

OVERLY PRODUCTIVE, WANT TO GET OUT QUICKLY? TOXIC PRODUCTIVITY ANALYSIS ON TURNOVER INTENTION WITH JOB BURNOUT MEDIATION

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ABSTRACT

This study to analyze the effect of toxic productivity on turnover intention with job burnout as a mediating variable. The phenomenon of excessive productivity driven by internal and external pressures has become increasingly prevalent in modern workplaces. Individuals who continuously force themselves to remain productive without considering physical and psychological limits are at risk of experiencing job burnout, which may lead to the intention to leave the organization. This research employed a quantitative approach using primary data collected through questionnaires distributed to active employees. Data were analyzed using path analysis to examine both direct and indirect relationships among variables.

For The findings indicate that toxic productivity has a positive and significant effect on job burnout. Furthermore, job burnout significantly influences turnover intention. In addition, job burnout significantly mediates the relationship between toxic productivity and turnover intention. These results suggest that workplace cultures that normalize excessive productivity without prioritizing employee well-being may increase burnout risk and employees' intention to resign. Therefore, organizations should develop work policies that emphasize work-life balance and healthy workload management to reduce turnover intention.

Keywords : toxic productivity, job burnout, turnover intention, employee well-being, organizational behavior

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of toxic productivity has become increasingly relevant in today's work dynamics. The core problem addressed in this study is the pressure to remain constantly productive without considering individual limits, which may ultimately trigger job burnout and increase turnover intention. Preliminary observations indicate that many employees feel guilty when resting, struggle to separate work and personal life, and continue working despite experiencing physical and mental exhaustion.

This research is important because high turnover intention can lead to increased recruitment and retraining costs, as well as decreased organizational stability. The urgency of this study is reinforced by post-pandemic work transformations, including flexible work systems and digitalization, which often extend working hours and blur the boundaries between work and personal life. Over the past two years, discussions surrounding employee mental health, burnout, and excessive work culture have intensified both nationally and internationally, reflecting growing awareness of psychological well-being in the workplace.

This issue is significant not only in Indonesia but also globally, as it relates to long-term productivity and organizational sustainability. The data used in this study consist of primary quantitative data obtained through questionnaire responses measured using attitude scales. In terms of policy, this topic is associated with labor regulations, working-hour policies, and corporate employee well-being programs. Therefore, this study is expected to provide empirical contributions to understanding the mechanism linking toxic productivity, job burnout, and turnover intention.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Toxic Productivity

Toxic productivity refers to an excessive and unhealthy drive to remain constantly productive without considering physical, emotional, and psychological limits. Unlike healthy productivity, toxic productivity is characterized by compulsive overworking, feelings of guilt when resting, and the internalization of extreme performance standards. In modern workplaces, especially after the digital transformation and flexible working systems, employees are increasingly exposed to blurred boundaries between work and personal life.

From a theoretical perspective, this phenomenon can be explained through the **Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory**, which argues that high job demands combined with insufficient job resources lead to psychological strain. Toxic productivity increases both objective demands (long working hours, high targets) and subjective demands (self-imposed pressure to always perform), making employees more vulnerable to emotional exhaustion.

2.2 Job Burnout

Job burnout is a psychological syndrome resulting from prolonged exposure to chronic work-related stress. It is commonly characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Burnout emerges when employees continuously invest energy without adequate recovery or organizational support.

In this study, job burnout is positioned as a mediating variable. Conceptually, toxic productivity creates continuous psychological pressure, which gradually depletes emotional and cognitive resources. When employees experience sustained exhaustion, they begin to disengage from work as a coping mechanism.

2.3 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention refers to an employee's conscious and deliberate willingness to leave the organization. It is widely recognized as the strongest predictor of actual turnover behavior.

High turnover intention can increase recruitment costs, reduce organizational performance, and disrupt team stability.

The relationship between burnout and turnover intention can be explained using **Social Exchange Theory**, which suggests that when employees perceive imbalance between effort and reward, they may withdraw from the organization. Emotional exhaustion weakens organizational attachment and increases the desire to resign.

2.4 Relationship Among Variables

Based on theoretical arguments and previous empirical findings, the relationships among variables are formulated as follows:

1. Toxic productivity positively affects job burnout.
2. Job burnout positively affects turnover intention.
3. Toxic productivity indirectly affects turnover intention through job burnout.

Burnout functions as a psychological mechanism that explains how excessive productivity pressure evolves into the intention to leave the organization

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The objective is to examine the causal relationships between toxic productivity, job burnout, and turnover intention.

3.2 Type and Source of Data

The research uses primary data obtained from questionnaire responses collected through an online survey form. The questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.3 Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of active employees who meet the research criteria. Based on the collected questionnaire data, the total number of valid respondents included in the analysis is **N = 102 respondents**

The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, where respondents were selected based on specific criteria:

- Currently employed as active employees
- Having at least one year of working experience
- Completing the questionnaire fully and validly

3.4 Data Collection Technique

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to employees. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with statements reflecting their work experiences related to productivity pressure, emotional exhaustion, and intention to leave.

3.5 Measurement of Variables

- **Toxic Productivity (Independent Variable)**

Measured through indicators reflecting excessive work drive, difficulty resting, and internal pressure to continuously perform.

- **Job Burnout (Mediating Variable)**

Measured using adapted items based on the Maslach Burnout framework, focusing on emotional exhaustion and reduced professional efficacy.

- **Turnover Intention (Dependent Variable)**

Measured through items assessing employees' desire to search for new jobs or resign from the organization.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis was conducted in several stages:

1. **Validity and Reliability Test**

To ensure that the instrument accurately and consistently measures each construct.

2. **Classical Assumption Tests**

Including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure regression model suitability.

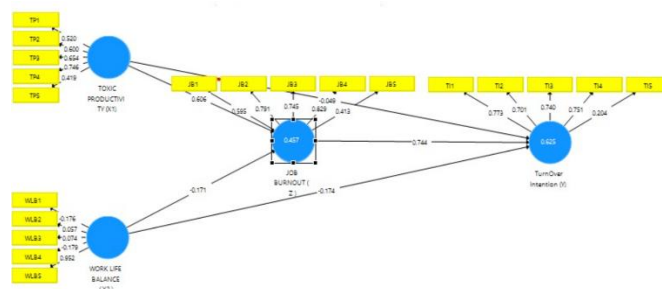
3. **Path Analysis**

Used to examine both direct and indirect effects among variables.

4. **Mediation Test**

The mediating role of job burnout was tested using the Sobel test or bootstrapping approach to determine whether the mediation effect is partial or full.

3.7 Structural Model



Research Hypotheses

X1: Toxic Productivity

X2: Work Life Balance

Z : Job Burnout

Y : TurnOver Intention

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To examine the proposed hypotheses, the structural model was evaluated using path coefficient analysis. The standardized path coefficients were employed to determine the direction and strength of the relationships among Toxic Productivity, Work-Life Balance, Job Burnout, and Turnover Intention. The results of the structural model are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Path Coefficients of the Structural Model

Hypothesis	Structural Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	Direction	Interpretation
H1	Toxic Productivity $\rightarrow$ Job Burnout	0.606	Positive	Strong positive relationship
H2	Job Burnout $\rightarrow$ Turnover Intention	0.744	Positive	Very strong positive relationship
H3	Toxic Productivity $\rightarrow$ Turnover Intention	-0.049	Negative	Very weak negative relationship
H4	Work-Life Balance $\rightarrow$ Job Burnout	-0.171	Negative	Weak negative relationship
H5	Work-Life Balance $\rightarrow$ Turnover Intention	-0.174	Negative	Weak negative relationship

Source: SmartPLS Output (2026)

As shown in **Table 1**, the structural model demonstrates that **Toxic Productivity has a strong positive relationship with Job Burnout ($\beta = 0.606$)**. This result indicates that employees who continuously experience excessive pressure to maintain high levels of productivity are more likely to suffer from emotional exhaustion and psychological fatigue. The finding supports the argument of the **Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory**, which explains that excessive job demands gradually deplete employees' physical and psychological resources, leading to burnout.

Furthermore, the results reveal that **Job Burnout has the strongest positive relationship with Turnover Intention ($\beta = 0.744$)**. This coefficient represents the highest effect among all structural relationships in the model, suggesting that burnout is the primary determinant of employees' intention to leave the organization. Employees experiencing prolonged emotional exhaustion tend to lose organizational commitment, reduce their work engagement, and become more inclined to seek employment opportunities elsewhere. This finding is consistent with **Social Exchange Theory**, which proposes that employees withdraw from organizations when the perceived imbalance between effort and organizational support becomes excessive.

Interestingly, the direct relationship between **Toxic Productivity and Turnover Intention is relatively weak and negative ($\beta = -0.049$)**. This finding suggests that toxic productivity alone does not directly encourage employees to resign. Instead, its influence on turnover intention appears to occur indirectly through Job Burnout. Employees may initially perceive excessive productivity as part of professional responsibility or organizational expectations.

However, when this pressure persists over time and develops into psychological exhaustion, turnover intention becomes more apparent. Therefore, Job Burnout serves as the principal mechanism linking toxic productivity to employees' turnover intention.

Regarding the role of **Work-Life Balance**, the findings indicate a **negative relationship with Job Burnout ($\beta = -0.171$)**. This result suggests that employees who are able to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life experience lower levels of burnout. Adequate recovery time, family interaction, and personal activities contribute to reducing emotional exhaustion and improving psychological well-being.

Similarly, **Work-Life Balance negatively affects Turnover Intention ($\beta = -0.174$)**. Although the magnitude of the relationship is relatively modest, the result demonstrates that employees who perceive a better balance between work and personal life are less likely to develop intentions to leave their organizations. Supportive organizational policies, flexible work arrangements, and manageable workloads may strengthen employees' organizational commitment while simultaneously reducing turnover intention.

Overall, the structural model confirms that **Job Burnout represents the central explanatory mechanism within the research model**. Toxic Productivity primarily contributes to Turnover Intention through its effect on Job Burnout, whereas Work-Life Balance functions as a protective factor by reducing both burnout and employees' intention to resign. These findings highlight the importance of promoting sustainable productivity practices and implementing organizational policies that support employee well-being in order to minimize turnover intention.

Summary of Structural Relationships

Relationship	β	Effect Strength	Conclusion
Toxic Productivity $\rightarrow$ Job Burnout	0.606	Strong	Excessive productivity significantly increases employee burnout.
Job Burnout $\rightarrow$ Turnover Intention	0.744	Very Strong	Burnout is the strongest predictor of turnover intention.
Toxic Productivity $\rightarrow$ Turnover Intention	– 0.049	Very Weak	Toxic productivity has almost no direct influence on turnover intention.
Work-Life Balance $\rightarrow$ Job Burnout	– 0.171	Weak	Better work-life balance reduces employee burnout.
Work-Life Balance $\rightarrow$ Turnover Intention	– 0.174	Weak	Better work-life balance lowers employees' intention to leave.

5. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATION

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships among Toxic Productivity, Work-Life Balance, Job Burnout, and Turnover Intention using a structural path analysis approach. The findings demonstrate that Toxic Productivity is positively associated with Job Burnout, indicating that employees who continuously experience excessive productivity pressure are more likely to suffer from emotional exhaustion. This result highlights that an organizational culture emphasizing constant performance without adequate recovery may negatively affect employees' psychological well-being.

The analysis also reveals that Job Burnout has the strongest positive relationship with Turnover Intention, suggesting that emotional exhaustion is a major factor influencing employees' willingness to leave the organization. Employees who experience prolonged burnout tend to lose motivation, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction, ultimately increasing their intention to seek alternative employment opportunities.

Conversely, Work-Life Balance exhibits negative relationships with both Job Burnout and Turnover Intention. These findings indicate that maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life can reduce employees' emotional exhaustion while simultaneously decreasing their intention to resign. Therefore, work-life balance functions as an important protective factor in promoting employee well-being and organizational sustainability.

In addition, the direct relationship between Toxic Productivity and Turnover Intention is relatively weak compared with its relationship with Job Burnout. This pattern suggests that the influence of toxic productivity on employees' intention to leave the organization primarily occurs through the development of burnout rather than through a direct mechanism. Consequently, organizations should not only focus on improving productivity but also prioritize employee well-being through effective workload management, psychological support, and work-life balance initiatives.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing literature on organizational behavior by providing empirical evidence that employee well-being plays a central role in explaining how excessive productivity demands influence turnover intention. The findings also offer practical implications for organizations seeking to improve employee retention by reducing burnout and fostering healthier work environments.

LIMITATION

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study.

First, this study employed a cross-sectional research design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships among the variables. Future studies are encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs to better understand how toxic productivity, job burnout, and turnover intention develop over time.

Second, the study relied exclusively on self-reported questionnaire data, making the findings susceptible to common method bias and respondents' subjective perceptions. Future research may combine survey data with supervisor evaluations, organizational records, or qualitative interviews to improve the robustness of the findings.

Third, the sample consisted of 102 respondents representing active employees from various organizations. Although this sample size is adequate for structural analysis, broader samples involving different industries, organizational sizes, and geographical regions would improve the generalizability of the results.

Finally, this study focused on Job Burnout as the primary explanatory mechanism linking Toxic Productivity to Turnover Intention while incorporating Work-Life Balance as an additional predictor. Future studies are encouraged to extend the model by including other organizational and psychological variables, such as perceived organizational support, employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, psychological resilience, leadership style, and career cushioning. Incorporating these variables may provide a more comprehensive understanding of employee behavior and strengthen the explanatory power of the research model.

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