



“The mediating effect of employee engagement and well-being on turnover intention in Indonesia”

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THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING ON TURNOVER INTENTION IN INDONESIA

Abstract

Employee turnover is challenging for firms, and it is usually fueled by employee stress due to their heavy workload. To minimize turnover, firms can implement various initiatives, such as employee well-being and employee engagement programs. Previous studies have examined the influence of work stress, employee engagement, or employee well-being separately on turnover intention. By exploring these factors simultaneously, this study aims to explain the roles of employee well-being and engagement as mediators in alleviating the impact of work stress on turnover. Data were collected from 425 employees working in various economic sectors (e.g., finance, education, research and development, retail, and business) in Indonesia and analyzed using the structural equation modeling (SEM) with the Lisrel 8.8 software. The results confirmed that work stress and employee engagement are factors that can directly influence turnover intention. Nevertheless, employee well-being does not have a direct impact on reducing turnover. The role of employee engagement in mediating the impact of work stress and employee well-being on turnover intention has been proven to be significant. This indicates that the company can withstand the stress that leads to employee turnover by creating jobs that make employees enthusiastically enjoy their work. Furthermore, company initiatives to create employee well-being will only be effective if those initiatives encourage employee engagement. Based on these findings, companies can develop strategies to reduce employee turnover. This can be achieved by prioritizing work stress management and improving employee well-being and engagement.

Keywords

organizational behavior, work stress, work engagement, employee welfare, Indonesia

JEL Classification

J24, J63, J21

INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover is a crucial topic for every company as it gives rise to numerous challenges and complications, particularly in terms of the loss of direct and indirect costs associated with HR activities (Nuhn et al., 2018). Firms suffer huge losses when their employees leave for new jobs because of recruitment and development costs for new employees (Ferguson & Brohaugh, 2009). Unfortunately, turnover intention in business organizations often happens. Research has revealed that although firms have implemented various employee retention efforts, employees are still tempted to move to other organizations.

Many factors cause turnover. Aggarwal et al. (2022) and Wang et al. (2020) show that employee engagement affects turnover intention, and in Indonesia, research has also shown similar findings (Lestari & Margaretha, 2021). Despite the significance of employee engagement for organizations and practitioners, firms in Indonesia pay little attention to it. Unsurprisingly, only 24% of Indonesian employees stay loyal to their employers (Harter, 2022). This is lower compared to neighborhood countries in Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines (31%), Thailand (26%), or Cambodia (26%).

Other factors that affect turnover intention are employee well-being and work stress. Work stress affects emotions, idea processing, and thought processes. Consequently, work stress influences, either directly or indirectly, an individual's desire to leave a firm (Said & El-Shafei, 2021). So far, the relationship between work stress and other factors, such as employee well-being and engagement and how they influence turnover intention, is still under-researched, particularly by designating employee engagement and well-being as two variables that simultaneously are mediators. From a firm's perspective, demanding jobs and high-performance standards are often unavoidable. The challenge lies in how firms can take initiatives or implement policies to mitigate the impact of stress through employee well-being and engagement to reduce turnover rates. This paper focuses on the uniqueness of work engagement in Southeast Asia, with a particular emphasis on Indonesia, which has received limited research attention thus far.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

This study focuses on various factors causing or preventing turnover intention. Turnover intention comprises two elements: intention and turnover. Intention refers to an individual's inclination to take-action, while turnover involves an employee voluntarily leaving their current workplace or transitioning to another (Halimah et al., 2016). There are many factors that can influence turnover, including work stress, employee engagement, and employee well-being.

Every employee may encounter stress at the workplace. Stress is a condition that people experience when faced with opportunities, obstacles, or requests whose results are seen as uncertain but important (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Furthermore, work stress is also the result of dissatisfaction with the work situation, which causes withdrawal from work (Hon & Chan, 2013). Stressors have dimensions that lie in three aspects, including (1) individual stressors, (2) group stressors, and (3) organizational stressors (Gibson et al., 2012). Individual stressors will escalate when people receive inappropriate messages about their inappropriate behavior. Group characteristics can also have an impact on stressors. For example, a distrust among work partners may lead to a communication gap that can cause low job satisfaction. Not only does it affect job satisfaction, but work stress can also affect an employee's turnover intention. The higher the stress felt, the higher the chances of employees leaving their jobs. Gupta and Shaheen (2017) established a significant relationship between work stress and the intention to leave. Similarly, Ahn and Wang (2019) demonstrated a positive correlation between work stress and turnover intention.

In contrast to work-related stress, employee engagement makes employees work enthusiastically. The concept of employee engagement entails a positive work-related state of mind marked by enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Robinson et al. (2004) define engagement as a positive attitude toward the firm and its values. Kirk-Brown and Van Dijk (2016) argue that these positive emotions foster closer connections among employees and with the firm, leading to increased identification with the firm and a greater willingness to invest extra time and resources. Conversely, less dedicated employees exhibit a higher intention to leave. Numerous studies, including those of Aggarwal et al. (2022), Bhatnagar (2012), and de Klerk and Stander (2014), support the idea that engaged employees are more loyal and less likely to contemplate turnover.

There are three facets to employee engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Vigor is characterized by a high level of mental energy and determination in work, a willingness to invest in one's work, and determination in the face of adversity. Dedication means being deeply involved in work and feeling a sense of purpose, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Absorption is characterized by total concentration and focus on work, which makes time pass quickly and makes it difficult to leave. These three indicators have been tested to predict various outcomes, such as leaving a job early, job performance, and intention to quit.

Like employee engagement, employee well-being indicates a firm effort to contribute to enhanced employee productivity (Ilies et al., 2015). Zheng et al. (2015, p. 628) propose that "Employee well-being involves not only employees' perceptions and

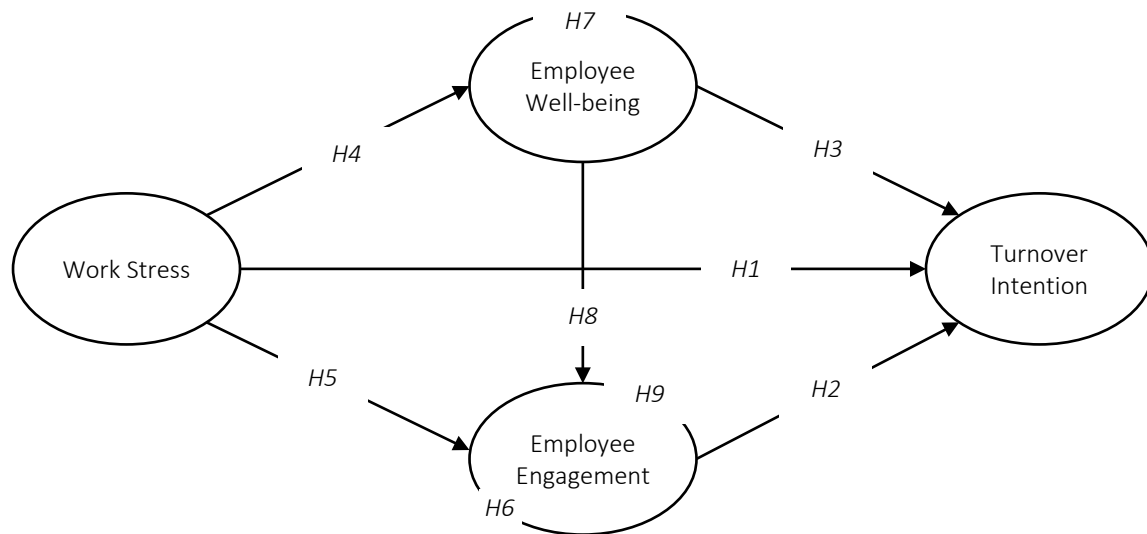


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

feelings about their work and life satisfaction but also their psychological experience and the level of satisfaction exhibited in both their work and personal lives.” Workplace situations differ considerably from general life situations, although cultural aspects are visible in work settings (Nimmi & Zakkariya, 2021). Psychological well-being and subjective well-being or job satisfaction are often used as proxies to represent the overall well-being of employees in firms (Cuyper et al., 2008). A significant negative relationship occurs between turnover intention and employee welfare (Trincherio et al., 2014). Health and well-being issues are becoming increasingly important due to their importance to workers, a fact recognized by both academic researchers and practitioners. Well-being is identified as a complex multidimensional construct influenced by significant cultural and contextual factors (Sandilya & Shahnawaz, 2018). According to Schwepker et al. (2021), many factors affect employee’s well-being at work, including their physical, mental, and emotional health. These elements show how happy, healthy, and satisfied workers are with the tasks they are performing at work.

The description above shows that inside the firm, there are factors driving turnover intention, namely work stress, and inhibiting factors, such as work engagement and employee well-being. It turns out that these encouraging and inhibiting factors are also related. Work stress is signif-

icantly related to employee well-being (Jamal & Preena, 1998). Winasis et al. (2020) and Yu et al. (2021) show that work stress has a negative impact on perceived well-being. Employees experiencing high levels of stress will likely have lower well-being. Work stress can influence employee well-being (Yu et al., 2021), and employee well-being influences turnover intention (Trincherio et al., 2014). Work stress not only impacts employee well-being but will also affect employee engagement. Sawir et al. (2021) believe that work stress has a negative effect on employee engagement.

Among the various factors inhibiting turnover, employment engagement has a fairly central role. This employment engagement is built on employee well-being (Koon & Ho, 2021; Tesi et al., 2019). Furthermore, Bawono and Lo (2020) clarified that employee engagement has a significant mediating role in the relationship between work stress and turnover intention. Fu et al. (2022) explored the relationship between well-being, employee engagement, and turnover intention. Their analysis determined that employee engagement is a mediator in the impact of well-being on turnover intention. Consequently, companies must prioritize employee engagement to enable subsequent influences of employee well-being on the level of turnover intention.

Therefore, the conceptual model (Figure 1) can be utilized to represent the relatively complex relationships between various factors determining

turnover intention. This model starts by identifying work stress as a significant factor contributing to turnover. This model aims to address the research objective, which is to examine the influence of work stress, employee engagement, and employee well-being on turnover intention in the Indonesian context. Simultaneously, the firm has the opportunity to mitigate turnover through initiatives that enhance work engagement and/or employee well-being. The strategic approach to addressing work stress and reducing turnover can take various forms.

Based on the extant literature review, the relationship between work-related stress and turnover can be mediated by employee engagement and well-being. Furthermore, the model aims to examine the potential mediating effects of employee well-being and employee engagement on the association between work stress and intention to leave the organization. The proposed hypotheses are as follows:

- H1: *Work stress positively affects turnover intention.*
- H2: *Employee engagement negatively affects turnover intention.*
- H3: *Employee well-being negatively affects turnover intention.*
- H4: *Work stress negatively affects employee engagement.*
- H5: *Work stress negatively affects employee well-being.*
- H6: *Employee engagement mediates the relationship between work stress and turnover intention.*
- H7: *Employee well-being mediates the relationship between work stress and turnover intention.*
- H8: *Employee well-being positively affects employee engagement.*
- H9: *Employee engagement mediates the relationship between employee well-being and turnover intention.*

2. METHOD

The data were obtained through a survey featuring closed questions administered online. The respondents are employees from various industries (e.g., finance, education, research and development, retail, and business), levels, and areas (territory) of Indonesia. With the diverse respondent population, the study seeks to capture a more accurate and comprehensive employee engagement in Indonesia. The paper utilized a 6-point Likert scale with response options ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree. The data were collected from employees with a minimum of six months of working experience in Indonesia. For detailed measurements, please see Table A1.

Initially, 500 respondents submitted the data, but the paper processes a final sample comprising 425 respondents after the data cleaning process. The sample comprised 56% females, with an average age between 21-30 (54%). Approximately 59% of respondents have a bachelor's degree. Among them, 70% are in staff-level positions, 21% work in the financial industry, and 64% work in the Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi) regions. Moreover, 65% have accumulated up to five years of work experience, and 58% have the status of permanent employees (as seen in Table 1). An ANOVA test was conducted to compare the sectors and regions in order to examine the mean comparison. The results showed no significant differences, so all the data were included.

Table 1. Respondent profile

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	185	44%
Female	240	56%
Age		
< 21 years old	9	2%
21-30 years old	228	54%
31-40 years old	88	21%
41-50 years old	73	17%
51-60 years old	27	6%
Education		
< High school	11	3%
High school	56	13%
Diploma	40	9%
Bachelor	252	59%
> Bachelor	66	16%
Job Level		

Table 1 (cont.). Respondent profile

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Staff	298	70%
Lower Management	48	11%
Middle Management	63	15%
Top Management	16	4%
Industrial Sector		
Finance	89	21%
Education	50	12%
Research and Development	29	7%
Retail	27	6%
Business	20	5%
Other	210	49%
Area/Territory		
Jakarta Greater Area	274	64.5%
Java non-Jakarta Greater Area	87	20.5%
Sumatera	26	6%
Kalimantan and Sulawesi	17	4%
Other	21	5%
Length of work		
< 1 year	34	8%
1-5 years	276	65%
6-10 years	58	14%
11-15 years	33	8%
16-20 years	13	3%
> 20 years	11	3%
Employment status		
Permanent	247	58%
Contract	114	27%
Outsourcing	26	6%
Apprenticeship	38	9%

Structural equation modeling (SEM) with Lisrel 8.8 software is used to analyze the data. Descriptive analysis, SEM analysis, including measurement model and structural model analysis, and mediation analysis are conducted. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) measures validity, reliability, and goodness-of-fit for the models. Validity is established when the standardized loading factors (SLF) attain a value of ≥ 0.50 (Igbaria et al., 1997). To examine reliability analysis, two scales, i.e., the calculation of construct reliability (CR) with a benchmark of ≥ 0.70 and variance extracted (VE) with a criterion of ≥ 0.50 (Hair et al., 2014), are employed. Additionally, the examination of mediation effects involved both direct and indirect effects as integral components of the analytical framework.

3. RESULTS

Table 2 summarizes the results of the validity and reliability analyses. It shows CR with a range from 0.84 to 0.92, higher than the threshold of 0.70 as rec-

ommended by Hair et al. (2014). Furthermore, the variables exhibit a commendable level of VE ranging from 0.39 to 0.58. The VE value falls below 0.5 and is still considered reliable, provided that the CR value exceeds 0.6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Notably, all loadings register above 0.5, except for items EE2, EE5, EE11, EE17, EWB16, EWB17, and EWB18, which fall below the threshold and therefore were deleted for further analysis.

Table 2. Measurement model results

Variables	Indicators	SLF	CR	VE			
Work Stress	WS1	0.58	0.91	0.48			
	WS2	0.77					
	WS3	0.81					
	WS4	0.76					
	WS5	0.80					
	WS6	0.75					
	WS7	0.61					
	WS8	0.65					
	WS9	0.66					
	WS10	0.60					
	WS11	0.65					
Employee Engagement	EE1	0.56	0.91	0.39			
	EE3	0.66					
	EE4	0.50					
	EE6	0.52					
	EE7	0.71					
	EE8	0.79					
	EE9	0.76					
	EE10	0.76					
	EE12	0.53					
	EE13	0.59					
	EE14	0.76					
	EE15	0.52					
	EE16	0.83					
	Employee Well-being	EWB1			0.63	0.92	0.42
		EWB2			0.60		
EWB3		0.74					
EWB4		0.72					
EWB5		0.76					
EWB6		0.59					
EWB7		0.76					
EWB8		0.73					
EWB9		0.71					
EWB10		0.79					
EWB11		0.51					
EWB12		0.68					
EWB13		0.64					
EWB14		0.65					
EWB15		0.62					
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.88	0.84	0.58			
	TI2	0.62					
	TI3	0.82					
	TI4	0.75					

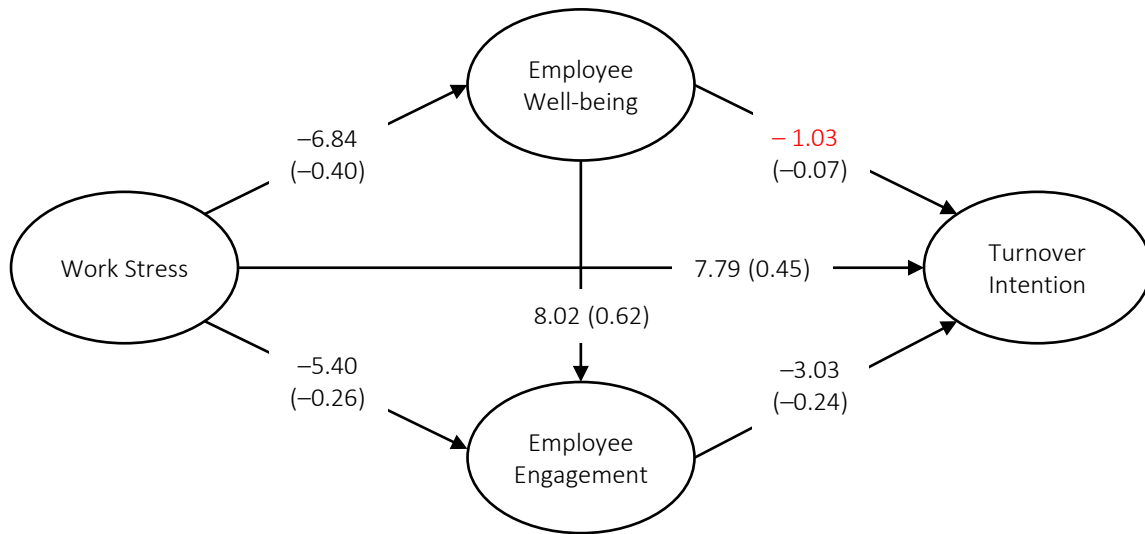


Figure 2. Empirical results

For structural model, construction model testing to verify the proposed research model is conducted. The results indicate a satisfactory fit of the goodness of fit index, which includes RMSEA = 0.066, SRMR = 0.067, RMR = 0.077, GFI = 0.80, AGFI = 0.77, NFI = 0.95, NNFI = 0.96, RFI = 0.94, and CFI = 0.97. The structural model demonstrates a satisfactory overall fit, indicating that the research data are well aligned with the model.

The *t*-value and standardized loading factors of each relationship between variables are explained by two values (in Figure 2), namely the *t*-value written as the number above, and the SLF written as the number below in parentheses. Figure 2 shows six paths between the variables tested. It

shows two positive and three negative relationships, while one is insignificant. Table 3 shows the *t*-value and SLF figures from the structural model analysis.

4. DISCUSSION

For hypothesis 1, results indicate a positive and direct influence of work stress on turnover intention. This finding is in line with Ahn and Wang (2019). If employees perceive an imbalance between the time allocated and the workload assigned, or if they are given tasks that fall outside their job description, they will encounter a higher level of stress. This condition then leads them to leave the firm. Firms may

Table 3. Result of hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	Results	
H1	Work stress to turnover intention	0.45***	Significant Positive	Supported
H2	Employee engagement to turnover intention	-0.24***	Significant Negative	Supported
H3	Employee well-being to turnover intention	-0.07	Not Significant	Not Supported
H4	Work stress to employee engagement	-0.26***	Significant Negative	Supported
H5	Work stress to employee well-being	-0.40***	Significant Negative	Supported
H6	Employee engagement mediates work stress to turnover intention	0.52***	Significant	Supported
H7	Employee well-being mediates work stress to turnover intention	0.51	Not Significant	Not Supported
H8	Employee well-being to employee engagement	0.62***	Significant Positive	Supported
H9	Employee engagement mediates employee well-being to turnover intention	-0.21***	Significant	Supported

Note: *** *p* < 0.01.

cultivate a more supportive and productive work environment by identifying and addressing the root causes of work stress, such as excessive workload and unrealistic deadlines.

The second hypothesis testing reveals that employee engagement negatively affects turnover intention. The result is similar to Wang et al. (2020). Aggarwal et al. (2022) also demonstrated a relationship between employee engagement and turnover intention. Employees who experience enjoyment and enthusiasm toward their work and who feel a sense of pride and happiness in what they do are less prone to decide to quit. Employees who are highly engaged are less likely to leave their firms.

Unlike the first two hypotheses, the third hypothesis is rejected. It shows that employee well-being does not significantly affect turnover intention. This indicates that employee well-being, encompassing employee satisfaction, happiness, and achievement, does not directly impact turnover intention. The data show that stronger or weaker employee well-being does not have a direct effect on the level of turnover intention. It implies that even though employees may have a pleasant or happy life, it does not guarantee they will not leave their firm. This finding is aligned with DiPietro et al. (2020), who argue that other factors influence the relationship between well-being and turnover intention.

The fourth hypothesis testing finds that work stress directly affects employee engagement negatively. This finding is in line with Winasis et al. (2020) and Sawir et al. (2021). When employees encounter a disparity between their workload and available time, excess responsibilities, and tasks outside the scope of the job description, they are prone to experiencing diminished job satisfaction, waning enthusiasm, and becoming unhappy with their jobs.

The fifth hypothesis testing reveals that work stress has a negative influence on employee well-being. This finding is in line with Yu et al. (2021). When employees experience a discrepancy between their workload and the available resources, feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities, and are assigned tasks that are not part of their job description, it becomes difficult for them to improve the quality of their work and causes job dissatisfaction.

The finding of the sixth hypothesis testing indicates that employee engagement mediates the relationship between work stress and turnover intention. This study reveals that employee engagement acts as a complementary mediation (Zhao et al., 2010) between work stress and turnover intention. As a complementary mediator, work stress can also directly influence turnover intention without being mediated by employee engagement. This finding is consistent with Harun et al. (2022).

The seventh hypothesis testing indicates no mediating effect of employee well-being on the relationship between work stress and turnover intention. The non-existence of a direct relationship between employee well-being and turnover intention results in the absence of employee well-being playing a role as a mediator for the impact of work stress on turnover intention. This result does not align with Langove et al. (2016), who discovered that employee well-being is a mediator between work stress and turnover.

The finding of the eighth hypothesis testing indicates that employee well-being has a positive effect on employee engagement. The result demonstrates a strong relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement. If employees find methods to improve the quality of work and achieve an enjoyable life, this will increase their job satisfaction and enthusiasm. This finding indicates that well-being has a beneficial impact on their level of engagement. This outcome is consistent with Koon and Ho (2021).

Lastly, the ninth hypothesis testing shows that employee engagement mediates the relationship between employee well-being and turnover intention. Specifically, in this case, employee engagement mediates work stress to turnover intention as indirect-only mediation (Zhao et al., 2010). It demonstrates that employee engagement exerts a significant influence on the relationship between employee well-being and turnover intention. Without employee engagement, the relationship between employee well-being and turnover intention becomes insignificant. This finding is in line with Fu et al. (2022). By ensuring employees are satisfied with their lives, including by providing space for employees to improve their work results and an appropriate workload, employees will be enthusiastic about their work, enjoy their work, and consequently forget about leaving the firm.

Furthermore, this study reveals that the low well-being of employees does not directly escalate their desire to leave the company. Whether or not an employee is happy with his or her life has no bearing on his or her desire to leave. The background of respondents may cause it, whereas most respondents have less than five years of work experience. They express the belief that the dissatisfaction they may encounter within the initial five-year period should not serve as the sole basis for their decision to leave the company.

This perspective stems from their understanding that, within this timeframe, they are still in the process of attaining a satisfactory level of professional competence. For future research, it would be beneficial to include a wider range of participants, not just those with six months of work experience. This adjustment aims to achieve a more extensive and representative distribution of respondents, enhancing the study's applicability to a wider population.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to demonstrate that work-related stress, employee well-being, and employee engagement can influence turnover intention. Employees who experience stress are more likely to leave the company, but employee engagement can counteract this inclination. Companies can manage stress by providing clear responsibilities and sufficient time for employees to complete their work. In addition, developing policies that promote employee engagement through a positive work environment and clear policies and procedures are crucial for enhancing their work enjoyment and enthusiasm. Furthermore, employee well-being does not have a direct impact on intention to leave but rather has an indirect impact through the mediation of employee engagement. This indicates that the company's efforts to enhance employee well-being should improve employee engagement. A company must ensure that when assisting employees in improving the quality of their work, employees genuinely enjoy their jobs.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Putri Mega Desiana, Mone Stepanus Andrias.
Data curation: Putri Mega Desiana, Mone Stepanus Andrias, Gyandra Sekar Ahyinaa.
Formal analysis: Putri Mega Desiana, Mone Stepanus Andrias, Gyandra Sekar Ahyinaa.
Investigation: Putri Mega Desiana.
Methodology: Putri Mega Desiana, Mone Stepanus Andrias, Gyandra Sekar Ahyinaa.
Project administration: Putri Mega Desiana, Mone Stepanus Andrias, Gyandra Sekar Ahyinaa.
Resources: Putri Mega Desiana, Mone Stepanus Andrias, Gyandra Sekar Ahyinaa.
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Visualization: Putri Mega Desiana.
Writing – original draft: Putri Mega Desiana, Mone Stepanus Andrias, Gyandra Sekar Ahyinaa.
Writing – review & editing: Putri Mega Desiana, Mone Stepanus Andrias, Gyandra Sekar Ahyinaa.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Measurement model

Variables	Indicator	Code	Source
Work Stress	The number of projects and/or assignments I have	WS1	Cavanaugh et al. (2000)
	The amount of time I spend at work	WS2	
	The volume of work that must be accomplished in the allotted time	WS3	
	Time pressures I experience	WS4	
	The amount of responsibility I have	WS5	
	The scope of responsibility my position entails	WS6	
	The degree to which politics rather than performance affects organizational decisions	WS7	
	The inability to clearly understand what is expected of me on the job	WS8	
	The amount of red tape I need to go through to get my job done	WS9	
	The lack of job security I have	WS10	
	The degree to which my career seems "stalle"	WS11	
Employee Engagement	At my work, I feel bursting with energy	EE1	Schaufeli et al. (2002)
	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	EE2	
	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	EE3	
	I can continue working for very long periods at a time	EE4	
	At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	EE5	
	At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well	EE6	
	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	EE7	
	I am enthusiastic about my job	EE8	
	My job inspires me	EE9	
	I am proud of the work that I do	EE10	
	To me, my job is challenging	EE11	
	Time flies when I am working	EE12	
	When I am working, I forget everything else around me	EE13	
	I feel happy when I am working intensely	EE14	
	I am immersed in my work	EE15	
	I get carried away when I am working	EE16	
	It is difficult to detach myself from my job	EE17	
Employee Well-being	I feel satisfied with my life	EWB1	Zheng et al. (2015)
	I am close to my dream in most aspects of my life	EWB2	
	Most of the time, I do feel real happiness	EWB3	
	I am in a good life situation	EWB4	
	My life is very fun	EWB5	
	I would hardly change my current way of life in the afterlife	EWB6	
	I am satisfied with my work responsibilities	EWB7	
	In general, I feel fairly satisfied with my present job	EWB8	
	I find real enjoyment in my work	EWB9	
	I can always find ways to enrich my work	EWB10	
	Work is a meaningful experience for me	EWB11	
	I feel satisfied with my work achievements in my current job	EWB12	
	I feel I have grown as a person	EWB13	
	I handle daily affairs well	EWB14	
	I generally feel good about myself, and I am confident	EWB15	
	People think I am willing to give and to share my time with others	EWB16	
	I am good at making flexible timetables for my work	EWB17	
	I love having deep conversations with family and friends so that we can better understand each other	EWB18	
Turnover Intention	I think a lot about leaving the organization	TI1	Mobley et al. (1978)
	I am actively searching for an alternative to the organization	TI2	
	As soon as it is possible, I will leave the organization	TI3	
	If I had another job offer that paid the same as the one I have, I would leave in a few minutes	TI4	