



THE EFFECT OF COWORKER SUPPORT ON TURNOVER: ROLE OF JOB STRESS, ORGANIZATIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS, POLITICAL INEPTNESS, AND DESPOTIC LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the topic of the effect of coworker support on employee turnover intention by involving other antecedents namely job stress, organizational embeddedness, political ineptness, and despotic leadership. Two mediating variables are used in this study namely job stress and organizational attachment. In addition, the two moderating variables in this study are political ineptness and despotic leadership. Using a quantitative approach, this study utilized a four-point Likert scale to measure the questionnaire in a cross-section method via snowball sampling on primary data. A total of 323 data were processed using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method in SmartPLS software application. The result shows that coworker support has an influence on employee's desire to leave and change jobs, both through moderating and mediating variables.

Keywords: *coworker support, turnover intention, SEM, public accounting firm..*

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INTRODUCTION

Employees are an important element of an organization, even more important than customer because employees play a role in encouraging organization to achieve business excellence (Mossarah, 2023). However, as time goes by, the job that employees do often becomes a trigger factor for them to leaving and rise the number of turnovers (De Clercq et al., 2020). As a profit-oriented company, desire of employee to change job is a scary thing that must be considered because it is related to the loss of company's competitive advantage (Uğural et al., 2020). Turnover can also be detrimental to the company because it causes large costs for recruiting, selecting, training, and even disruption within the organization (De Clercq et al., 2020; Mossarah, 2023).

Indonesian Stock Exchange (BEI) highlights the increase employees leaving their jobs after Eid in 2022, which mostly affects the middle career level (Viola Triamanda, 2022). Indonesian news portal Kumparan reported there was an increase of 10% of employees in Indonesia in terms of job transfer over the last five years (Kumparan, 2019). There are at least 52 thousand employees who move in and out from job to job (Liputan6, 2019).

Many factors influence employees to leave jobs and switch to other jobs, include work stress, leadership style, and political ability (De Clercq et al., 2020). Employees who experience work stress can cause problems for themselves both physical and mental health that in the end, job stress that befalls employees has a negative impact on the company due to their performance (Ergun et al., 2023). Apart from job stress, how despot the leader can also influence employee in changing workplaces (De Clercq et al., 2020). The despot leader requires employees to obey without questioning the reasons so employees feel pressure because they have no control their work (Naseer et al., 2016).

Desire to move can also come within the employee itself, for instance employee's ability to understand other people and use their power to influence other people's actions (Ferris et al., 2005). However, if employee do not have political skills, then they cannot develop and maintain friendships, also cannot influence other people (De Clercq et al., 2020). This is in line with the COR theory which explains stress and stress retention (Hobfoll, 1989). This theory explains humans will maintain resources they have and will even increase them, but will stress when they lose the resources. One of those resources is employee embeddedness with organization, that considered to reduce turnover rates because it can improve employee performance (Karatepe, 2012). Closer employee embeds with organizational network, the less likely the employee to change places of work (Amankwaa et al., 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conservation of Resources Theory

The basis of COR theory is the belief that main factor influence human life is stress, where stress will cause health problems both mental and physical (Hobfoll, 1989). Hobfoll introduced COR theory which explains stress and its retention with principle of this theory is that human try to maintain, protect, and build resources they currently have from things that could threaten the loss of these resources. Based on this theory, it is related to condition of the employee's work environment through relationship with coworkers can be a source of obtaining resources to buffer stress (De Clercq et al., 2020). Apart from that, other resources that employees can retain come from how embedded employee and its work environment (Mitchell et al., 2001; Self et al., 2022).

Turnover

According to (Scales & Quincy Brown, 2020), turnover intention is an employee's decision to resign from their job, where this divided into two types, voluntary and involuntary. This refers

to negative terms because it requires organizations to pay for recruitment process, training, and even have negative impact on customer service (Chung et al., 2021). Factors that influence employee to change places of work can be influenced by various factors, however (Yu et al., 2020) stated that employee's desires and actions in changing workplaces can change every day according to the situation. Some of these factors include stress at work, how despot the leader, and employee's inability politic skill (De Clercq et al., 2020) which will be the topic of this research.

Support from Coworker

As social creatures, human certainly need other humans in carrying out their lives, including at work. Employees need help and support from someone in work who is willing to help them and can be relied on especially if there is work-related problem (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2022). Dynamic work environment will influence employees psychosocially; therefore, a positive work environment is important for employees (Aydın Küçük, 2022). Karatepe & Olugbade (2017) stated if employees have a bad relationship with coworker, this will trigger employees to leave the job and change places of work.

Job Stress

Stress is a major factor that affects life related to mental health, even to physical health (Hobfoll, 1989). Job stress can be interpreted as a person's response to their own dysfunction due to work (Tu et al., 2022). High levels of stress at work make employees tired so that their performance is poor, low-quality service, and leads to turnover (Ergun et al., 2023). The causes of stress at work come from various things, for instance employee's ability to work, job characteristics, workplace, employee relationships with coworkers, and heavy workload (Chung et al., 2021).

Organizational Embeddedness

Employee turnover is homework for organization to keep it at a low level, in order to do that organization need to bind their employees to stay in the organization (Self et al., 2022). Organizational embeddedness means that combined forces prevent employees from leaving their jobs thereby reducing turnover rates (Karatepe, 2012). A study on this field stated that employee who are too attached and trapped in organizational network will find it increasingly difficult to leave and change jobs (Amankwaa et al., 2022).

Political Ineptness

Organization often becomes political forums to develop employee's preference so employee can get the benefit if they have political skills (De Clercq et al., 2022). An employee's ability in politic means that they have ability to know situations well, understand situation, and interpersonal environment within organization (Li et al., 2017). According to (Ferris et al., 2005), employee political incompetence is a failure in understanding social situations, cannot develop good relationships, being too sincere in communication with others, and cannot build effective network. Based on COR theory, employee will feel stress if they do not have political skills because they cannot adapt (Summers et al., 2020).

Despotic Leadership

The word despotism comes from Greek which means absolute power, where someone with this leadership style requires obedience for his or her interests, manipulates and exploits employees

(Mukarram et al., 2021; Naseer et al., 2016). The impact of having a despot leader is that employees are not flexible in doing their work so they feel stressed because of the pressure given, whether in the form of pressure to achieve goals or threats not to make mistakes (De Clercq et al., 2020; Schilling, 2009).

Social support where employees work can provide additional resources as an antidote to job stress (Kokoroko & Sanda, 2019). According to (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2022), the form of social support comes from coworker, supervisor, and the organization. High coworker support will help someone relieve stress from work, and team trust also create a conducive situation that will make employees feel comfortable, thereby reduce stress level (C. C. Lee et al., 2022; Park et al., 2020). Based on COR theory, the good and quality relationship a person builds with coworkers will help mitigate and reduce job stress (Hobfoll, 1989). This along with (Shi et al., 2022) that support from coworker can reduce negative impact of stress job.

H1: support from coworkers has negative influence on job stress.

A study revealed that someone who is under pressure and causes job stress will increase their desire to move from current place of work (Park et al., 2020). This because a work that puts pressure on employees make them feel stressed and make it more likely employee turnover (Bufquin et al., 2021). This is also supported by (Lee et al., 2020) that job stress directly influences employee quit their place of work. Thus, the second hypothesis as follows.

H2: job stress has a positive influence on turnover.

Based on COR theory, support from coworker is a conditional resource that can provide potential stress resistance to employee because coworker can help employee manage problems so less likely to quit job (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017). Another literature mention that employee who interact and receive positive support from colleague are less likely to change places of work because they feel cared by others (Nazir et al., 2016). Based on several studies, the third hypothesis can be formulated as follows.

H3: job stress as a mediator in the influence of coworker support on turnover.

An employee who has political skills will take her/him to act according to situation at work (Summers et al., 2020). Conversely, politically incapable employees are limited in understanding social environment, fail to develop good relationship with others, and fail to build effective network (Ferris et al., 2005). Therefore, employees need good-quality relationship with colleagues to receive support to reduce their political incompetence (Munyon et al., 2015). Based on COR theory, employees will certainly protect resources they have and if employees are unable to engage in politic then they use resources that come from coworker support to reduce stress at work (De Clercq et al., 2020). In the same literature, employees who do not have political skill cannot find effective ways to overcome work difficulties so support from coworker helps to mitigate political ineptness to reduce stress. The fourth hypothesis formulated as below.

H4: negative influence of coworker support on job stress moderated by political ineptness.

Leadership style applied by leader will determine the success of an organization and its employees, including despotic leadership style (Mehmood et al., 2023). A person with despotic leadership style has a dominating attitude, demands obedience from employee without any question, even cunning that can make employees feel stress (De Clercq et al., 2020; Mukarram et al., 2021). This is along with COR theory that coping with job stress comes from coworker support which can increase the missing resources because of despotic leadership (De Clercq et al., 2020; Hobfoll, 2001). If the leader does not demonstrate a despotic style, then employees do not feel limited in how they complete their work so they are less dependent on resources that come from support of coworkers (Naseer et al., 2016).

H5: negative influence of coworker support on job stress is moderated by despotic leadership.

H6: there is an indirect effect of coworker support on turnover through job stress which is moderated by political ineptness, and despotic leadership.

Some literature noted that organizations can make employees feel comfortable by organizational embeddedness so they stay in organization and choose to divert their energy to helping the organization (Burton et al., 2010; Self et al., 2022). Highly embedded employee will more involve to their organization because they can fit with organization and coworkers (Burton et al., 2010). Support that comes from coworkers can also make employees more motivated at work so can suppress employees' desire to quit (Self & Gordon, 2019). Based on this description, hypothesis can be formulated below.

H7: organizational embeddedness mediates the effect of coworker support on turnover.

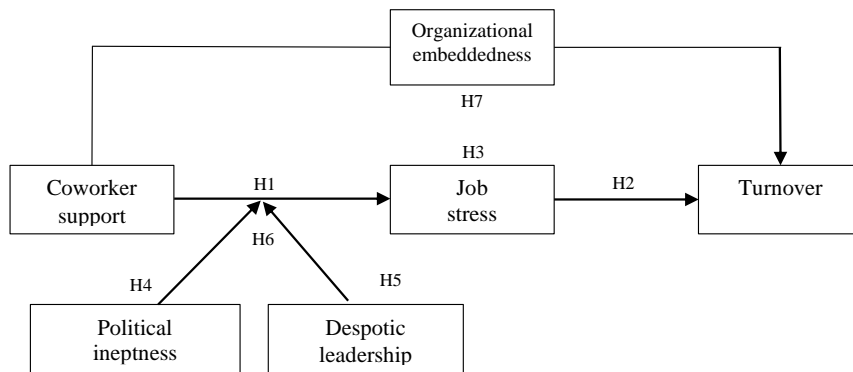


Figure 1. Framework

METHODOLOGY

This research used a quantitative approach with cross section method. Minimum number of respondents based on (Hair et al., 2019) is five times as many as questionnaire items where the data obtained is primary from 323 public accounting employees in Jakarta using the snowball sampling. Instrument measurement used a four-point Likert scale and tested using PLS-SEM.

“I often think about quitting my job” is a sample item of turnover from (De Clercq et al., 2020) with Cronbach alpha 0.77. “My coworkers are willing to help me when I have problems” was a sample item of coworker support from (Ladd et al., 2000) with Cronbach alpha 0.92. On the other hand, job stress is represented by “I have lot of work and afraid there will be little time to do it” from (De Clercq et al., 2020) with Cronbach alpha value was 0.90. The sample of organizational embeddedness is “when working I often interact with other employees” from (Robinson et al., 2014) with the value of Cronbach alpha was 0.94.

A sample item of political ineptness was “I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with other people” from (Ferris et al., 2005) with Cronbach alpha 0.94. “My boss tends to be unwilling or unable to relinquish control over projects or work” representing variable despotism leadership from (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008) with value of Cronbach alpha was 0.77.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study used online questionnaire distributed to employees, where 47.68% of respondents were women and the rest were men. A total of 323 respondents came from various work units, for instance audit and assurance, advisory, risk management, tax, consulting, to legal and law.

Table 1 shows the AVE value which has a minimum value of 0.50 so the questionnaire items in this study were valid.

Table 1 AVE Value

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Coworker support	0.637
Despotic leadership	0.687
Job stress	0.553
Organizational embeddedness	0.561
Political ineptness	0.540
Turnover	0.590

Along with AVE value, this study adapted GoF test from (Tenenhaus et al., 2005) where the GoF value is 0.50. Table 2 also shows hypothesis test where coworker support has a negative effect on job stress, this shown by P value < 0.05 so hypothesis one is supported. This indicates that employees who receive support both emotionally and instrumentally can reduce the stress level of work. This is consistent with previous study (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2022; Karadaş & Duran, 2022), where coworker willing to help employees when there are problems and such these things help employees feel emotionally connected.

The positive influence that job stress has on employee’s intention to move has a P value of 0.00 where second hypothesis is supported. This study shows when employees have a lot of work demands but only have a little time to complete the work then employee feel pressured which ultimately causes stress. This stress makes employees feel running out of energy and will eventually withdraw and leave their job. This is along with several previous studies (Bufquin et al., 2021; Chung et al., 2021; Haldorai et al., 2019).

Stress at work as a mediator in the effect of coworker support on turnover has P value lower than 0.05 so hypothesis three is supported. Willingness coworker to help with work and giving praise to employees will help employees to overcome work stress. Such assistance offered will be useful for employees and will encourage a decrease in employee turnover, this also line with COR theory (AlHashmi et al., 2019).

Table 2 Bootstrapping

	Ori. Sample	T Statistics	P Values
CS -> JS (H1)	0.335	4.578	0.000
JS -> TI (H2)	0.420	7.377	0.000
CS -> JS -> TI (H3)	0.141	3.502	0.000
PI x CS -> JS (H4)	-0.103	1.984	0.030
DL x CS -> JS (H5)	0.131	1.969	0.028
PI x CS -> JS -> TI (H6)	-0.043	1.980	0.043
DL x CS -> JS -> TI (H6)	0.055	1.966	0.042
CS -> OE -> TI (H7)	0.274	6.468	0.000

Furthermore, Table 2 shows hypothesis four has P value lower than 0.05 so hypothesis four is supported. This result consistent with (De Clercq et al., 2020, 2022) that the more incapable employees of politics ability can weaker the negative influence of coworker support on job stress. The advantage of having coworkers that support employees are not as prominent among employees who are less politically competent. In this case, employees do not pay too much attention to the support offered by coworkers.

The same result also shown by hypothesis five that has P value of 0.02 so despotic leadership moderate the negative influence of coworker support on job stress. Employees who have boss with a despotic style feel pressured because of leader’s attitude. This pressure is responded as trigger for stress, where to mitigate this, employees need the presence of colleagues who support them. Support from coworker reduces job stress, especially if employees have a boss with despotic style where this is in line with (De Clercq et al., 2020). This concept also in line with

COR theory where employees will maintain and increase resources they have as a way to mitigate stress (Hobfoll, 2001; Naseer et al., 2016).

Political ineptness and despotic leadership as mediators in the whole model have lower P value than 0.05 in moderating indirect effect of coworker support on turnover through job stress. This result in line with (De Clercq et al., 2020) that reduced stress felt by employee weakly links coworker support to reduced turnover intentions when employees are not politically skilled. Meanwhile, a decrease in employee stress correlates more strongly with coworker support and a decrease in employee's desire to change jobs when they are under the leadership of someone who is despot.

This concluded that hypothesis six is supported. The role of organizational embeddedness as mediator has P value of 0.00 so hypothesis seven is supported. As in COR theory and finding (Self et al., 2022), supportive coworkers are among the resources retained by employees that play a role in increasing organizational embeddedness and encouraging employees to remain in organization. In addition, (Phan Tan & Pham Xuan, 2024) revealed findings that organizational embeddedness mediates work environments (including support from coworkers) on employees' intention to remain in the organization.

CONCLUSION

This research can provide an overview for public accounting firms regarding the driving factors that cause high level of turnover. This can be useful organizations because it can be a direction for managing employee turnover rates through a number of variables involved in this research. Result of this study reveal that turnover rate can be controlled so goals and values promoted can be achieved. Public accounting firms in Jakarta can increase organizational embeddedness felt by employees, foster a sense of solidarity among employees to create supportive environment, as well as employees' political abilities. Apart from that, public accounting firms can also control turnover by reducing high levels of despotism in leaders which will cause employees to experience work stress. This will give employees space to be able to organize their work without strict control from despot leader, so employee feel less stress. Future research can focus on other industries in order to obtain different results and perspectives, thereby enriching similar findings. By using the same model, further research can test direct influence that coworker support has on turnover, so that there are clearer findings for the influence of coworker support on turnover. Future research can also able to explore further dimensions of variable used in this research.

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