

ANALYSIS OF TURNOVER INTENTION, WORK ENGAGEMENT, PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT AND HAPPINESS IN A PUBLIC SECTOR

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Abstract

The public sector in Indonesia is often regarded as a sector with stable employee turnover, possibly considered almost non-existent. However, the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) era has exerted pressure on employees within the Ministry of Finance (MoF) due to both global pressures (e.g., low economic growth) and domestic demands (e.g., high expectations for public services and societal way of life). The high job demands and societal pressures on employees at the MoF have created an exceedingly demanding work environment. Therefore, the research measures turnover intention (TI) which is found extremely high according to internal surveys (46%). This study explores the factors contributing to the high TI by predicting work engagement (WE), perceived organisational support (POS), and happiness as independent variables. Research data was collected through surveys (n=183) and analysed using Partial Least Squares, Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings demonstrate the diverse impacts of WE (2.881 > 1.96 t-table; sig 0.004 < 0.10), POS (3.305 > 1.96 t-table; sig 0.001 < 0.10), and happiness (1.541 < 1.96 t-table; sig 0.123 > 0.10) to TI. Two hypotheses were supported, while one hypothesis was rejected, indicating the need for further research in the public sector environment.

Keywords : *happiness, perceived organisational support, public sector, turnover, work engagement*

1. INTRODUCTION

The global uncertainty resulting from changing world conditions poses a threat to national bankruptcy. In addition to that, the residual effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the fluctuating relations between Ukraine and Russia contribute to this uncertainty. The recent insolvency of Sri Lanka serves as an example of a country declaring bankruptcy. In previous years, Argentina also defaulted on its debts amounting to Rp1440 trillion. Presently, twenty-six countries are queuing for assistance from the IMF due to their inability to resolve domestic issues on their own (Setkab, 2022). Towards the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023, the President of Indonesia placed special emphasis on anticipating global uncertainty in order to reduce the risk of bankruptcy. Therefore, the people within the organisation should mitigate the potential issues with extra effort. In other words, the pressure is raising for the employees who hold the responsibilities.

Not only from external sources, public demands for government performance, particularly within the MoF, are steadily increasing, placing additional extra pressure on employees. These demands extend beyond optimal performance to scrutinizing employees' lifestyles. According to Bakker and de Vries (2021), these demanding expectations can lead to significant psychological stress on employees. From an organisational perspective, this can disrupt the well-functioning processes within the MoF (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2018). Ultimately, the organisation's output becomes a victim that could have been prevented. The MoF employees should perform to manage the low economic growth in the framework of its pessimistic projection in 2023 (IMF 2.7%, 2022; World Bank 1.7%, 2023). The MoF as the fiscal coordinator must respond appropriately by

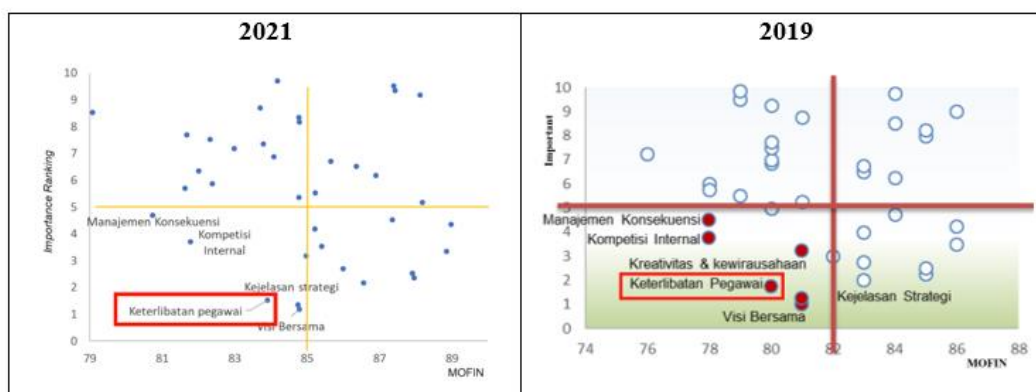
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enhancing productivity and ensuring that public services remain optimal to mitigate greater risks. Consequently, MoF also adds more pressure on its employees demanding extra effort.

The high pressure on employees directed the author to explore the locus of study. It is discovered that in 2022, 46% of respondents from an anonymous internal survey expressed a desire to leave FETA. 176 respondents (n=383) expressed their intention to depart by citing several reasons such as transferring to other first-echelon units within the MoF, moving to other government agencies outside the MoF, working in the private sector, pursuing independent ventures, and retiring/leaving employment. As MoF implement internal job vacancy (IJV) to facilitate employees' move to other units under MoF, FETA recorded a significant number of employee intentions that reached nearly 100 applicants from 2020 to 2022. IJV may allow inviting employees to join FETA or just take them out of FETA. Unfortunately, the ratio of actual employees leaving and entering FETA is consistently imbalanced for the last two years. The recorded ratio was 1 to 7 for those entering to those leaving FETA. The phenomenon of high TI is possibly caused by the low engagement of the employees. The MoF organisational health report calls for focus group discussion to resolve this matter and the top management urge to increase the engagement score. The matrix of important – performance of FETA is suggested in the table below. Engagement is among the most top important to support better performance.

Image 1: Important – Performance Matrix FETA in Comparison



Source: Internal Data

The other cause of high intention to depart from FETA is possibly caused by low organisational support that is perceived by employees. As found in analysis using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) in the organisational health report indicates competency development, career path, organisational culture, and employee transfers as the most mentioned. The low perception of organisational support indicates that employees are not content with the organisation. Some reasons provided by employees who had undergone IJV imply both positive and negative sentiments regarding their departures. The reasons from exit interviews describe job enrichment and refreshment as positive feedback. While in convenient interviews, some ex-FETA implied unhappiness as the main underlying factor for leaving FETA (e.g., avoiding unpredictable transfers and the certainty of work location).

Furthermore, the pressure on the employees also comes from internal FETA which adopts a "do more with less" approach. They have been gradually improving their outcomes from 2019 to 2024 while reducing budget allocations consistently. For instance, they aim to have 85% of training alumni experience performance improvement in 2023. While in the previous two years, targets were exceeded by 80% and 83% in 2021 and 2022, respectively. While this intention may not necessarily be translated into actual turnover, previous research suggests that attitudes (e.g., intent) can predict behaviour (e.g., quit). Thus, the high turnover intention warrants special attention to prevent actual turnover (Kraut, 1975; Mobley et al., 1978; Price & Mueller, 1981). The interview

with the Head of the Human Resource Development (HRD) Subdivision and her staff confirmed the existence of a high intention to leave FETA. The high desire is reflected in the enthusiasm to join IJV. They said that IJV is becoming the favourite event that employees are waiting for.

The officials and pieces of literature find the negative impact of high TI in the organisation. They are losing talents, competencies, investment for recruiting, training, and development (Belete, 2018; Korunka et al., 2008). The potential decreased of motivation of existing employees is caused by shifting focus to find other opportunities. The increasing workload is also the burden of actual turnover. Campbell et al. (2014) indicate that high TI is the manifestation of an underperforming organisation. Based on the issue exploration, the problem is stated as high turnover intention affects organisational performance to achieve their goals. The high intention is caused by low work engagement, organisational support, and happiness. Resolving the problem could support finding appropriate strategies using fewer resources as the approach of “do more with less”.

Selection of variable turnover intention

Turnover intention refers to an individual's voluntary desire to leave an organisation or job (Tett & Meyer, 1993), and it has been widely used by researchers as an antecedent and proxy for actual turnover behaviour (Wong & Cheng, 2020). Although researchers have found varied results regarding the relationship between turnover intention and predicting actual turnover behaviour (Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Griffeth et al., 2000), turnover intention remains the best predictor of actual turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000). This is supported by the perspective of attitude theory, which states that intent (attitude) determines behaviour (quit) (Kraut, 1975; Mobley et al., 1978; Price & Mueller, 1981). An empirical study by Harrison et al. (2006) on a meta-analysis of job attitudes and behaviour concluded that attitudes such as turnover intention can predict behaviours such as leaving the organisation. Furthermore, turnover intention has been identified as the strongest predictor of actual turnover (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, in Cohen et al., 2016, p. 3).

The second reason for selecting this variable is the ease of measuring employee intent compared to actual turnover, as employees are still within the organisation (Cohen et al., 2016). Consequently, it is more cost-effective to measure turnover intention rather than seek employees who have already left the organisation (Dalton et al., 1982). There is no need to take the risk of not finding respondents as the data can be easily obtained from existing employees. Another rationale is that turnover intention has been studied in the public sector outside Indonesia (e.g., Cohen et al., 2016; Jung, 2010; and Tett & Meyer, 1999). In the public sector, researchers generally find that turnover intention can serve as a proxy for voluntary turnover. Furthermore, given Indonesia's high-power distance, Wong and Cheng (2020) found a strong intention-behaviour relationship, suggesting a higher likelihood of actual turnover.

Hypothesis development: Turnover intention dan work engagement

Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74) define engagement “as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption”. These aspects represent indicators of an engaged individual. Vigour refers to a positive emotional state characterized by high mental resilience, energy levels, and persistence toward work. Dedication is experienced when individuals perceive their work as inspiring, significant, prideful, and engrossing. Absorption is characterized by being focused, immersed, and happily engrossed in one's work, making it difficult to detach from it. Work engagement is a unique construct that lacks a specific theory as its foundation. However, Schaufeli (2013) suggests several approaches. The first approach is the job demands-resources (JDR) model, which has received substantial empirical support. This approach assumes that work engagement is formed by the resources perceived by employees, which in turn motivates them to reciprocate and contribute to the organisation. The resources mentioned by Schaufeli (2013) include job resources and personal resources. Job resources encompass everything that supports job attainment, reduces job demands, and stimulates employee development (e.g., social support from colleagues, job control). On the other hand, personal resources include

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individual aspects associated with resilience and the ability to influence one's environment (e.g., optimism, self-efficacy, emotional stability).

The author proposes examining work engagement through the lens of social exchange theory (SET) by Blau (1968), which conceptualizes relationships as continuously evolving and leading to mutual commitment for reciprocal exchanges (Schaufeli, 2013). This approach is particularly relevant for this study, considering the characteristics of the research context. First, the employment relationship between civil servants and the organisation is perceived as long-lasting, implying that employees are expected to work until retirement. Second, this perspective focuses on the relationship between the organisation and its employees, facilitating the analysis of the quality of these relationships. For instance, when the organisation provides resources through HRM practices, employees reciprocate based on the level of engagement they experience (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli, 2013; Alfes et al., 2013). Therefore, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows: H1: Work engagement has a negative influence on employee turnover intention in the FETA.

Hypothesis development: Turnover intention dan perceived organisational support

The relationship between employees and organisations can be explained by SET (Blau, 1968). This theory emphasizes reciprocal exchanges, where individuals are willing to do something in the expectation of receiving commensurate rewards, thus creating a mutually beneficial relationship. Consistent with this, organisational support refers to actions taken by organisations to attend to employees' well-being and needs (Eisenberger et al., 2002). The quality of organisational support is perceived by employees through the level of support from the organisation, which makes them feel comfortable and less inclined to seek employment elsewhere. H2: Perceived organisational support has a negative influence on employee turnover intention in the FETA.

Hypothesis development: Turnover intention and happiness

Many organisations claim to care about employee happiness and well-being. However, these claims may not be evident in bureaucratic public sector organisations. This may be due to the bureaucratic nature which hinders their adaptability to environmental changes. Preliminary interview results implicitly suggest that employees who leave FETA experienced unhappiness, which is presumed to be one of the causes of increased turnover intention in the organisation. On the other hand, organisations that prioritize employee happiness have reported increased productivity (Oswald et al., 2015; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Employees who feel happy are more satisfied with their work and have a lower desire to switch jobs. Happiness among employees has been associated with various successful outcomes in over two hundred studies (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

H3: Happiness has a negative influence on employee turnover intention in the FETA.

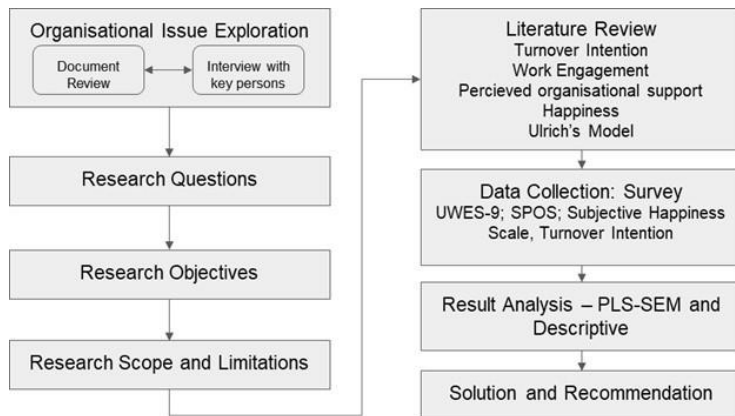
Ultimately, this study aims to examine the relationships between WE, POS, and happiness with TI in the Indonesian public sector. Amid stereotypes of low employee turnover in the public sector, the findings of this research are expected to contribute to public organisations in developing strategies to improve organisational performance in meeting the high demands for public services.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research methodology uses the design as depicted in the image 2. The measurement tools include 32 items of five-point Likert scale in the survey. The items incorporate 4 validated questionnaires namely the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9; 9 items) of Schaufeli et al. (2006), the Survey of Perceived Organisational Support (SPOS; 16 items) of Eisenberger et al. (1986), The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS; 4 items) of Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999), TI (3 items) of Landau and Hammer (1986). Data collection is spread to all employees (N=1298) through an official letter of the Secretariate Agency which took approximately three weeks, with a one-week break during the Eid al-Fitr holiday. Data analysis is suggested using PLS-SEM by Hair et al.

(2017) and descriptive statistic. The application to run the data is SmartPLS 4. To interpret the descriptive statistic, the Likert scale needs to be divided into five interval classes. The interval width is determined by subtracting the lowest value from the highest value of the selected scale and dividing it by five, $(5-1)/5 = 0.80$ (see table 1).

Image 2: Research Flow



Source: Author

Table 1: Class Interval

Interval	Category
1.00 - 1.80	Very low
1.80 - 2.60	Low
2.60 - 3.40	Medium
3.40 - 4.20	High
4.20 - 5.00	Very high

Source: Author

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Respondents

Table 2: Sample and Population Comparison

Code	Gender	Sample		Population		Mean	Med
		F	%	F	%		
1	Male	119	65%	883	68%	1.35	1.00
2	Female	64	35%	410	32%		
Generation							
1	Baby boomer	2	1%	21	2%	2.88	3.00
2	Gen X	27	15%	445	34%		
3	Gen Y	145	79%	757	59%		
4	Gen Z	9	5%	70	5%		
Education background							
1	High school	6	3%	79	6%	3.99	4.00
2	Diploma 1	3	2%	24	2%		
3	Diploma 3	27	15%	206	16%		
4	Bachelor	98	54%	497	38%		
5	Master	48	26%	443	34%		
6	Doctor	1	1%	41	3%		
Position							
1	Administrator and above	1	1%	44	3%	3.67	4.00
2	Supervisor	18	10%	106	8%		
3	Functional	22	12%	333	26%		
4	General staff	142	78%	756	58%		
Unit location							
1	Jabodetabek	131	72%	1028	80%	1.48	1.00
2	Java and Bali	17	9%	127	10%		
3	Outside area above	35	19%	138	11%		

Source: Author and Internal data

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The sample adequately represents the population under study. For example, in terms of gender representation, the sample consists of 65% males and 35% females, while the population distribution is 68% males and 32% females. Although the specific numbers may not match exactly, the sample proportionately reflects the population, indicating that the sample is considered representative.

3.2 Evaluation of the measurement model and structural model

The measurement model evaluation consists of convergent validity (outer/factor loadings >0.708, average variance extracted/AVE >0.50), discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross loadings) and internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha >0.60 and composite reliability >0.60). There are three items which is found under the standard of loading in the study (>0.708). Two of are deleted; one item from POS which might not relate to the public sector (My organisation continues to employ me despite the potential to replace me with individuals who earn lower salaries) and one reversed item from happiness (Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be). In summary, all the measurement model thresholds are all passed as some of them shown the table 3 and 4 below. The Fornell-Larker criterion and cross loading are also found sound which shows greater score in comparison to the other variable and indicators.

Table 3: Factor/Outer loadings

Items	Loadings	Remarks
All items (mean)	0.823	Valid
P2 <- POS	0.176	Invalid
H3 <- Happiness	0.689	Invalid
H4 <- Happiness	0.669	Invalid

Source: SmartPLS 4

Table 4: AVE, CA and CR

Variables	AVE	Cronbach’s alpha	Composite reliability
WE	0.778	0.964	0.967
POS	0.713	0.971	0.974
Happiness	0.733	0.816	0.838
TI	0.733	0.816	0.821

Source: SmartPLS 4

The structural model is evaluated using these standards (variance inflation factor/VIF <3; t-statistic >1.96; significant <0.10; standardised root mean square residual/SRMR<0.08; normed fit index/NFI 0-1)

Table 5: Structural model measurement

	VIF	Path coef.	T stat.	P val.	SRMR	NFI	R ²	Hypothesis Results
WE -> TI	2.271	-0.329	2.881	0.004	0.050	0.848	0.283	H1 is Supported
POS -> TI	1.886	-0.304	3.305	0.001				H2 is Supported
H -> TI	1.403	0.121	1.541	0.123				H3 is Rejected

Source SmartPLS 4

Based on the results, it can be observed that the path coefficient between WE and TI is -0.329, indicating a negative relationship. This coefficient is statistically significant, as indicated by the t-statistic of 2.881 (p-value = 0.004). The path coefficient between POS and TI is -0.304, also indicating a negative relationship. This coefficient is statistically significant, with a t-statistic of 3.305 (p-value = 0.001). The path coefficient between Happiness and TI is 0.121, suggesting a positive relationship. However, this coefficient is not statistically significant, as the t-statistic of 1.541 does not exceed the critical value of 1.96 (p-value = 0.123).

Some previous studies have found that happiness can predict TI, suggesting that happy employees are less likely to leave an organisation (e.g., Romão et al., 2022; Wang & Yang, 2016). In contrast to these researchers' findings, there are several possibilities that can explain the lack of support for this hypothesis. First, it is suspected that the cause of the subjective happiness of employees does not have a meaningful relationship with the organisation. The happiness obtained may come from factors outside of work. Rego and colleagues (2010) argue that an emotional connection between organisations and employees must be established to elicit desired behaviours from both parties. The unsupported finding indicates that happy employees do not necessarily have

a strong connection to producing expected behaviour towards FETA. They are happy but their intention to leave FETA is also high. This finding leads to the second rationale, which suggests that the greater the happiness of employees (caused by factors outside the organisation), the more motivated they are to leave the organisation. Park and Min (2020) found that high-performing employees, or those who can be considered happy, are more likely to leave the organisation compared to lower-performing employees. The third possible reason for the lack of support for this hypothesis is the limited research examining the relationship between happiness and TI (Wang & Yang, 2016), which consequently limits the variability of test results. The fourth reason suggests that the implementation of well-being initiatives in the public sector has not received much attention from leaders, therefore arising happiness is often sourced from non-work-related reasons.

3.3 Descriptive statistics

Table 6: Variables Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.	Category
TI	2.81	3.00	3.00	1.29	1	5	Medium
WE	3.68	4.00	4.00	0.96	1	5	High
- Vigour	3.56	4.00	4.00	0.94	1	5	High
- Dedication	3.73	4.00	4.00	0.96	1	5	High
- Absorption	3.76	4.00	4.00	0.98	1	5	High
POS	3.43	4.00	4.00	0.97	1	5	High
Happiness	3.92	4.00	4.00	0.70	1	5	High

Source: Author

The table indicates that almost all variables have mean values that fall into the high category. The happiness variable has the highest mean value of 3.92, followed by WE and POS with mean values of 3.68 and 3.43, respectively. This suggests that employees in the research location exhibit high levels of engagement, organisational support, and happiness. The variable of turnover intention is the only variable that falls into the medium category with a value of 2.81. The standard deviation indicates values below the mean, indicating that the data has low variation and clusters around the mean value.

3.4 Discussion

Upon closer examination, despite the high average scores for WE and POS, the values for them are near the medium category (WE=3.68; POS=3.43). The mean scores indicate a need to further explore. To provide further discussion, the author will examine the descriptive statistics for each indicator.

Table 7: Items of WE which below the average

Items	Mean	Frequency				
		1=Never	2=Rarely	3=Sometimes	4=Often	5=Always
V3: When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work						
V3	3.39	4.4%	14.8%	30.1%	39.3%	11.5%
V1: At my work, I feel bursting with energy						
V1	3.56	2.2%	8.7%	31.1%	46.4%	11.5%
D2: My job inspires me						
D2	3.59	4.4%	8.2%	26.8%	45.4%	15.3%
WE	3.68 High	2.7%	9.2%	23.6%	46.3%	18.3%

Source: Author

This finding focuses on "Why do employees lack energy and enthusiasm to work at FETA?" This could be influenced by the type of job that they find uninspiring. For example, employees may feel trapped in monotonous routines, which diminishes their enthusiasm and motivation. Limited or monotonous job tasks can make work less challenging for employees. One proposed solution is to introduce new job variations with different levels of challenges.

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Increasing employee participation in decision-making can enhance their sense of ownership and responsibility for their work. Employees with a high sense of belonging are more likely to be enthusiastic and dedicated. Such participation opens up communication between the two parties, ultimately fostering trust.

Table 8: Items of POS which below the average

No	Items	Mean	Frequency				
			1=Never	2=Rarely	3=Sometimes	4=Often	5=Always
1	P6: The organisation cares about my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me						
	P6	3.17	7.1%	15.3%	38.8%	31.1%	7.7%
2	P5: The organisation would accept my complaints						
	P5	3.23	7.7%	14.8%	32.8%	36.6%	8.2%
3	P16: The organisation tries to make my job as interesting as possible						
	P16	3.32	4.9%	13.7%	37.2%	33.3%	10.9%
4	P13: The organisation shows very big concern for me						
	P13	3.36	5.5%	8.7%	41.5%	33.3%	10.9%
5	P10: The organisation is willing to help me when I need a special favor						
	P10	3.38	3.8%	13.1%	31.7%	44.3%	7.1%
6	P11: The organisation cares about my general satisfaction at work						
	P11	3.38	4.4%	12.6%	32.8%	41.0%	9.3%
	POS	3.43 High	4.3%	11.0%	32.9%	41.2%	10.6%

Source: Author

The table above indicates that six items fall below the average POS score (3.43), namely P6 (3.17), P5 (3.23), P16 (3.32), P13 (3.36), P10 (3.38), and P11 (3.38). Generally, the statements in these items suggest that there are support deficiencies among FETA employees. Moreover, the POS score for these items falls into the medium category (<3.43) which attracts the author's attention. P6 (3.17), as the item with the furthest deviation from the overall average POS, indicates that the organisation's policies, on average, inadequately consider the needs or well-being of the employees. An example of such a policy obtained from this research is the relocation policy, which is frequently complained about by employees. This indicates a sense of dissatisfaction as employees feel neglected in the decision-making process. Similarly, P5 (3.23) suggests that employee complaints are not adequately addressed by the organisation. When employees require specific support, the perceived organisational support could have been more felt if FETA addresses their issues. The support should ideally enhance employees' trust when they perceive the organisation's presence in their personal lives (e.g., P10 = 3.38). Item P13 (3.36) also shows that the organisation is lacking great concern among some of FETA's employees. P16 (3.32) indicates that job variation can still be optimized to inspire employees. Overall, the organisation's support is perceived as lacking in creating employee job satisfaction (P11=3.38). This finding aligns with the previously discussed item in the previous variable (D1) where employees' jobs should be more inspiring.

4. CONCLUSION

Finally, this section concludes two supporting hypotheses and rejecting one hypothesis. The overall findings of this study debunk the notion that "civil servants work in the same position forever." They were found to have a strong desire to move to other job which provides tranquillity. Work engagement was found to influence turnover intention in conjunction with perceived organisational support. Although statistically, their influence on turnover intention is less than 50%, their relationship is significant and can support managerial implications. The relationship between happiness and turnover intention was found to be insignificant and requires future research, particularly in the same sector. In addition to the practical and academic contributions

through the findings, this research also had limitations, such as the sample size and the short duration of the study conducted during the month of Ramadhan. This impacted the research implementation, such as the number of variables to predict the relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. Further research can use the same model or expand it to overcome limitations and enrich new empirical evidence in the related sector.

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