

## Conference Paper

# The Role of Work Stress as a Mediating Variable in The Relationship Between Workload and Intention to Leave

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## Abstract

Jobs with high workload characteristics will require employees to work more than normal working hours so that employees will often work overtime. This condition will cause employees to be exhausted both physically and mentally which ultimately creates work stress. Job stress will cause employees to experience health problems. Employees who experience job stress will consider leaving the organization and looking for new jobs that can reduce their work stress. Respondents of this study were employees of telecommunications companies in the digital financial services department. The questionnaire was distributed to all employees in the digital financial service department of a leading telecommunications company in Indonesia. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 employees. However, only 60 questionnaires can be used for hypothesis testing (the response rate of this study is 60%). Hypothesis testing using hierarchical linear regression. The three hypotheses proposed in this study are supported, namely (1) workload has a positive and significant effect on work stress (H1;  $p < .001$ ); (2) work stress affects the intention to leave (H2;  $p < .001$ ; and (3) work stress as a mediating variable in the relationship between workload and intention to leave the company (H-3;  $p < .001$ ).

**Keywords:** Workload, Job Stress, Intentions to Leave

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## 1. Introduction

A job must have a level of stress for its employees because the job requires employees to work with high workload intensity, which can lead to an increase in the health problems and stress on employees (Astianto & Suprihhadi, 2014; Arnold, Daniel, & Feldman (1986)). By increasing the level of stress that occurs to employees, employees will consider to leave the organization (Beehr, 1976; Cote & Morgan, 2002. When the company has a high employee turnover rate, the company will suffer losses, including loss of investment (employee recruitment, training and development costs) and disturbing other employees. Therefore, the company needs to minimize the turnover rate so that the sustainability of the company is not disturbed.

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Salleh, Bakar and Keong (2008) stated that work stress is symbolized as a person's strength, pressure, tendency or effort in carrying out his work. Tunjungsari (2011) states that stress is an adaptive response to external situations that results in physical, psychological, and / or behavioral deviations in members of the organization. Stress is often considered and seen as negative because stress usually results from a bad thing. According to Robbins (2003), when individuals experience high levels of stress, the consequences that arise are physiological and behavioral symptoms (psychological and behavioral). According to Robbins (2003), there are 3 (three) potential factors that influence the stress level of employees, namely, the work environment, organization and individuals. Gibson (1995) says that excessive workload is one of the factors causing work stress as a form of fatigue both physically and emotionally, so it can cause work stress.

Workload has an effect on work stress which arises as a result of depression, work time, and mental stress while working, so that the high workload identifies the occurrence / emergence of work stress (Irvianti & Verina, 2015). A high workload, creates a feeling of stress on employees, if it lasts for a long time causing fatigue and stress that interfere with employee health. So the hypothesis proposed in this study is **workload will have positive affect on work stress (H1)**.

Job stress experienced by employees can be a consideration for employees to stay or leave the organization. Job stress will strengthen the employee's desire to leave the organization (Shofiah et al., 2017) because stress can affect employee health and make employees feel depressed when doing their work, and when that happens, the possibility of having an intention to leave the organization is higher. **So the hypothesis proposed is work stress will have positive affect on the intention to leave (H2)**

Work stress will mediate the relationship between workload and employee exit intention (Mahaiswari & Rahyuda, 2015). Excessive workload makes employees feel depressed and exhausted, resulting in stress on employees. Then the stress becomes a link between workload and intention to leave the employee. If you have experienced stress, employees will consider themselves to survive or leave the company. **So the hypothesis proposed in this study is work stress mediates the relationship between workload and intention to leave (H3)**

## 2. Methods and Equipment

This research uses quantitative survey. The questionnaire was used for collecting data. The sample in this study was 100 employees of DFS from the largest telecommunications company in Indonesia. Of the 100 employees only 60 questionnaires can be used for hypothesis testing (the response rate of this study is 60%). Measurement used in this study is the measurements that were built by previous researchers. Measurement for workload using measurements built by (Ippolito et al., 2010) consists of 3 item statements. Job stress consists of 2 statement items and exit intentions consisting of 5 item statements. Hierarchical linear regression used for hypothesis testing the hypothesis of this study using hierarchical linear regression.

## 3. Result

The characteristics of respondents in this study are presented in Table 3.1. The majority of respondents in this study were men (71.7%) and were in the age group between 25-30 years (67%) and were married (55%). In the position category, the majority of respondents are staff (66.7%) and have worked 2 years to 5 years (60%). The results of the descriptive analysis are presented in Table 3.2. Based on descriptive analysis data, the relationship between workload and work stress has the highest correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient between work load and intention to leave was not as high as the correlation coefficient between workload and work stress but the correlation coefficient between work stress and intention to leave was higher (0.582) than the correlation coefficient between workload and intention to leave (0.570).

The results of hypothesis testing are presented in Table 3.3 and Table 3.4. Path analysis results are also presented in Figure 3.1. The research data shows that the three proposed hypotheses are supported.

## 4. Discussion

The result showed that workload had a positive and significant effect on work stress. If the employee perceives the workload he experienced high, the work stress of the employee will also increase. The respondents perceive that they have a high workload. This can be seen from the respondent's answer to the statement item "too much work needs to be done". The plausible explanation that can be given by the authors to this condition is because the majority of respondents are aged 25 to 30 years. At this age,

TABLE 1: Characteristics of Respondents.

Description	Total	Presentations
<b>Gender</b>		
Man	43	71.7%
Women	17	28.3%
<b>Age</b>		
19 - 24	7	11%
25 – 30	40	67%
>30	13	22%
<b>Position</b>		
General	1	1.6%
Manager	4	6.7%
Manager Officer	15	25%
Staff	40	66.7%
<b>Meritage Status</b>		
Single	27	45%
Married	33	55%
<b>Tenure</b>		
Up to 2 years	24	40%
Up to 5 years	36	60%

Source: Authors (2018)

TABLE 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among All Variables.

	M	SD	1	2	3
Work Load	w3.10	.6064	-		
Work Stress	2.69	.6085	.802***	-	
Intention to Leave	3.04	.5335	.570***	.582***	-

N = 90 \*p <.05, \*\*p <.01, \*\*\*p<.001

TABLE 3: Result of H1 – H2 Testing.

Hypothesis	Standardized beta coefficient	t statistic	Significance	Statement
Workload will have positive impact on work stress	0.717	7.845	0.000	H1 Supported
Work stress will have positive impact on intention to leave	0.875	29.104	0.00	H2 Supported

Source: Authors (2018)

TABLE 4: Result of H4 Testing (Path Analysis).

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Stand. Coef.	t stat.	Sign	Noted
The impact of workload on intention to leave will mediated by work stress	Workload	Intention to Leave	.091	0.938	0.052	H3 Supported
	Work Stress		.875	19.356	.000	

Source: Authors (2018)

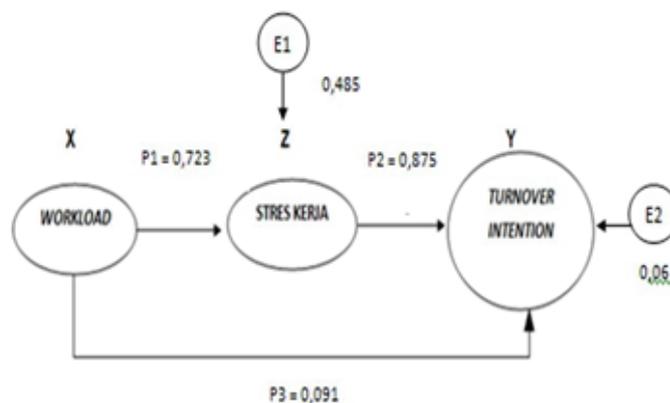


Figure 1: Result of Path Analysis.

employees have a focus on careers and activities / activities outside of work. High jobs demands make them not have time for other activities outside of work so employees experience job stress.

In additional, the respondents of this study were also mostly male and married. In Asian cultures (such as Indonesia), men have a role as leaders in the family and proving finance for families so men are required to have time for social roles. When a man spends his time on office work he will not be able to fulfill his social role. This causes employees to experience work stress and consider leaving the company. The intention to leave the company is an effort to reduce work stress because working for another company whose workload is low will make the employee fulfill his social role. The result of this study are in line with the result of previous studies, namely workload stress (Kusuma & Soesatyo, 2014) because work stress can be formed due to internal factors namely gender and external factor namely workload as a form of fatigue experienced (Budiman, Husaini, and Arifin, 2016).

## 5. Conclusion

Workload has a significant positive effect on work stress and work stress has a positive and significant effect on the intention to leave the company. Job stress is also supported in mediating the relationship between workload and intention to leave. Based on the result of the study, the authors suggest that companies periodically evaluate the work design of employees and level of employees' work stress. Management should design the workloads that could reduce level of work stress so that the intention to leave also decreases.

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