bootstrapping. Hypothesis testing was performed using a t-statistic ≥ 1.96 or p-value ≤ 0.05, including mediation testing (X1 → Y1 → Y2 and X2 → Y1 → Y2). The results were interpreted to determine whether work stress functions as a mediating variable and to provide managerial implications related to managing the work environment and workload in order to reduce turnover intention.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Toxic Workplace Environment (X_1) has a positive and significant effect on Stress (Y_1).

H2: Workload (X_2) has a positive and significant effect on Stress (Y_1).

H3: Toxic Workplace Environment (X_1) has a positive and significant effect on Turnover Intention (Y_2).

H4: Workload (X_2) has a positive and significant effect on Turnover Intention (Y_2).

H5: Stress (Y_1) has a positive and significant effect on Turnover Intention (Y_2).

H6: Stress (Y_1) mediates the effect of Toxic Workplace Environment (X_1) on Turnover Intention (Y_2).

H7: Stress (Y_1) mediates the effect of Workload (X_2) on Turnover Intention (Y_2).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
RESULT
Convergent Validity and Reliability Test

Table 1. Validity Results

No	Variable	Indicator	Correlation Coefficient	Description
1	Turnover Intention	Y2.1	0.859	Valid
2		Y2.2	0.881	Valid
3		Y2.3	0.919	Valid
4	Work Stress	Y1.1	0.785	Valid
5		Y1.2	0.865	Valid
6		Y1.3	0.855	Valid
7		Y1.4	0.838	Valid
8	Toxic Workplace	X1.1	0.944	Valid
9		X1.2	0.933	Valid

10		X1.3	0.766	Valid
11		X1.4	0.929	Valid
12	Workload	X2.1	0.843	Valid
13		X2.2	0.927	Valid
14		X2.3	0.928	Valid

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Based on the results in the table above, it is known that all statement items of the variables Toxic Workplace Environment (X_1), Workload (X_2), Work Stress (Y1), and Turnover Intention (Y2) have correlation coefficient values greater than the table r value (0.235). Therefore, all items are considered valid, meaning that each statement in the questionnaire is able to measure the research variables accurately and consistently.

Table 2. Reliability Results

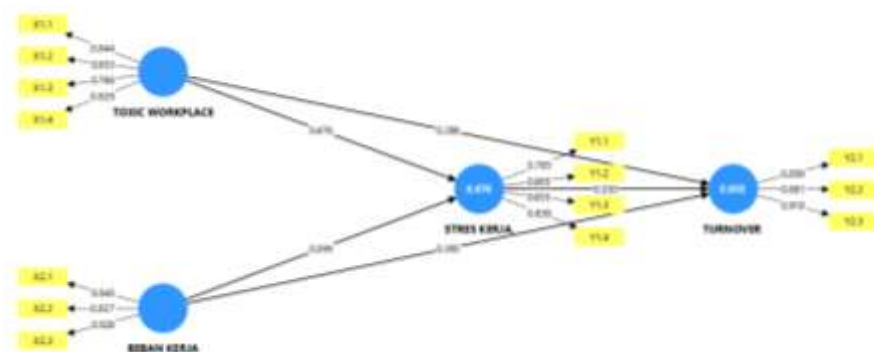| No	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Standard Alpha	Cronbach's	Description
1	Turnover Intention (Y2)	0.864	0.70		Reliable
2	Work Stress (Y1)	0.859	0.70		Reliable
3	Toxic Workplace (X1)	0.915	0.70		Reliable
4	Workload (X2)	0.882	0.70		Reliable

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Based on the results in the table above, all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, which means that all research instruments are considered reliable. This indicates that each statement item in the questionnaire has a high level of internal consistency and can be trusted to measure the research variables consistently.
Therefore, it can be concluded that all instruments used in this study meet the criteria for validity and reliability, making them suitable for use in the next stage of data analysis.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Based on Partial Least Squares (PLS)

PLS analysis is conducted through two main stages, namely (1) evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and (2) evaluation of the structural model (inner model).

Results of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test Results

No	Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
1	Turnover Intention (Y2)	Thinking about resigning (Y2.1)	0.859
		Looking for another job (Y2.2)	0.881
		Desire to quit (Y2.3)	0.919
2	Job Stress (Y1)	Task Demands (Y1.1)	0.785
		Role Demands (Y1.2)	0.865
		Interpersonal Demands (Y1.3)	0.855
		Organizational Demands (Y1.4)	0.838
3	Toxic Workplace Environment (X1)	Ostracism (X1.1)	0.944
		Incivility (X1.2)	0.933
		Harassment (X1.3)	0.766
		Bullying (X1.4)	0.929
4	Workload (X2)	Work Conditions (X2.1)	0.843
		Utilization of Working Time (X2.2)	0.927
		Targets to Be Achieved (X2.3)	0.928

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Based on the convergent validity test in Table 5.11, the results show that all outer loading values of the indicators for each variable exceed 0.70, with values ranging from 0.766 to 0.944. This indicates that all indicators of the constructs Toxic Workplace Environment, Workload, Job Stress, and Turnover Intention have good convergent validity, as they meet the outer loading criterion of ≥ 0.70 (Hair et al., 2021).

Discriminant Validity Test Results

Kode	Turnover Intention (Y2)	Stres Kerja (Y1)	Toxic Workplace Environment (X1)	Beban Kerja (X2)
Y2.1	**0.859**	0.661	0.716	0.765
Y2.2	**0.881**	0.851	0.686	0.771
Y2.3	**0.919**	0.810	0.884	0.809
Y1.1	0.500	**0.785**	0.500	0.510
Y1.2	0.706	**0.865**	0.706	0.659
Y1.3	0.785	**0.855**	0.785	0.833
Y1.4	0.555	**0.838**	0.555	0.463
X1.1	0.820	0.706	**0.944**	0.741
X1.2	0.775	0.683	**0.933**	0.709
X1.3	0.656	0.663	**0.766**	0.516
X1.4	0.827	0.742	**0.929**	0.750
X2.1	0.748	0.646	0.712	**0.843**
X2.2	0.807	0.707	0.686	**0.927**

| X2.3 | 0.825 | 0.705 | 0.668 | **0.928** |

Table 4. Method Cross Loading

The cross-loading test results show that all indicators have met the discriminant validity criteria, as the highest loading factor values are found on the constructs they are intended to measure.

Method Average Variance Extracted (AVE),
Table 5. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Result

No	Variabel	*Average Variance Extracted* (AVE)
1	*Turnover Intention* (Y2)	0.786
2	Stres Kerja (Y1)	0.700
3	*Toxic Workpace* (X1)	0.803
4	Beban Kerja (X2)	0.811

All variables in this study have Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.50. The AVE value for the Turnover Intention variable is 0.786, Job Stress is 0.700, Toxic Workplace is 0.803, and Workload is 0.811. These results indicate that each construct has a good ability to explain the variance of its indicators, as more than 50% of the indicator variance can be explained by the latent construct.

Composite Reliability Test Result
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

R-Square (R^2) was used to assess the predictive power of the exogenous variables on the endogenous constructs. Based on the analysis: (1) Stress (Y1) has an R^2 of 0.903, indicating that Toxic Workplace Environment (X1) and Workload (X2) explain 90.3% of its variance. This represents a strong explanatory power. (2) Turnover Intention (Y2) has an R^2 of 0.676, meaning that X1, X2, and Y1 together explain 67.6% of its variance, which falls into the moderate category.

These results indicate that the model has strong predictive capability, especially for Stress (Y1).

Tabel 6. R^2

Konstruk	R^2	Interpretation
Stress (Y1)	0.903	Strong
Turnover Intention (Y2)	0.676	Moderate

Effect Size (f^2)

Effect size (f^2) was assessed to determine the magnitude of influence of each exogenous construct on the endogenous constructs. According to Hair et al. (2019), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively.

Tabel 7. f^2

Relationship	f^2	Category
Workload (X2) → Turnover Intention (Y2)	0.556	Large
Stress (Y1) → Turnover Intention (Y2)	0.410	Large
Toxic Workplace (X1) → Turnover Intention (Y2)	0.277	Medium
Toxic Workplace (X1) → Stress (Y1)	0.291	Medium
Workload (X2) → Stress (Y1)	0.205	Medium

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Workload (X2) shows the strongest impact on Turnover Intention (Y2) (f^2 = 0.556), indicating that high work demands significantly increase employees' intention to leave. Stress (Y1) also has a strong impact on turnover intention (f^2 = 0.410), confirming that work stress is a critical psychological driver of turnover. Toxic Workplace Environment (X1) moderately affects turnover intention (f^2 = 0.277), meaning that toxic behaviors, unfair treatment, or poor communication still strongly contribute to turnover but not as severely as workload.

Both Workload (f^2 = 0.205) and Toxic Workplace (f^2 = 0.291) have medium effects on Stress (Y1), demonstrating that both constructs significantly increase employee stress levels. Overall, the f^2 results show that Workload and Stress are the strongest predictors of Turnover Intention, while Toxic Workplace plays an important role especially in shaping Stress, which subsequently escalates turnover intention.

DISCUSSION
Confirmation of Theory

The findings of this study reaffirm major theoretical perspectives in organizational behavior and human resource management, particularly the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model and the Stress Theory. According to the JD-R framework, harmful work environments and excessive job demands increase psychological strain, leading to negative behavioral outcomes such as withdrawal and turnover intention. This study supports that premise, as both toxic workplace environment and workload significantly increased employees' work stress, which subsequently strengthened their intention to leave the organization.

The results also align with Stress Theory, which asserts that prolonged exposure to negative stimuli such as interpersonal conflict, role overload, or unfair treatment elevates emotional strain and encourages escape or avoidance behaviors. In the context of PT. MWB, the findings substantiate that toxic treatment, poor communication, and heavy work demands contribute directly to higher stress levels and stronger turnover intention.

Explanation of Findings

The empirical results show that toxic workplace environment has a significant positive effect on stress. This reflects that employees who experience intimidation, disrespect, or interpersonal conflict tend to feel emotionally exhausted and psychologically pressured. Similarly, workload was also found to significantly increase

stress, indicating that time pressure, excessive task volume, and demanding job expectations heighten employees' mental burden.

Furthermore, both toxic workplace environment and workload significantly influenced turnover intention. Employees who are exposed to negative social conditions or heavy job demands are more likely to feel dissatisfied and seek better employment alternatives. Stress also demonstrated a strong positive effect on turnover intention, confirming that psychological strain serves as a key trigger driving employees to consider leaving their organization.

The mediation results reveal that stress partially mediates the effects of toxic workplace environment and workload on turnover intention. This indicates that harmful conditions and excessive demands not only influence turnover intention directly, but also strengthen it indirectly by increasing employees' stress levels. In other words, stress acts as a psychological mechanism explaining why negative work conditions contribute to higher turnover intention.

Comparison with Prior Studies

The findings of this research are consistent with numerous previous studies that confirmed the detrimental effects of toxic workplace environment and excessive workload on psychological strain and turnover intention. Studies by Lestari & Rachmawati (2023) and Nguyen & Tran (2021) found that toxic interpersonal relations and heavy job demands significantly elevate stress, which subsequently increases an employee's desire to quit.

However, this study also contributes clarity to research inconsistencies. Several earlier studies reported that workload or toxic workplace environment had no effect on turnover intention. By incorporating stress as a mediating variable, the present study demonstrates that the divergent findings may stem from the absence of stress in previous analytical models. The strong partial mediation effect found in this study suggests that stress is a crucial explanatory variable that must be included to fully capture the causal process leading to turnover intention.

Role of the Mediating Variable (Stress)

Stress plays a significant mediating role in this research, partially transmitting the effects of both toxic workplace environment and workload on turnover intention. The mediation is partial because the direct effects remain significant even after stress is included in the model. This implies that work stress not only intensifies employees' desire to leave but also explains the underlying psychological mechanism connecting harmful environments and job demands to behavioral outcomes.

Thus, stress is a central psychological construct that links organizational conditions to undesirable employee behaviors.

Practical Implications

The findings carry substantial managerial implications for PT. MWB. First, reducing toxic workplace behaviors through stricter behavioral policies, improved leadership communication, and conflict management training is essential to lowering stress levels. Second, balancing workload distribution, clarifying job descriptions, and adjusting work schedules may significantly reduce employee strain. Third, since stress is a powerful predictor of turnover intention, organizations should implement employee assistance programs, counselling services, and stress-reduction initiatives to mitigate psychological burden.

Overall, improving the psychosocial work environment is crucial for reducing turnover rates and enhancing employee stability in the company.

Academic Contribution (Novelty)

This study offers three key academic contributions: (1) It enriches empirical evidence supporting the mediating role of stress in explaining how toxic workplace environment and workload shape turnover intention. (2) It provides a comprehensive relational model combining workplace toxicity, job demands, stress, and turnover intention, which has rarely been examined simultaneously in the F&B service industry. (3) It clarifies previous inconsistencies in the literature by demonstrating that the absence of stress as a mediating variable may cause mixed findings regarding the effects of workload and toxic workplace environment.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that a toxic work environment and a high workload significantly increase employees' work stress, with an explanatory power of 90.3%. The resulting work stress then becomes an important factor that strengthens employees' intention to leave, alongside the direct influence of a toxic work environment and workload. Among all variables, workload has the strongest impact on turnover intention, followed by work stress and the toxic work environment.

Conceptually, these findings confirm that the quality of the work environment and workload management are crucial elements in maintaining workforce stability. The impact of this study indicates that organizations need to implement interventions related to workload management and workplace culture improvement to reduce stress levels and prevent increasing turnover intention. This study also reinforces empirical evidence that psychological factors and workplace conditions are interconnected and play a central role in shaping employees' decisions to stay or leave the organization.

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