

The Influence of Toxic Leadership, Work Stress, and Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities on Employee Turnover Intention

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ABSTRACT: Employee turnover remains a significant issue faced by many organizations today. Employee turnover behavior within an organization can be well predicted by turnover intention, and high turnover intention among employees negatively impacts organizations, with some experts arguing that its consequences are even more detrimental than the turnover behavior itself. Turnover intention is influenced by various factors, including toxic leadership, job stress, and perceived alternative job opportunities. This study aims to analyze the influence of toxic leadership, job stress, and perceived alternative job opportunities on the turnover intention of village officials in Bengkulu Province. The novelty of this research lies in its conceptual model, which simultaneously examines the influence of these variables on turnover intention, whereas previous studies typically analyzed them separately. Using a quantitative approach with a survey method, this study involved a population of all village officials in Bengkulu Province, with 270 respondents selected through multistage random sampling. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression, and the results showed that toxic leadership, work stress, and perceived alternative job opportunities each have a positive and significant influence on turnover intention. Simultaneous testing further revealed that these variables collectively have a significant influence on the turnover intention of village officials in Bengkulu Province.

KEYWORDS: Turnover intention, Job Stress, toxic leadership, Alternatif Job Opportunities

I. INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are the most important assets of an organization, driving its operations and influencing its efficiency and effectiveness (Dessler, 2017). The critical role of human resources compels organizations to compete for acquiring the best talents and skills suited to their needs. This competition is not only prevalent among business organizations but also occurs within public organizations. In addition to competing for the best human resources, organizations must also strive to retain their existing workforce and prevent them from leaving or moving to similar organizations.

Public organizations, as non-profit entities, aim primarily to serve the public. Their ability to deliver services heavily depends on the human resources they possess. However, the performance of public organizations is often disrupted by employee turnover intention. Turnover intention refers to an employee's intention or desire to leave their job, whether voluntarily or involuntarily (Robbins & Judge, 2016).

High turnover intention among employees negatively impacts organizations, with some experts arguing that its effects are even more damaging than actual turnover. Employees with high turnover intention often exhibit behaviors such as failing to meet job responsibilities, decreased enthusiasm, loss of motivation, and reduced performance, ultimately affecting the overall performance of the organization (Holzer et al., 2004). Indicators of turnover intention include actively seeking new job opportunities, misuse of sick leave, and extended break times, all of which disrupt organizational effectiveness and efficiency (Carragher & Bentler, 2008).

Several factors influence turnover intention, including work stress (Ramlah et al., 2021; Anees et al., 2021; Mulyaningsih & Tanuwijaya, 2023), toxic leadership (Hattab et al., 2022; Manaa, 2022; Ofei et al., 2023), and perceived alternative job opportunities (Weimer, 1985; Hwang & Kuo, 2006; Thatcher et al., 2003).

Previous studies have shown inconsistent findings regarding the effect of work stress on turnover intention. Studies by Ramlah et al. (2021), Anees et al. (2021), and Mulyaningsih & Tanuwijaya (2023) indicate that higher levels of work stress are

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associated with increased turnover intention. In contrast, other studies (Kusumanegara et al., 2018; Ramlawati et al., 2021; Mawardi, 2022) found no significant direct effect of work stress on turnover intention.

Similarly, there are discrepancies in the findings regarding the influence of toxic leadership on turnover intention. Studies by Hattab et al. (2022), Manaa (2022), and Ofei et al. (2023) found that higher perceptions of toxic leadership lead to higher turnover intention. Conversely, studies by Aktas et al. (2020) and Dwita (2022) reported no significant effect of toxic leadership on turnover intention.

In addition to toxic leadership and work stress, research on the effect of perceived alternative job opportunities on turnover intention also shows inconsistencies. Farooqui & Ahmed (2013), Mosez et al. (2018), and Ramlawati et al. (2021) found a positive and significant influence, whereas Shi (2022) found no significant statistical relationship. Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2024) reported that perceived alternative job opportunities did not significantly affect turnover intention, explaining why many employees resigned even without available job alternatives during the pandemic.

This study aims to address population, empirical, and practical gaps related to employee turnover intention. From a population perspective, it focuses on employees in the public sector, a context rarely explored in relation to turnover intention, toxic leadership, work stress, and perceived alternative job opportunities. From an empirical standpoint, the study seeks to contribute by addressing the inconsistent findings in prior research by examining the simultaneous relationship of these three variables with turnover intention, which have mostly been studied independently. Practically, this study offers strategic recommendations for HR management to mitigate toxic leadership, reduce work stress, and understand employees' perceptions of alternative job opportunities to lower turnover intention.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Turnover intention

According to Mathis & Jackson (2016), turnover is the process by which employees leave an organization and must be replaced. Robbins & Judge (2016) define turnover intention as the tendency or degree to which an employee is likely to leave the company, either voluntarily or involuntarily, due to dissatisfaction with the current job and the availability of alternative job opportunities.

Employee turnover intention has significant implications for costs and many other negative consequences for any organization. The loss of skilled and highly qualified personnel can damage the overall performance of the organization by disrupting its functions, administration, and the delivery of vital services (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Turnover intention is a strong predictor of employee turnover (Bashir, 2014). High turnover intention will ultimately lead to actual turnover behavior. According to Mathis & Jackson (2016), employee turnover can be classified into: involuntary and voluntary turnover, functional and dysfunctional turnover, and uncontrollable and controllable turnover.

Toxic leadership is one of the factors that can influence employee turnover intention. Toxic leadership can increase employees' intention to leave because it can harm their well-being and increase dissatisfaction with their jobs (Mehta & Maheshwari, 2013). Research conducted by Behery et al. (2018), Zaabi et al. (2018), and Manaa (2022) found that toxic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee turnover intention. Employees who report high levels of toxic leadership are more likely to have a strong desire to leave their jobs. While some employees in the public sector may remain in their jobs despite experiencing high levels of toxic leadership, the intention to leave remains.

In addition to toxic leadership, another factor that can influence turnover intention is work stress. According to Robbins & Judge (2016), employees who experience excessive work stress are more likely to voluntarily leave their jobs. Employees with high levels of work stress tend to have low job satisfaction and ultimately decide to leave for better opportunities (Khan et al., 2017). Research by Pahi et al. (2016), Manoppo (2020), and Ramlah et al. (2021) found that work stress has a positive and significant effect on employee turnover intention. Employees with high levels of work stress tend to have a higher desire to leave their jobs. Conversely, employees with low levels of work stress are more likely to stay in their jobs.

Another factor that can influence turnover intention is perceived alternative job opportunities. Perceived job alternative opportunity is defined as an individual's perception of the availability of external job alternatives or opportunities outside the organization where they work (Josephson et al., 2008). According to Ucho et al. (2012), employees may not choose to leave their jobs regardless of their job satisfaction levels, but rather because of the lack of alternative jobs available in the market.

Studies by Farooqui & Ahmed (2013), Mosez et al. (2018), Albalawi et al. (2019), Awal et al. (2020), Baranchenko et al. (2020), Bhat et al. (2021), Ramlawati et al. (2021), and Zivkovic et al. (2023) found that perceived alternative job opportunities have a positive and significant impact on employee turnover intention. The higher the employees' perception of alternative job

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opportunities, the higher their turnover intention will be. On the other hand, Bhat et al. (2021) reported that the lack of external job opportunities forces employees to remain with the organization, even when facing a stressful work environment.

B. Job Stress

Stress is a response to adjustments influenced by individual differences and psychological processes, as a consequence of actions. Stress can be positive when a situation offers an opportunity for an individual to achieve something (Robbins & Judge, 2016). According to Sheraz et al. (2014), the non-specific negative reaction of the body to job demands is called work stress. Sewwandi (2016) states that high work stress has negative consequences such as decreased job satisfaction, lowered dedication and motivation, and increased withdrawal behavior and turnover. Studies by Dwita (2022) and Jamil et al. (2022) found that work stress has a positive and significant effect on employee turnover intention. The results showed that work stress directly significantly influences turnover intention, while the indirect effect test shows that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work stress and turnover intention. High work stress among employees affects their job satisfaction, which ultimately leads them to turnover intention behavior.

C. Toxic Leadership

The definition of toxic leadership is divided into two categories: toxic leadership as a general term encompassing various negative leadership behaviors, and toxic leadership as part of unethical, negative, or destructive leadership (Pagan, 2016). Lipman-Blumen (2005) states that toxic leadership styles can drastically hinder employees' motivation, creativity, job satisfaction, productivity, and overall performance. Under toxic leadership, employees basically have two choices: comply with the leader or leave. Those who choose to remain in the organization may still hope for a change in the situation. Some may respond by only being partially engaged. In other words, their commitment to their work and their relationship with the company can be tentative. It can be said that low employee commitment to organizations that allow damaging leadership occurs because employees may believe that the organization has failed to protect them, ultimately affecting their loyalty to the organization (Burris et al., 2008; Schyns & Schilling, 2013).

Research by Hattab et al. (2022), Keskin & Kilic (2023), and Nonehkaran et al. (2023) found that toxic leadership has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention. Employees who experience high levels of toxic leadership at work are more likely to have a high turnover intention. Moreover, turnover intention has also been reported as a mediator of the effect of toxic leadership on unproductive work behavior among public sector employees.

D. Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities

Perceived job alternative opportunities is defined as an individual's perception of the availability of external job alternatives or opportunities outside the organization they work for (Josephson et al., 2008). According to Ucho et al. (2012), employees do not choose to leave their jobs based solely on job satisfaction levels, but also due to the lack of alternative jobs available in the market. According to Skachkova (2011), job alternatives compel employees to leave the organization, referring to it as an alternative force among other forces when analyzing voluntary turnover among technical consultants in Sweden.

In a recent study, Zivkovic et al. (2023) found that employees who perceive little or weak potential for obtaining alternative jobs outside the organization have low turnover intention. Similar results were found by Awal et al. (2020) and Baranchenko et al. (2020), who argued that external job opportunities greatly affect turnover intention. Meanwhile, Albalawi et al. (2019) emphasized that perceived alternative job opportunities outside the organization's control correlate positively with turnover intention. Bhat et al. (2021) reported that the lack of external job opportunities forces employees to maintain membership in the organization, even when facing a high-pressure work environment.

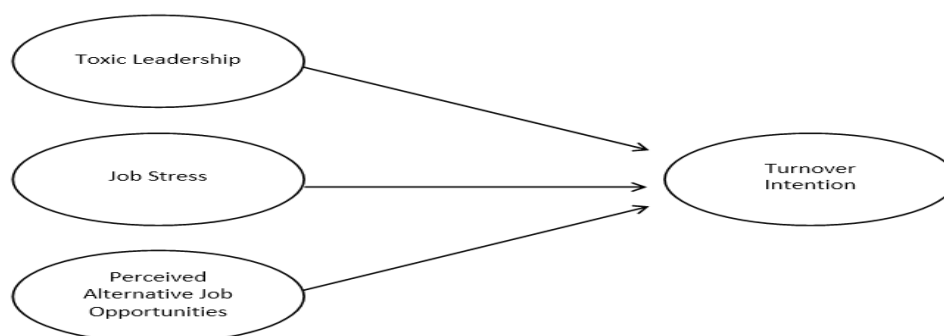


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

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Based on the research model described above, the researcher proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Toxic leadership has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention.

H2: Job stress has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention.

H3: Perceived alternative job opportunities has a positive and significant effect on turnover intention.

H4: Simultaneously, there is a significant influence of toxic leadership, work stress, and the perception of alternative job opportunities on turnover intention.

III. METHOD, DATA, AND ANALYSIS

This research is a quantitative study with a survey approach. Quantitative research is based on positivism philosophy, used to examine specific populations or samples, with quantitative/statistical data analysis aimed at testing predetermined hypotheses (Sekaran, 2010). The survey research method involves data collection techniques through oral or written questions (Cresswell, 2018).

The population of this study comprises all village officials in Bengkulu Province. The research sample includes 270 village officials selected using a multistage random sampling method. The research data were collected through a survey method using questionnaires. The variables in this study were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with response weights ranging from 1 to 5. A weight of 1 represents "Strongly Disagree (SD)," 2 represents "Disagree (D)," 3 represents "Somewhat Agree (SA)," 4 represents "Agree (A)," and 5 represents "Strongly Agree (SA)."

The research instruments were adopted from previous studies. Turnover intention was measured using the instrument developed by Michaels & Spector (1982). This instrument assesses employees' intention to leave their organization or workplace voluntarily within the past six months and consists of three indicators or statement items. Toxic leadership was measured using the Short Version Toxic Leadership Scale developed by Schmidt & Hanges (2014). This instrument includes five dimensions (abusive supervision, authoritarian leadership, narcissism, self-promotion, and unpredictability) and 15 indicators. Job stress was measured using Parker's Job Stress Scale developed by Parker & DeCotiis (1983), which includes two dimensions (time stress and job anxiety) and 13 indicators. Perceived alternative job opportunities were measured using the Perceived Job Alternatives Scale developed by Treuren (2013), consisting of six indicators.

In addition to collecting respondents' responses to the research variables, this study also gathered individual data such as age, gender, highest education level, and length of service.

The data analysis employed multiple linear regression using IBM SPSS Statistics 25. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the effects of toxic leadership, job stress, and perceived alternative job opportunities on turnover intention, both partially and simultaneously.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. RESULT

1. Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of the respondents in this study include age, gender, highest level of education, and length of service.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Description	Total	Percentage (%)
Age	20 – 30 Years	67	24,8
	31 – 40 Years	98	36,3
	41 – 50 Years	77	28,5
	> 50 Years	28	10,4
Gender	Male	195	72,2
	Female	75	27,8
Education	High School	165	61,1
	Diploma (D3)	18	6,7
	Bachelor's Degree	87	32,2
Work Tenure	< 5 Years	119	44,1
	≥ 5 Years	151	55,9

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2. Classical Assumption Test

Normality Test

The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. If the significance value $> \alpha 0.05$, it can be concluded that the data for each research variable is normally distributed. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Normality Test Results

Variable	Significance Value	Information
Turnover Intention	0,118	Normal
Toxic Leadership	0,112	Normal
Job Stress	0,200	Normal
Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities	0,171	Normal

Based on the results in Table 2, the significance values for all variables are greater than the alpha value (0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that the data for all variables are normally distributed.

Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test uses tolerance values and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). If the tolerance value > 0.10 and the VIF value < 10 , it indicates no multicollinearity among the independent variables. The results of the multicollinearity test are shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance Value	VIF Value	Information
Toxic Leadership	0,280	3,618	No Multicollinearity
Job Stress	0,430	2,327	No Multicollinearity
Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities	0,480	2,078	No Multicollinearity

Based on the results in Table 3, the tolerance values for all variables are > 0.10 and the VIF values are < 10 . Thus, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity.

Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test uses the Glejser test by comparing the significance value to the alpha value (0.05). If the significance value > 0.05 , it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity in the regression model. The results are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variable	Significance Value	Information
Toxic Leadership	0,440	No Heteroscedasticity
Job Stress	0,142	No Heteroscedasticity
Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities	0,628	No Heteroscedasticity

Based on Table 4, the significance values for all variables are $> \alpha 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity.

3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis in this study was used to determine the influence of two or more independent variables (toxic leadership, job stress, and perceived alternative job opportunities) on the dependent variable (turnover intention) simultaneously. The results are presented in Table 5 below:

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Table 5: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.857	.118		7.253	.000
	Toxic Leadership	.045	.011	.217	4.087	.000
	Job Stress	.052	.010	.216	5.070	.000
	Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities	.242	.017	.565	14.017	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention

Regression Equation:

$$Y = 0.857 + 0.045 X_1 + 0.052 X_2 + 0.242 X_3$$

Interpretation:

- The constant value of 0.857 indicates that if toxic leadership (X1), job stress (X2), and perceived alternative job opportunities (X3) are zero, the turnover intention (Y) remains at 0.857.
- The regression coefficient of toxic leadership (X1) is 0.045, meaning a one-unit increase in X1 increases turnover intention (Y) by 0.045, assuming other variables are constant.
- The regression coefficient of job stress (X2) is 0.052, meaning a one-unit increase in X2 increases turnover intention (Y) by 0.052, assuming other variables are constant.
- The regression coefficient of perceived alternative job opportunities (X3) is 0.242, meaning a one-unit increase in X3 increases turnover intention (Y) by 0.242, assuming other variables are constant.

4. Coefficient of Determination Analysis

The coefficient of determination analysis aims to determine the percentage of the independent variables' influence on the dependent variable. The results are presented in Table 6:

Table 6: Coefficient of Determination Results

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.890 ^a	.792	.792	.402

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities, Job Stress, Toxic Leadership

The R Square value of 0.792 indicates that 79.2% of the variance in turnover intention is explained by the independent variables (toxic leadership, job stress, and perceived alternative job opportunities), while the remaining 20.8% is influenced by other factors not included in the model.

5. Hypothesis Testing

Partial Testing

Partial testing evaluates the effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable. The results are shown in Table 7:

Table 7: Partial Testing Results

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.857	.118		7.253	.000
	Toxic Leadership	.045	.011	.217	4.087	.000
	Job Stress	.052	.010	.216	5.070	.000
	Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities	.242	.017	.565	14.017	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention

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Based on Table 7, the results of the partial testing above can be presented for each research variable as follows:

- The test results for the toxic leadership variable (X1) showed that $t_{count} = 4.087 > t_{table} = 1.64$ or $Sig = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. This means there is a positive and significant influence of toxic leadership (X1) on turnover intention (Y).
- The test results for the job stress variable (X2) showed that $t_{count} = 5.070 > t_{table} = 1.64$ or $Sig = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. This means there is a positive and significant influence of job stress (X2) on turnover intention (Y).
- The test results for the perceived alternative job opportunities variable (X3) showed that $t_{count} = 14.017 > t_{table} = 1.64$ or $Sig = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. This means there is a positive and significant influence of perceived alternative job opportunities (X3) on turnover intention (Y).

Simultaneous Testing

Simultaneous testing evaluates whether independent variables collectively influence the dependent variable. Results are shown in Table 8:

Table 8: Simultaneous Testing Results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	202.596	3	67.865	417.857	.000 ^b
	Residual	42.978	266	.162		
	Total	245.574	269			

a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities, Job Stress, Toxic Leadership

Based on Table 8, the results of the simultaneous test above show that $F_{count} = 417.857 > F_{table} = 2.6$ or $Sig = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. This means there is a significant simultaneous influence of toxic leadership (X1), job stress (X2), and perceived alternative job opportunities (X3) on turnover intention (Y).

B. DISCUSSION

The partial test results indicate that toxic leadership has a positive and significant effect on the turnover intention of village officials in Bengkulu Province. This finding aligns with Rousseau's (1990) view, which states that employees may feel their leaders and organizations fail to provide job security due to continuous toxic treatment. Employees may not directly retaliate due to the accepted power imbalance, which is supported in cultures with high power distance (Richard et al., 2020). However, this condition results in intense emotional reactions and motivates employees to leave their jobs (turnover intention) or exhibit unproductive work behaviors. Furthermore, studies by Hattab et al. (2022) and Manaa (2022) found a positive and significant effect of toxic leadership on employee turnover intention. Employees reporting high levels of toxic leadership also report a strong desire to leave their jobs.

Job stress has a positive and significant effect on the turnover intention of village officials in Bengkulu Province. This is consistent with Khan et al. (2017), who stated that employees experiencing high job stress tend to have low job satisfaction and eventually decide to leave their jobs to seek better opportunities. The findings align with studies by Yuda & Ardana (2017), Manoppo (2020), Ramlah et al. (2021), and Anees et al. (2021), which found that job stress positively and significantly affects employee turnover intention.

Perceptions of alternative job opportunities have a positive and significant effect on the turnover intention of village officials in Bengkulu Province. This finding supports Ucho et al.'s (2012) assertion that employees may choose not to leave their jobs, irrespective of job satisfaction, due to the lack of available alternatives in the job market. A study by Zivkovic et al. (2023) found low turnover intention among employees perceiving limited alternative job opportunities outside their organization. Similarly, Awal et al. (2020) and Baranchenko et al. (2020) argued that external job opportunities significantly impact turnover intention. Meanwhile, Albalawi et al. (2019) emphasized that perceived alternative job opportunities outside organizational control positively correlate with turnover intention. Bhat et al. (2021) reported that a lack of external job opportunities forces employees to remain with the organization, even in high-stress work environments.

The simultaneous test results show that toxic leadership, job stress, and perceptions of alternative job opportunities collectively have a significant effect on turnover intention. The combined effect of toxic leadership, job stress, and perceptions

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of alternative job opportunities on turnover intention is 97.6%. These findings align with Zubair et al.'s (2017) argument that job stress can mediate the effect of toxic leadership on employee turnover intention. Employees experiencing high levels of toxic leadership at work tend to report high stress levels, which ultimately influence their desire to leave the organization. Studies by Farooqui & Ahmed (2013), Mosez et al. (2018), and Ramlawati et al. (2021) also found that perceptions of alternative job opportunities have a positive and significant effect on employee turnover intention.

V. CONCLUSION

The study results indicate that toxic leadership, job stress, and perceptions of alternative job opportunities each have a positive and significant effect on turnover intention. Simultaneously, these factors collectively have a significant impact on the turnover intention of village officials in Bengkulu Province. This implies that an increase in toxic leadership, job stress, and perceptions of alternative job opportunities leads to a higher likelihood of employees exhibiting turnover intention.

VI. IMPLICATION, LIMITATION, AND SUGGESTIONS

Implications

Theoretical implications: The findings contribute to the existing literature by exploring the impact of toxic leadership, job stress, and perceptions of alternative job opportunities on turnover intention among public sector employees, a topic that has been understudied.

Practical implications: The study results serve as a reference for managers to reduce turnover intention among village officials by addressing toxic leadership behaviors, lowering job stress levels, and improving job satisfaction to mitigate the effects of alternative job opportunities beyond organizational control.

Limitations

This study has several limitations, including a relatively small sample size and a broad research area, making it challenging to generalize the findings. The use of a Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) may introduce bias in responses, particularly on sensitive topics like toxic leadership and turnover intention. The study only examines the independent variables of toxic leadership, job stress, and perceptions of alternative job opportunities, leaving the potential influence of other variables unexplored.

Suggestions

Future researchers are encouraged to use larger sample sizes and focus on specific populations to facilitate better generalization of the findings. Additionally, future studies should explore diverse variables or consider moderating factors such as alternative job opportunities and emotional intelligence to explain the effects of job stress and toxic leadership on employee turnover intention more comprehensively.

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