



Does Workplace Stress Mediate The Effects of Job Insecurity and Toxic Workplace Environment on Turnover Intention?

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ABTRACT

This study examines the influence of job insecurity and toxic workplace environment on turnover intention, with workplace stress serving as a mediating variable among retail employees. The research is motivated by the high turnover rates commonly found in the retail sector, which are often associated with unstable employment conditions and unfavorable work environments. Using a quantitative approach, primary data were collected through online questionnaires from 302 Indomaret employees in Bengkulu City. The data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 to assess the validity, reliability, and structural relationships among the variables. The findings indicate that job insecurity has a direct and significant positive effect on turnover intention, suggesting that uncertainty regarding job stability increases employees' desire to leave the organization. While a toxic workplace environment does not directly influence turnover intention, it significantly increases workplace stress, which in turn positively affects turnover intention. Moreover, workplace stress is found to mediate the relationships between job insecurity and turnover intention, as well as between toxic workplace environment and turnover intention. Overall, the study highlights the crucial role of workplace stress as a psychological mechanism linking unfavorable work conditions to employees' intention to leave, offering important implications for employee retention strategies in the retail sector.

Keywords: *job insecurity, toxic workplace environment, workplace stress, turnover intention.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh job insecurity dan toxic workplace environment terhadap turnover intention dengan workplace stress sebagai variabel mediasi pada karyawan sektor ritel. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh tingginya tingkat turnover karyawan di sektor ritel yang sering kali dipengaruhi oleh ketidakstabilan pekerjaan dan kondisi lingkungan kerja yang tidak kondusif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan data primer yang dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner daring terhadap 302 karyawan Indomaret di Kota Bengkulu. Data dianalisis menggunakan SmartPLS 4.0 untuk menguji validitas, reliabilitas, serta hubungan struktural antarvariabel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa job insecurity berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap turnover intention, yang mengindikasikan bahwa ketidakpastian terhadap keberlanjutan pekerjaan meningkatkan keinginan karyawan untuk meninggalkan organisasi. Sementara itu, toxic workplace environment tidak berpengaruh langsung terhadap turnover intention, namun berpengaruh signifikan terhadap workplace stress yang selanjutnya meningkatkan turnover intention. Selain itu, workplace stress terbukti memediasi hubungan antara job insecurity dan turnover intention serta antara toxic workplace environment dan turnover intention. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan peran penting workplace stress sebagai mekanisme psikologis yang menghubungkan kondisi kerja yang tidak menguntungkan dengan niat karyawan untuk berpindah Kerja.

Kata Kunci: Ketidakamanan Kerja, lingkungan Kerja yang toksik, stres di tempat kerja, niat berpindah kerja

Introduction

Employee turnover intention has become a critical issue for organizations, particularly in the retail sector, due to its detrimental impact on operational efficiency, organizational stability, and human resource costs. Retail employees often work under conditions marked by job instability, demanding workloads, and limited career development opportunities, which intensify their vulnerability to turnover intentions. In this context, job insecurity and toxic workplace environments have emerged as prominent factors that negatively shape employees' work experiences and psychological well-being.

Job insecurity creates uncertainty regarding job continuity and future career prospects, leading employees to experience anxiety and psychological strain that may encourage them to seek alternative employment. Similarly, toxic workplace environments characterized by poor leadership practices, interpersonal conflict, and hostile behaviors contribute to emotional exhaustion and reduced employee engagement. However, existing studies have largely examined these factors in isolation and have not sufficiently explained the psychological processes that connect unfavorable working conditions to employees' intention to leave.

To address this gap, the present study emphasizes the role of workplace stress as a key mediating mechanism that links job insecurity and toxic workplace environments to turnover intention. By focusing on retail employees, this research responds to the urgent need for empirical evidence that clarifies how stressful work conditions drive turnover intention in sectors with inherently high employee mobility. The findings are expected to provide meaningful theoretical contributions and practical guidance for organizations seeking to reduce employee turnover by improving job security and workplace conditions.

Turnover intention has become a costly and challenging issue for many organizations. Turnover intention refers to an individual's consideration or conscious desire to leave their current job (Zhang et al., 2024; Tett & Meyer, 1993). This desire generally arises from employees' efforts to seek better employment opportunities and fulfill their expectations regarding job stability, well-being, and career prospects (Dalgic & Akgunduz, 2022). High employee turnover has adverse consequences for organizational effectiveness, including increased recruitment and training costs, loss of organizational knowledge, and disruption of operational continuity (Kerdpitak & Jermstittiparsert, 2020; Kim et al., 2019). Therefore, identifying the factors that contribute to turnover intention is essential for organizations seeking to reduce its negative impacts and improve employee retention.

One of the key factors associated with turnover intention is job insecurity. Job insecurity refers to an employee's perception that their current job is at risk (Balz & Schuller, 2021). It reflects employees' negative reactions to changes related to their work and employment conditions (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). According to Hellgren et al., (1999), job insecurity represents a perceived threat to various aspects of employment, particularly threats to job continuity and the quality of work relationships. Employees' subjective perceptions regarding the potential loss of their job are commonly referred to as quantitative job insecurity.

(Demirović Bajrami et al., 2021). Previous studies consistently indicate that job insecurity is a stressful experience that negatively affects employees' psychological well-being and significantly increases their intention to leave the organization (Peltokorpi & Allen, 2024; Soelton et al., 2021).

In addition to job insecurity, a toxic workplace environment has been identified as another critical factor contributing to turnover intention. A toxic workplace environment describes negative interactions between employees and their work environment (Azuma et al., 2015). Such environments are characterized by narcissistic behavior, offensive and aggressive leadership, harassment, intimidation, exclusion, and inappropriate conduct among supervisors and coworkers (Rasool et al., 2019; Rasool et al., 2021). These conditions can create unpleasant and harmful experiences for employees, adversely affecting their mental and physical health and increasing their intention to leave the organization (Iqbal et al., 2022; Beno et al., 2022). Prior research has demonstrated that toxic workplace environments significantly reduce employee engagement and increase negative emotions such as frustration and emotional exhaustion, which ultimately elevate turnover intention (Low et al., 2023).

Another important factor influencing turnover intention is workplace stress. Workplace stress refers to a condition in which job demands exceed an individual's physical or emotional capabilities, causing feelings of pressure and strain (Goel & Verma, 2021; Kerdpitak & Jermstiparsert, 2020). Stress in the workplace may arise not only from job tasks and responsibilities but also from unfavorable working conditions and organizational environments (Shoib et al., 2019). Excessive workplace stress has been shown to reduce job satisfaction, increase emotional exhaustion, and encourage employees to seek employment elsewhere (Jiang et al., 2022; Manoppo, 2020). As a result, workplace stress is widely recognized as a direct antecedent of turnover intention.

Although numerous studies have examined the direct relationships between job insecurity, toxic workplace environment, and turnover intention, findings regarding their combined effects remain limited and inconclusive. Several studies have confirmed that job insecurity has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention (Balz & Schuller, 2021; Ratnasari & Lestari, 2020), while others have demonstrated a strong association between toxic workplace environments and employees' intention to leave (Low et al., 2023). However, the mechanisms through which these factors influence turnover intention have not been fully explored.

Recent studies suggest that workplace stress may play a critical mediating role in this relationship. Job insecurity has been identified as a significant source of stress, as employees who perceive threats to their job stability tend to experience anxiety, pressure, fatigue, and emotional exhaustion (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; An et al., 2023). Similarly, toxic workplace environments have been shown to increase stress levels due to persistent exposure to negative interpersonal interactions and unhealthy organizational climates (Beno et al., 2022; Seyadi et al., 2024). Previous research has demonstrated that workplace stress can effectively

mediate the relationship between various organizational factors and turnover-related outcomes (Çelik, 2018; Sesen & Ertan, 2022).

Despite these findings, empirical studies that simultaneously examine job insecurity and toxic workplace environment as antecedents of turnover intention through the mediating role of workplace stress remain scarce, particularly in the retail sector. Most prior studies have focused on specific industries such as banking or pharmaceuticals (Abolade, 2018; Rasool et al., 2021), leaving a gap in understanding how these variables interact in retail organizations. This gap is particularly important because retail employment is often characterized by unstable working hours, relatively low wages, part-time employment, and limited job security, all of which contribute to high turnover rates (Han et al., 2019).

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the effect of job insecurity and toxic workplace environment on turnover intention, with workplace stress as a mediating variable, among employees in the retail industry. By integrating these variables into a single research framework, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying turnover intention. The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for human resource managers and policymakers in designing effective strategies to reduce employee turnover and foster healthier work environments.

Job insecurity has an influence on turnover intention. According to (Akgunduz & Eryilmaz, 2018) An employee who feels a high level of job insecurity may choose to find a new job as a way to reduce worries related to unemployment, overcome social and psychological losses, and obtain better financial benefits. furthermore (Ashford et al., 1989) found that feelings of job insecurity significantly increase the desire to find a new job. Meanwhile, other studies have shown that job insecurity can actually increase productivity, where employees who feel their jobs are threatened will try harder to gain recognition from managers and keep their positions stable (Abolade, 2018).

According to the results of research (Brougham & Haar, 2020) that job insecurity has a direct relationship to turnover intention. Job mobility is a significant factor in predicting the intention to change jobs. In addition, job insecurity turns out to be more influential on a person's intention to change jobs than the job satisfaction factor itself. Clearer results based on the results of (Richter et al., 2020) state that job insecurity is positively related to employee turnover. In line with the results of research (Abolade, 2018) and (Peltokorpi & Allen, 2024) stated that job insecurity has a positive effect on an employee's intention to move.

H1 : Job insecurity has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention.

Toxic workplace environment has an influence on Turnover intention. When people with power exhibit greed and selfishness, they tend to commit immoral acts, such as intimidation, harassment, threats, and humiliating others. As a result, productivity decreases and turnover intention increases (Anjum & Ming, 2018). When employees feel unhappy or dissatisfied in such an atmosphere, they are likely to consider resigning (Low et al., 2023). A toxic work environment reduces employee engagement and increases negative feelings, such

as frustration and stress, which can lead to incivility. Research shows that this disrespect is one of the factors that predicts employees' intention to change jobs (Rasool et al., 2021).

More significant results are generated from several studies. According to research (Low et al., 2023) there are significant results between a toxic workplace and turnover intention. In line with other research which reveals that workplace incivility has a positive influence on turnover intention (Tricahyadinata et al., 2020). Meanwhile, according to (Iqbal et al., 2022), a toxic workplace has an indirect and significant effect on employee turnover intention.

H2 : Toxic workplace environment has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention.

Workplace stress has an influence on turnover intention. There are several factors that cause stress in the work environment including demands, control, support, interactions between colleagues, roles, change, and organizational culture. All of these factors can affect stress levels among employees. In addition, these factors have a significant impact on health consequences that can result in high levels of employee absenteeism and turnover (Kerdpitak & Jermittiparsert, 2020). Research results (Manlove, 1994) show that stress can reduce job satisfaction and increase the desire to leave the job.

According to the results of research (Çelik, 2018) there is a positive relationship between job stress and employee turnover intention. Because, excessive stress, as is well known, can damage employees and adversely affect their attitude towards work. This condition encourages them to consider leaving their jobs. In line with (Jiang et al., 2022) that stress has a positive influence on turnover intention. Furthermore, other studies show a positive and significant influence between job stress and turnover intention (Manoppo, 2020) and according to (Chao et al., 2015) workplace stress has a positive effect on turnover intention.

H3 : Workplace stress has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention.

Job insecurity has an influence on workplace stress. When employees feel a threat to their current job and realize that future job opportunities are dwindling, they tend to experience self-doubt, anxiety, pressure, fatigue, energy depletion, and stress. This research shows a positive and significant influence between job insecurity and job stress (An et al., 2023). Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt define job insecurity as a source of stress that includes fear, loss of potential, and anxiety (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). In line with the results of research (Soelton et al., 2020) which states that there are positive and significant results between job insecurity and job stress.

H4 : Job insecurity has a positive and significant effect on workplace stress.

Toxic workplace environment has an influence on workplace stress. According to (Kurniawan et al., 2023) the effects of a toxic work environment can also increase work stress. In line with the results of his research, it was found that there was a significant positive effect of a toxic work environment on work stress. Furthermore, findings from (Seyadi et al., 2024)

indicate that an unhealthy work environment can substantially increase stress levels in the workplace, which in turn results in a decrease in life satisfaction and productivity of employees. In line with the results of research (Beno et al., 2022) that a toxic work environment has a positive and significant effect on workplace stress.

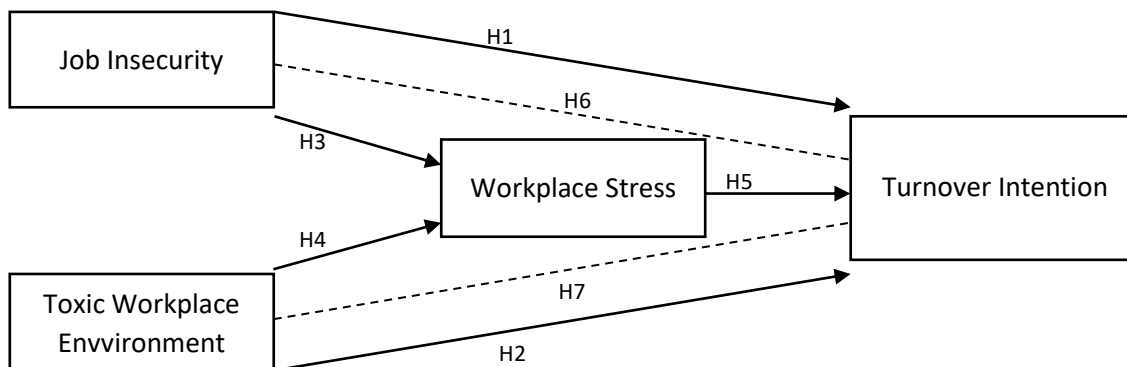
H5 : Toxic workplace environment has a positive and significant effect on workplace stress.

When employees feel job insecurity, they tend to feel stress. In line with the statement that employees feel their jobs are threatened and realize that future job opportunities are increasingly limited, they are likely to experience feelings of self-doubt, anxiety, pressure, fatigue, energy depletion, and stress. This study revealed a significant positive relationship between job insecurity and workplace stress (An et al., 2023). Meanwhile, workplace stress has a significant relationship with turnover intention. This stressful condition that occurs in the workplace makes individuals consider their intention to leave the organization. In line with the results of his research that there is a positive relationship between job stress and employee turnover intention (Çelik, 2018). Also in line with the results of research (Manlove, 1994) which states that there is a positive relationship between workplace stress and employee turnover intention.

H6 : Job insecurity has a positive effect on turnover intention through the mediation of workplace stress.

When employees are in a toxic work environment, they tend to feel stress when they are in that place. Supported by research (Kurniawan et al., 2023) which states the cause of stress in the work environment is a toxic environment. In line with research (Seyadi et al., 2024) and (Beno et al., 2022) that a toxic work environment has a positive effect on stress experienced in the workplace. Meanwhile, workplace stress has a significant relationship with turnover intention. In line with research (Manoppo, 2020) shows a positive and significant influence between work stress and turnover intention. And according to (Chao et al., 2015) workplace stress has a positive effect on turnover intention. It is still the same as the results of research (Çelik, 2018) that there is a positive relationship between job stress and employee turnover intention.

H7 : Toxic workplace environment has a positive effect on turnover intention through the mediation of workplace stress.



Methods

This research describes various conditions, situations, and variable relationships with Indomaret employees in Bengkulu City. In this study, the approach used is quantitative research. The population in this study were retail store employees in Bengkulu City, totaling 536 people. The data used in this study are primary data, namely data obtained directly from the object of research in the form of a questionnaire containing structured statements regarding respondents' responses to the variables studied in Indomaret employees in Bengkulu City. To obtain representative data, the authors used the census method, in which all members of the population were used as respondents, so that a sample of 302 people was collected. Data on the number of stores and employees are described as follows:

Table 1. Data on the Number of Employees of Indomaret Bengkulu City

Kecamatan	Jumlah Toko	Jumlah Karyawan
Kecamatan Selebar	24	114 orang
Kecamatan Ratu Agung	18	118 orang
Kecamatan Muara Bangkahulu	14	66 orang
Kecamatan Singaran Pati	12	60 orang
Kecamatan Gading Cempaka	8	48 orang
Kecamatan Teluk Segara	8	46 orang
Kecamatan Ratu Samban	5	30 orang
Kecamatan Sungai Serut	3	15 orang
Kecamatan Kampung Melayu	7	39 orang
Total	99 toko	536 orang

Source : Bengkulu City Industry and Trade Office, Research Results.

Based on table 2, the majority of participants in this study were female (63.6%), while the

number of male employees was (36.4%). Meanwhile, in terms of education, most employees are high school graduates (83.4%). Employees who work for less than 1 year (21.8%) while those who work for 1-3 years (64.9%) where this proves that most of the employees are in the early stages of their work. As many as 7.9% of respondents have worked for 4-5 years, and only a small percentage of employees have worked for more than 5 years where the percentage is 5.3%. In terms of age, the respondents of this study were dominated by employees with an age range of 17-23 years (73.5%) which illustrates that the majority of employees are at a young age and productive age range. This shows that most Indomaret employees who are respondents are employees who are still in the early stages of their career journey.

Table 2. Respondent profile demographic results

No	Klasifikasi	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Man	110	36.4
	Woman	192	63.6
2	Age		
	17-23 tahun	222	73.5
	24-30 tahun	74	24.5
	>30 tahun	6	2
3	Education		
	SMA/SMK/Sederajat	252	83.4
	Diploma	5	1.7
	Sarjana	45	14.9
4	Long Time Working		
	<1 tahun	66	21.8
	1-3 tahun	196	64.9
	4-5 tahun	24	7.9
	>5 tahun	16	5.3

Source : Processed primary data (2025)

In this study, the questionnaire that was adapted and adopted from scientific articles based on previous research was used. The variable job insecurity was measured through 4 question items taken from (Chen & Eyoum, 2021), one of which is "I worry that I will not be able to keep my job." The variable toxic workplace environment was measured through 7 question items taken from (Rasool et al., 2021), one of which is "My supervisor/colleagues/subordinates sometimes try to be open with me and share inappropriate jokes." The variable turnover intention was measured through 4 question items taken from (Akgunduz & Eryilmaz, 2018), one of which is "Sometimes I feel driven to quit my current job." The variable workplace stress was measured through 13 question items taken

from (Chao et al., 2015), one of which is “My job requires me to focus for long periods of time and is draining.” The questionnaire was measured using a Likert scale with the following answer choices and scores: (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) sometimes, (2) disagree, (1) strongly disagree.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed research model. This model shows the relationship between job insecurity and toxic workplace environment on turnover intention, mediated by workplace stress.

Figure 1. Measurement Model

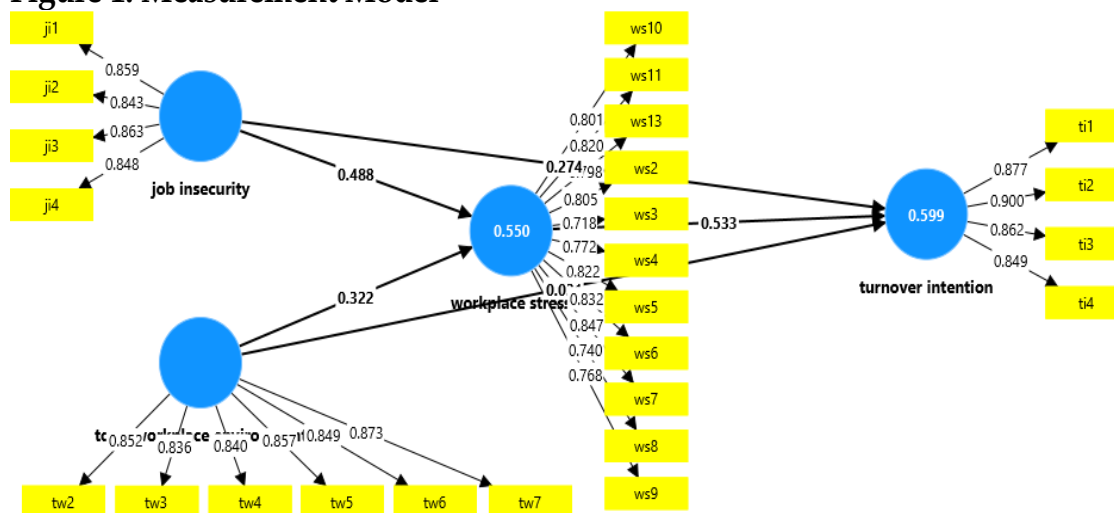


Table 3 shows that the outer loading of each questionnaire item is > 0.7. This means it meets the standard criteria for outer loading, which must be > 0.7. However, several indicators had to be removed, including TW2, WS1, and WS12, because their factor loading values were < 0.7.

Table 3. Validity Test Results

Item	Factor Loading			
	1	2	3	4
Job Insecurity				
J1	0,597			
J2	0,585			
J3	0,599			
J4	0,589			
Toxic Workplace Environment				
TW2		0,592		
TW3		0,581		

TW4	0,583
TW5	0,595
TW6	0,590
TW7	0,606
Workplace Stress	
WS2	0,559
WS3	0,499
WS4	0,536
WS5	0,571
WS6	0,578
WS7	0,588
WS8	0,514
WS9	0,533
WS10	0,556
WS11	0,569
WS13	0,548
Turnover Intention	
TI1	0,609
TI2	0,625
TI3	0,599
TI4	0,590

Source : Processed primary data (2025)

Table 4 shows the results of the variable reliability test; it indicates that all four variables are declared reliable because they meet the criteria with Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability values > 0.7 .

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

Variabel	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
job insecurity	0.876	0.915
toxic workplace environment	0.924	0.940
turnover intention	0.895	0.927
workplace stress	0.941	0.949

Source : Processed primary data (2025)

Table 5 presents the data from the hypothesis testing results. The result of testing H1 is accepted because it has a t-statistic value greater than 1.96 and a p-value less than 0.05. However, H2 is rejected because it has a t-statistic value of 0.488 and a p-value of 0.626. Meanwhile, the other hypotheses are accepted and have values in accordance with the criteria.

Tabel 5. Hypothesis Test Results

Hipotesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
job insecurity → turnover intention	0.274	0.276	3.682	0.000
toxic workplace environment → turnover intention	0.031	0.029	0.488	0.626
workplace stress → turnover intention	0.533	0.534	8.082	0.000
job insecurity → workplace stress	0.488	0.492	9.384	0.000
toxic workplace environment → workplace stress	0.322	0.319	5.713	0.000
job insecurity → workplace stress → turnover intention	0.260	0.262	6.735	0.000
toxic workplace environment → workplace stress → turnover intention	0.172	0.171	4.281	0.000

Source : Processed primary data (2025)

The result of testing H1 illustrates that job insecurity has a positive influence on turnover intention. In retail companies, job insecurity can be a strong reason for employees to leave their jobs. The results of this study are supported by several other research findings. The variable job insecurity has a significant influence on turnover intention and plays an important role in influencing turnover intention at PT. Fifgroup Batam Branch (Ratnasari & Lestari, 2020). Furthermore, the results show that job insecurity has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention (Soelton et al., 2020). Job insecurity can increase employees' desire to look for new jobs and is one of the main factors in the intention to leave a job. The impact of this insecurity tends to be negative, especially when associated with stress, which can reinforce the desire (Sun et al., 2020). In addition, an employee who feels threatened by job instability tends to consider looking for another job as an effort to reduce anxiety about the possibility of losing their job, to overcome the emerging social and psychological impacts, and to improve their financial condition (Akgunduz & Eryilmaz, 2018).

In contrast to the results of H2, which indicate a negative influence between job insecurity and turnover intention. Although research shows that a toxic work environment tends to increase turnover intention due to dissatisfaction, stress, and emotional exhaustion, this study found that it does not always encourage employees to leave their jobs. This is clarified through the approach of the Social Exchange Theory proposed by Peter M. Blau in 1964, which in this context explains that employees' decisions to stay are not only influenced by poor

environmental conditions but also by other benefits they receive, such as financial rewards or promising career prospects. In addition, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Karasek et al., 2001) shows that although there are high job demands due to a toxic environment, job resources such as social support and adequate compensation can reduce these negative impacts, thereby encouraging employees to remain.

The results of testing H3 show a positive relationship between workplace stress and turnover intention. This research finding is supported by several other studies with similar results. As found by Soelton & Atnani (2018), stress has a positive and significant influence on turnover intention. Similar results were also obtained from the study by Chegini et al (2019), which showed that nurses experiencing high workloads and interpersonal stress are more likely to leave their jobs. This is also supported by the research of Çelik, (2018), which found a positive relationship between job stress and employees' intention to leave. Excessive stress, as is well known, can have serious negative effects on employee well-being, which in turn affects their attitudes toward their work. This high level of stress often causes employees to feel pressured and tend to consider leaving their jobs in search of a more supportive work environment.

Next, the testing of H4 illustrates that job insecurity has a positive relationship with workplace stress. The results of this study are also supported by other research. As shown by oleh M.-J. Kim & Kim (2020), job insecurity has a positive effect on workplace stress. The feeling of anxiety from not receiving support or recognition from the work environment due to being perceived as less competent creates insecurity at the workplace, leading to self-doubt and social worries, which ultimately result in increased stress. Furthermore, Soelton et al., (2020) in their study revealed a positive effect of job insecurity on stress. Additionally, when employees feel threatened by their current job and realize that future job opportunities are becoming increasingly scarce, they tend to experience self-doubt, anxiety, pressure, fatigue, burnout, and stress (An et al., 2023).

The results of testing H5 show a positive influence between a toxic workplace environment and workplace stress. This is in line with the findings of Wang et al., (2020), which state that there is a positive influence between these two variables. This is because when employees experience a toxic environment at their workplace, they tend to feel psychologically disturbed, which causes stress. This is supported by the research of Seyadi et al. (2024), which indicates that an unhealthy work environment can substantially increase stress levels at work, which in turn results in decreased life satisfaction and employee productivity.

From the testing of H6, the results show that workplace stress can play a mediating role in the influence of job insecurity and a toxic workplace environment on turnover intention. This is in line with research that reveals a significant positive relationship between job insecurity and workplace stress (An et al., 2023). Meanwhile, workplace stress has a significant relationship with turnover intention (Çelik, 2018). This indicates that job insecurity can be an initial trigger that increases employees' stress levels, which in turn drives their

intention to leave the job. When employees feel insecure about their job, psychological pressure increases, thus boosting the desire to find a more stable work environment.

Furthermore, the results of testing H7 show that workplace stress can mediate the relationship between the toxic workplace environment and turnover intention. This is in line with research by Seyadi et al., (2024) and Beno et al., (2022), which proves that an unhealthy work environment can increase the stress levels experienced by employees. Meanwhile, stress that arises in the workplace has a strong and significant correlation with the increased desire of employees to leave their jobs (Manoppo, 2020).

This study makes a theoretical contribution by deepening the understanding of the relationship between job insecurity and toxic workplace environment to turnover intention by considering the mediating role of workplace stress. The results of this study are in line with the Job Demands-Resources Model (Karasek et al., 2001), which states that when workload or pressures such as job uncertainty and a negative work environment exceed the resources available to employees, stress will arise that can trigger the desire to quit work. In this case, stress in the workplace serves as a link between an ideal work situation and an employee's decision to seek a job that is considered more stable and supportive (Çelik, 2018; An et al., 2023). In addition, these findings are also consistent with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which explains that employees make decisions to stay or move based on the reciprocity of what they gain and feel in the work environment.

In addition, the results of this study emphasize the importance of workplace stress as a relevant mediating variable in describing the influence of job insecurity and toxic workplace environment on turnover intention. This finding is reinforced by previous studies showing that job uncertainty as well as a poor work environment can exacerbate employee stress levels oleh (M.-J. Kim & Kim, 2020; Seyadi et al., 2024), and these stressful conditions ultimately drive employees' desire to leave work (Soelton & Atnani, 2018; Beno et al., 2022). Therefore, this study not only expands the literature in the field of organizational behavior, but also provides the foundation for further research that wants to explore more deeply the role of psychological stress in bridging the influence of work environment factors on employees' intention to change jobs.

This study offers a distinctive contribution to the literature by highlighting the central role of workplace stress as a key explanatory mechanism in understanding turnover intention, rather than merely confirming direct relationships between unfavorable work conditions and employees' intention to leave. The findings demonstrate that negative workplace conditions do not always immediately result in turnover intention. Instead, turnover intention develops through a psychological process in which workplace stress becomes the critical factor that translates adverse work experiences into withdrawal intentions.

One of the most notable contributions of this study is the finding that a toxic workplace environment does not exert a direct effect on turnover intention. This result contrasts with much of the existing literature and provides a more nuanced understanding of employee behavior. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model,

the findings suggest that employees may tolerate toxic conditions when compensatory resources—such as job security, financial benefits, or social support—are perceived as sufficient. However, prolonged exposure to such environments increases psychological strain, and it is this accumulated workplace stress that ultimately strengthens employees' intention to leave.

Furthermore, this study distinguishes the different psychological pathways through which job insecurity and toxic workplace environments influence turnover intention. Job insecurity directly triggers concerns about future employment stability, leading employees to consider leaving more immediately, whereas toxic workplace environments influence turnover intention indirectly by intensifying stress levels over time. By testing workplace stress as a mediator for both antecedents within a single integrated model, this study extends prior research that has typically examined these relationships in isolation.

The principal novelty of this study resides in its theoretical reconceptualization of turnover intention as a stress-driven psychological process rather than a direct behavioral response to adverse workplace conditions. While prior research has largely adopted a linear perspective by examining the direct effects of job insecurity and toxic workplace environments on turnover intention, this study advances the literature by positioning workplace stress as a core explanatory construct that governs how and when unfavorable work conditions are translated into withdrawal intentions. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model, this research theorizes that employees' responses to negative workplace conditions are contingent upon their cognitive and emotional appraisal of these conditions as stressors. Conceptually, the findings suggest that toxic workplace environments do not inherently provoke turnover intention; instead, their influence materializes through the accumulation of psychological strain when perceived job demands exceed available resources. Furthermore, this study differentiates the underlying pathways of job insecurity and toxic workplace environments, demonstrating that job insecurity operates as an immediate threat to employment continuity, whereas toxic environments exert a more indirect, stress-mediated effect over time. By integrating these mechanisms into a unified theoretical framework, this study moves beyond confirming established associations and contributes a process-oriented explanation of turnover intention, thereby enriching theoretical understanding of employee withdrawal behavior, particularly within high-volatility retail employment contexts.

Conclusion

This study concludes that job insecurity and toxic workplace environment play important roles in shaping employees' turnover intention, particularly through the presence of workplace stress among retail employees. Job insecurity directly encourages employees to consider leaving their organization, as uncertainty about job stability creates psychological pressure and reduces employees' sense of security regarding their future. Meanwhile, a toxic

workplace environment does not directly lead to turnover intention; however, it becomes a significant factor when it increases employees' stress levels. Workplace stress emerges as a key psychological mechanism that explains how unfavorable working conditions influence employees' intention to leave. These findings indicate that employees may tolerate insecure or unhealthy work environments to some extent, but prolonged stress resulting from such conditions ultimately drives their intention to seek alternative employment. Therefore, workplace stress serves as a crucial link between negative work conditions and turnover intention in the retail sector.

This research has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the scope of the research is only limited to Indomaret employees in Bengkulu City, so the findings cannot be generalized widely to other sectors or regions. In addition, the quantitative approach used does not fully capture the subjective and emotional dimensions of employees' experiences of job insecurity, toxic work environments, and work stress. Other variables that may also play a role in shaping *turnover intention*, such as job satisfaction, organizational involvement, or leadership, have not been included in this model.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, managers in the retail sector should prioritize practical actions that directly reduce workplace stress as a means of lowering employee turnover intention. First, management should address job insecurity by improving communication regarding work schedules, contract status, and performance expectations so that employees have a clearer understanding of their job continuity. Providing regular feedback and transparent information about career opportunities can help reduce uncertainty and anxiety among employees. Second, managers should actively prevent the development of toxic workplace environments by enforcing clear behavioral standards, promoting respectful communication, and responding promptly to interpersonal conflicts. Leadership training that emphasizes empathy, fairness, and supportive supervision can play a critical role in creating a healthier work climate. In addition, organizations should implement stress management initiatives such as reasonable workload distribution, adequate rest periods, and access to counseling or employee assistance programs. These managerial efforts can help employees cope more effectively with work pressures and prevent stress from escalating into intentions to leave. Overall, focusing on stress reduction through concrete managerial practices can serve as an effective strategy to improve employee retention and create a more stable and productive workforce.

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