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The Effect Of Work Life Quality, Work Stress, And Leadership Style On Employee Turnover Intention In Startup Companies

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of quality of work life, job stress, and leadership style on employee turnover intention at a property startup company in Indonesia. This quantitative research used a saturated sampling technique involving 205 employees as respondents, with data collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4 software. The results of the outer model evaluation show that all indicators are valid and reliable. The inner model evaluation shows an R-Square value of 0.705, indicating that the three independent variables are able to explain 70.5 percent of the variance in turnover intention. The path coefficient test shows that quality of work life has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention (t = 14.210; p = 0.000), job stress has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention (t = 13.004; p = 0.000), and leadership style has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention (t = 9.428; p = 0.000). These findings indicate that in the dynamic environment of a startup company, a high quality of work life does not necessarily reduce the desire of employees to leave the organization, since employees who feel psychologically secure tend to have greater confidence and resources to look for better career opportunities elsewhere. This study contributes to the turnover intention literature by offering an alternative explanation of the relationship between quality of work life and turnover intention in the context of startup companies, which differs from conventional organizations.

Keywords: Quality of Work Life; Job Stress; Leadership Style; Turnover Intention; Startup Company

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INTRODUCTION

Human resources are strategic assets that determine the success of an organization in achieving goals and maintaining a competitive advantage. In the midst of increasingly dynamic business competition, especially in startup companies, the organization's ability to retain quality employees is becoming an increasingly complex challenge. One of the problems that many organizations face today is the high level of turnover intention, which is the tendency or intention of employees to leave their jobs voluntarily within a certain time (Hasibuan, 2019).

The high level of turnover intention causes various negative impacts on the organization, including increased costs of recruitment, selection, training, and adaptation of new employees, disruption of operational stability, decreased work productivity, and loss of knowledge and competencies owned by employees who leave the organization (Ratnaningsih, 2021). In startup companies, this problem tends to be more complex than conventional companies, because the dynamic work environment, high work targets, business uncertainty, rapid organizational changes, and the demands of continuous innovation often cause psychological pressure for employees.

Several previous studies have shown inconsistent results regarding the influence of work life quality, work stress, and leadership style on turnover intention. Abidin and Sunarto (2023) found that the quality of work life had a positive and significant effect on turnover intention, while Shavira (2025) found that the quality of work life had no direct effect on turnover intention. Similarly, in the variable work stress, Ratnaningsih (2021) found a positive and significant effect, while Astuti et al. (2022) found that work stress had no significant effect. In the leadership style variable, Ghomam (2024) found a significant influence, while Falakhiyah (2024) found the opposite result.

Based on the research gap, this study offers novelty in the context of the research object, namely startup companies that have different organizational characteristics from conventional companies, so that it allows the discovery of different relationship patterns between the quality of work life, work stress, leadership style, and turnover intention. Based on this description, the formulation of the problem in this study is: (1) whether the quality of work life affects employee turnover intention; (2) whether work stress affects employee turnover intention; and (3) whether leadership style affects employee turnover intention. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of work life quality, work stress, and leadership style on employee turnover intention in startup companies.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is an employee's desire to quit or resign from his job, which reflects an individual's evaluation of the continuation of the working relationship with the company before it is manifested in the actual act of leaving the organization (Rivai, 2009). According to Mobley et al. (1978) in Pracasri (2021), turnover intention can be measured through three indicators, namely thinking of quitting, intention to search for alternatives, and intention to quit (desire to leave the organization).

Quality of Work Life

Quality of Work Life (QWL) describes the extent to which an organization is able to create a safe, comfortable, healthy work environment, and supports the physical and psychological well-being of employees (Imelia et al., 2024). This study adopts indicators from Walton (1974) in Faghih et al. (2013), which include fair and adequate compensation, safe and healthy environment, growth and security, capability development, total living space, constitutionalism, social integration, and social relevance.

Work Stress

Work stress is a condition of tension that affects a person's emotions, thought processes, and conditions at work, which arises due to an imbalance between job demands and an individual's ability to deal with them (Hasibuan, 2019; Mangkunegara, 2017). These variables are measured using indicators of workload, working time, work conflicts, communication, and work authority.

Leadership Style

Leadership style is a pattern of behavior used by leaders in influencing, directing, and motivating subordinates to achieve organizational goals (Hasibuan, 2017; Miftah, 2010). Based on Path Goal Theory, Astari (2024) groups leadership styles into four indicators, namely directive leadership, supportive leadership, participative leadership, and achievement oriented leadership.

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Hypothesis Development

The quality of work life reflects how the organization meets the needs and well-being of employees. Abidin and Sunarto (2023) and Astuti et al. (2022) found that the quality of work life has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention. Based on this description, the first hypothesis proposed is:

H1: The quality of work life affects the turnover intention of employees.

Work stress describes the pressure that employees feel while doing work.

Falakhiyah (2024) and Ratnaningsih (2021) found that work stress has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention. Based on this description, the second hypothesis proposed is:

H2: Work stress affects employee turnover intention.

Leadership style shows how leaders build relationships and influence employee behavior. Ghomam (2024) found that leadership style has a significant effect on turnover intention. Based on this description, the third hypothesis proposed is:

H3: Leadership style affects employee turnover intention.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to test the hypothesis that has been formulated (Sugiyono, 2013). The independent variables in this study consisted of quality of work life (X1), work stress (X2), and leadership style (X3), while the dependent variable was turnover intention (Y). The research was carried out on employees of a startup company in the property sector (Rumah 123).

The population in this study amounted to 205 employees. The sampling technique used is saturated sampling (census), so that all members of the population are made research respondents (Sugiyono, 2022). The number of samples has met the sample adequacy criteria for PLS-SEM analysis as suggested by Hair et al. (2022), namely 100 to 200 respondents.

The data was collected through the distribution of a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, which was distributed in person or online through Google Forms. The data analysis technique used is Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) with the help of SmartPLS 4 software. Model evaluation is carried out through two stages, namely external model evaluation (convergent validity, discriminant validity, average variance extracted, and composite reliability) and inner model evaluation (R-Square, f-

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Square, and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping procedures) (Ghozali, 2016; Hair et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The majority of respondents have a working period of less than 5 years (72%), female (55%), aged 30 to 40 years (42%), and have completed S1 education (73%). This characteristic reflects a relatively young workforce structure dominated by early career generations, as is commonly found in startup companies.

Evaluation of the Outer Model

The results of the convergent validity test showed that all indicators in the variables of Quality of Working Life (X1), Work Stress (X2), Leadership Style (X3), and Turnover Intention (Y) had an outer loading value between 0.749 to 0.912, with an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value above 0.50 (X1 = 0.679; X2 = 0.742; X3 = 0.722; Y = 0.768). Discriminant validity testing through the Fornell-Larcker criteria showed that the square root value of AVE of each construct (X1 = 0.824; X2 = 0.861; X3 = 0.850; Y = 0.876) is greater than the correlation between constructs, so that all variables are declared valid. The results of the reliability test showed that Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values of the entire construct were in the range of 0.939 to 0.971, indicating a very high level of internal consistency.

Inner Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing

The results of the R-Square test showed a value of 0.705 with an R-Square Adjusted of 0.700, which means that 70.5% of the variation in Turnover Intention was able to be explained together by Quality of Work, Work Stress, and Leadership Style, while the rest was influenced by other variables outside the model. The results of the f-Square test showed that the three independent variables had a large effect on Turnover Intention, with Quality of Work Life as the most dominant contributor ($f^2 = 0.996$), followed by Work Stress ($f^2 = 0.849$), and Leadership Style ($f^2 = 0.489$).

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The results of hypothesis testing through the bootstrapping procedure are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing Results (Path Coefficient)

Hipotesis	Path Coefficients	t-statistic	p-value	Remarks
H1: X1 -> Y	0.543	14.210	0.000	Accepted
H2: X2 -> Y	0.501	13.004	0.000	Accepted
H3: X3 -> Y	0.381	9.428	0.000	Accepted

The results of the first hypothesis test showed that Quality of Working Life had a positive and significant effect on Turnover Intention (path coefficient 0.543; t-statistic 14.210 > 1.96; p-value 0.000 < 0.05), so H1 was accepted. These findings are in line with Abidin and Sunarto (2023) and Astuti et al. (2022), but they are different from the conventional view that job comfort is always directly proportional to loyalty. In the context of startup companies, the high quality of work life that employees feel tends to increase their confidence and psychological resources to seek more competitive career opportunities outside the organization, so that a high quality of work life can actually serve as a stepping stone instead of an anchor that holds employees back (Fayyazi & Aslani, 2015).

The results of the second hypothesis test showed that Work Stress had a positive and significant effect on Turnover Intention (path coefficient 0.501; t-statistic 13.004 > 1.96; p-value 0.000 < 0.05), so H2 was accepted. This finding is consistent with Falakhiyah (2024) and Ratnaningsih (2021), and can be explained through Job Demands-Resources Theory, where job demands that exceed the resources possessed by individuals will cause emotional fatigue that encourages the emergence of the desire to leave the organization as a self-defense mechanism.

The results of the third hypothesis test showed that Leadership Style had a positive and significant effect on Turnover Intention (path coefficient 0.381; t-statistic 9.428 > 1.96; p-value 0.000 < 0.05), so H3 was accepted. This result is in line with Ghomam (2024) and can be explained through Leader-Member Exchange Theory, where a less adaptive leadership style creates low-quality working relationships between superiors and subordinates, thus encouraging employees to look for other work environments that are considered more supportive.

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Overall, the results of the study show that Quality of Work Life, Work Stress, and Leadership Style together have a significant effect on employee Turnover Intention, with an R-Square value of 0.705 which is relatively strong (Hair et al., 2022). These findings confirm that managing turnover intention in startup companies requires an integrated approach that not only focuses on improving the quality of work life, but also on controlling work stress and strengthening the effectiveness of leadership styles.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of SEM-PLS's analysis of 205 startup company employees, it can be concluded that Quality of Work, Work Stress, and Leadership Style each have a positive and significant effect on Turnover Intention, both partially and simultaneously. Quality of Work Life is the variable with the most dominant contribution, followed by Work Stress, and Leadership Style. Findings regarding the positive influence of Quality of Work Life on Turnover Intention indicate a typical phenomenon in startup companies, where high job comfort actually provides employees with psychological resources to seek better career opportunities outside the organization.

For startup company management, it is recommended to implement an integrated human resource management strategy, including equal distribution of workload, development of employee well-being programs, strengthening organizational support, and improving leadership competencies that are more participatory, communicative, and supportive. In addition, policies to improve the quality of work life need to be balanced with improvements in the aspects of compensation and career paths, so that the work comfort felt by employees does not lead to an increase in the desire to change jobs. For future researchers, it is recommended to add mediation or moderation variables, such as organizational commitment or employee engagement, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of relationships between variables.

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