

FEAR OF COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WORK BEHAVIOR OF FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES IN JAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of fear of covid-19 on job burnout and its impact on the Intention to leave frontline employees in Jakarta. The data used are primary, and the sampling method uses a purposive sampling technique by distributing online questionnaires to 270 frontline employees in various sectors as samples. Hypothesis testing techniques use Structural Equation Modelling and previously performed instrument tests using validity and reliability. From the data processing results, frontline employees do not feel the fear of covid-19, frontline employees do not feel bored in doing their work, do not have physical, emotional, and mental fatigue resulting from work situations, and do not have the Intention to leave. Therefore, frontline employees will continue to work for their current company. The results of hypothesis testing in this study indicate that Fear of Covid has a positive effect on Job Burnout and Intention to Leave; job Burnout has a positive effect on Intention to leave; also Fear of Covid has a positive effect on Intention to Leave by being mediated by Job Burnout. The managerial implication that can be conveyed is that all managers from frontline employees must maintain providing better services so that employees can continue to work without fear of covid-19 and do not have job burnout and remain loyal to their respective companies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The spread of coronavirus disease 19, or Covid-19, found initially in Wuhan, has not subsided. A virus that spreads quickly within a few months can infect millions. It has been found in more than 200 countries, and as of 19 July 2020, there were 14,043,176 confirmed cases of the virus which resulted in the loss of 597,583 lives worldwide, so WHO declared it a global pandemic [1]. The many impacts of this disease on people's work, economy, and personal lives are global and unprecedented. Covid-19 not only increases the risk of death due to viral infection but also causes many changes in attitudes at work and psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, depression, and job burnout, especially for health workers who are at the forefront during this pandemic [2]. However, it is not only health workers who are affected. Other employees, namely frontline employees who work on the front lines and deal directly with customers, are also affected because during the pandemic, there were companies that did not implement work-from-home (WFH), and the companies were still operating normally. Many frontline employees are afraid to do their jobs and afraid to leave the house, but this is still carried out with the risk that they must face being infected with the Covid-19 virus or transmitting Covid-19 to those closest to them [3]; [4]; [5]. Employees with high fear of covid can have irrational and unclear thoughts [6]. Fear of covid also causes employees to feel uncomfortable and unfocused at work [7]. The workplace will affect the employees in it, can undermine a person's ability to think usually, and can cause adverse psychological and mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and burnout [8].

Frontline employees are included in jobs that are vulnerable to job burnout because they often face situations that cause stress and many demands at work, including workload, role stress, emotional conditions, and high working hours, which are related to fear of covid. The obligation to meet face-to-face with customers during a pandemic also increases the level of concern for frontline employees [5]. Job burnout can also occur due to unfavorable or unsupportive environmental conditions. Employees may experience job burnout due to having to adapt to new situations and changes in physical activity that must be limited, such as shaking hands, keeping a distance from other people, using masks, gloves, and face shields, and behavior from consumers who ignore social distancing rules. Increases work stress and

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cause job burnout [9]. The high level of job burnout among frontline employees also correlates with a low level of employee satisfaction. Job burnout can lead to an increase in the release of frontline employees from their jobs and have a negative effect on the company. Frontline employees with high work stress conditions will also impact poor decision-making, which will cause customer handling to be unsatisfactory [4]; [10].

When employees feel a decrease in morale due to perceived job burnout, the intention to leave will increase. Intention to leave will be a problem for the company if high-achieving employees leave the company [1]. During a pandemic like today, many companies are forced to reduce the number of employees or even close their companies. The unemployment rate increases, and it is difficult to get a job, but employees with a high fear of covid will think and plan to quit their jobs. Especially if the employee is experiencing job burnout, the employee will look for other job alternatives [11], which can be detrimental to the company with various kinds of problems caused by the intention to leave [12].

The results of literature studies from various previous studies conducted during the pandemic showed that there was a significant influence between fear of covid and several employees works attitudes such as job stress, resilience, job burnout, anxiety, job satisfaction, job insecurity, life satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, depression [13]; [8]; [14]; [15]; [11]; [16]. In these studies, most were conducted with medical personnel such as doctors and nurses as the respondents. There was still little research conducted with frontline employees as research objects. Besides that, the hypotheses being tested are also mostly the direct influence of the two related variables. Only a small number of these studies have tested the role of intervening variables, and no research has been found that has tested job burnout as an intervening variable between fear of covid and intention to leave.

Hypotheses Formulation

Fear of covid can increase job burnout and reduce job satisfaction and psychological capital [17]. In a different study, it was said that Fear of covid correlated positively with job burnout, according to [18]. In addition, Fear of Covid-19 among health professionals is negatively related to job satisfaction [19]; positively related to turnover intention [20] and job burnout [1]. Another opinion is from [21]. If an employee feels uncomfortable doing his job or pressured by the presence of the Covid-19 virus, it will cause high job burnout. Employees will be anxious, stressed, and depressed. The hypothesis that can be put forward is H1: Fear of covid affects Job Burnout.

[22] suggest that when looking at the relationship between the intention to leave and job burnout, it is necessary to look at the burnout stage first. There are four stages of job burnout, the first stage is the enthusiasm stage, and at this stage, the intention to leave cannot be found. The second stage is the stagnation stage, and at this stage, employees start to think about leaving their jobs and have negative thoughts about their jobs. The third stage is the frustration stage, and at this stage, the employee believes that he or she cannot change a negative situation at work and has a high intention to leave. The last stage in burnout is the carelessness stage, and the employee feels a deep sense of hopelessness about his job and business in this stage. Burnout and intention to leave can be realized directly at this stage. In short, when employees reach the last stage of job burnout, they will immediately leave their jobs. [23] suggested that there is a significant influence between job burnout and intention to leave. Research conducted by [24] states that there is an effect of job burnout on the intention to leave. Furthermore, research by [25] states that job burnout has a significant adverse effect on the intention to leave. Rough supervision of work within the company causes stress on employees and then triggers job burnout in employees. As a result, employees become uncomfortable working for the company, and this increases the intention to leave. [26] also states that job burnout affects the intention to leave. The impact of high anxiety and fatigue in employees causes poor employee attitudes toward compliance with company regulations which ultimately increases intention to leave the company, so the hypothesis proposed is H2: Job Burnout affects Intention to Leave.

High fear of covid causes workplace discomfort and can make employees want to leave their jobs [18]. [27] explained that employees with a perceived risk of Covid-19 would increase psychological stress, eventually leading to the intention to leave employees and increasing turnover intention. [28] states that a high fear of covid will lead to an intention to leave because the level of job burnout is also high, employees feel uncomfortable doing their jobs and feel a high level of boredom and emotion, so they have the desire to find a job. New to another company. Another study by [29] on nurses found that fear of covid and an increased risk of infection strengthened the intention to leave their nursing job and look for alternative jobs. Thus, higher fear of covid, job burnout, and anxiety also cause a significant intention to

leave nurses. In addition, [30] also shows that increased fear of covid causes mental health problems, and consequently, the intention to leave will increase and reduce employee job satisfaction. [31] also found a strong and positive influence between fear of covid, job stress, and resilience on the intention to leave frontline employees who work in restaurants. Based on some of the literature above, the hypothesis that can be put forward is:

H3: Fear of covid affects the Intention to Leave

H4: Fear of covid affects Intention to Leave with Job Burnout as mediation

2. METHOD

The variables in this study refer to some previous research. Fear of Covid-19 Scale (FCV-19S) from [32] was used to measure Fear of Covid, which consisted of seven statement items with the dimensions of physical response of fear (four items) and high fear (three items). Job burnout is measured using the Oldenburg Job Burnout Inventory (OLBI) from [33] which consists of two dimensions, namely disengagement, which is measured using eight statement items, and exhaustion which is measured by eight statement items. The third variable, intent to leave, adapts four statements from [34] and [35]. The scale used for the three variables is a Likert scale with alternative answers from strongly disagree to agree strongly. This study uses non-probability sampling using the purposive sampling method where uses the formula from [36] which is the minimum number of samples is multiplied by the number of statement items by five and the maximum number of samples is multiplied by ten. Total item used to measure the variable is twenty-seven, so 270 respondents involve in this research. The instrument test was carried out with a questionnaire completed by the respondent; the measuring instrument used was to determine the results of the study. Two kinds of testing are needed, namely validity testing with factor loading is ≥ 0.35 and reliability testing with Cronbach's Alfa is ≥ 0.60 (the results in table 1-3). Furthermore, to test the hypothesis used the method of Structural Equation Modeling was used using AMOS version 25. This study will test the Goodness of Fit, which shows how well the user-defined model mathematically reproduces the observed covariance matrix among the indicator items (the similarity of the observed and estimated covariance matrices). The goodness of fit shows how well the specified theoretical structure represents reality as represented by the data. The results of the goodness of fit test that show the conclusion of poor fit are Chi-square with a cut off value of < 2 with a value of 749,245 (poor fit), then a p-value chi-square with a cut-off of > 0.05 with a result of 0.000 (poor fit), RMSEA with a cut off < 0.10 and the result is 0.089 (model fit), TLI with cut off > 0.90 and the result is 0.834 (marginal fit). Furthermore, the results of the Goodness of Fit test which show the conclusion of Goodness of Fit are NFI with cut off > 0.90 and the result is 0.802 (marginal fit), CFI with cut off > 0.90 and the result is 0.855 (marginal fit), CMIN/DF where the cut off is 1 and the lower limit its top 5 with a result of 3,109 which means Model Fit. From the Goodness of Fit test, it can be concluded that the above model is feasible because several items meet the criteria of Marginal Fit. In a model, the minimum Goodness of Fit is 1. Therefore, the model that has passed the Goodness of Fit test can be used for the next test in hypotheses testing.

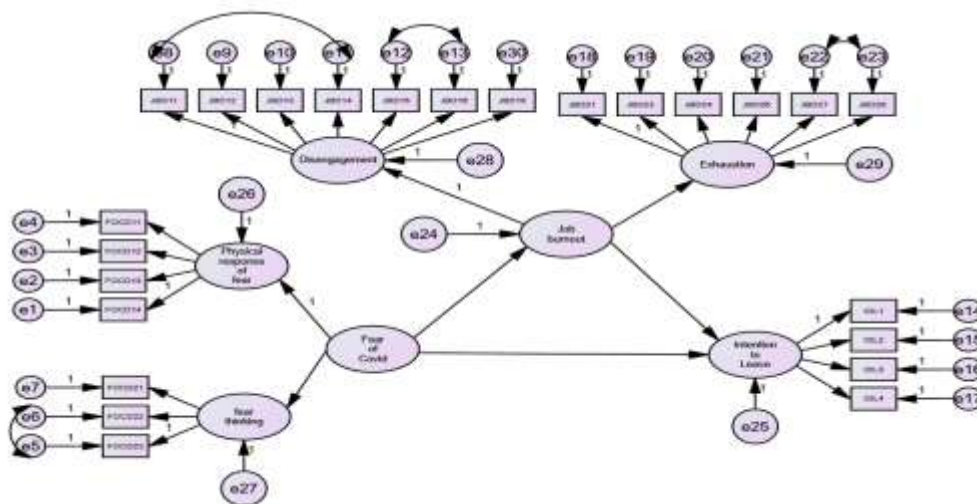


Figure 1 Structural Equation Model

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Frontline employees that most of the respondents were female (64.10%), most of them were 20-40 years old (64.44%), with the last education was undergraduate (65.82%), tenure was 62,22% between 11-20 years and most of the respondents as many as 27.8% work in the air transportation sector do not feel fear of covid, as evidenced by an average score of 2.6463. Employees do not fear covid because this research was conducted at the end of 2022 when each employee has adapted to managing himself to deal with the Covid-19 virus, they have received booster vaccines. Employees can still work typically as before the pandemic [14]. The average score for job burnout is 2.4744, indicating that frontline employees do not feel bored doing their jobs and do not experience physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion from work situations. In addition, frontline employees do not experience severe stress due to workload that can affect the mental and physical health of employees. Based on the results of the data above, the intention to leave has a mean of 2.49. It means that frontline has no desire to leave their jobs and will continue to work at their current company even though the pandemic situation is not yet over. The reason is that finding a new job currently is not easy, especially for employees over 50 years old. Furthermore, the data shows that 54.8% of employees have worked for over ten years, meaning they have had a long working period quite a long time in their respective companies. Another thing that can make the intention to leave low for frontline employees is that employees have high job satisfaction and high organizational commitment, where employees will be extremely attached to the company. Therefore, employees will have a greater intention to remain at the company than to quit work. Apart from this, gender also significantly affects the intention to leave. Female employees will have more desire to remain in the company [37]; [38]; [39].

Table 1. Hypotheses Testing Results

	Hypotheses	Coefficient	p-value (<0,05)	Decision
H ₁	Fear of Covid → Job Burnout	2,984	0,001	Supported
H ₂	Job Burnout → Intention to Leave	5,624	0.003	Supported
H ₃	Fear of Covid → Intention to Leave	2,220	0.013	Supported
H ₄	Fear of Covid → Job Burnout → Intention to Leave	2,626	0.004	Supported

Source: Results of Data Processing (AMOS)

From the results of hypothesis testing conducted at frontline employees is known that fear of covid has a positive effect on the job burnout. This can be seen based on the significant value of $0.001 < 0.05$, with C.R of 2.984. The results of this study are the same as previous research from [21]; [40]; [3]; [6], that if employees feel high fear of covid, then job burnout will also increase, and vice versa if employees do not feel fear of covid then employees will not experience job burnout either. Frontline employees currently do not feel the fear of covid because employees inevitably must live side by side with Covid-19, which is ultimately considered a pandemic. Employees do not feel afraid of Covid-19 because, as a condition for being able to continue working, they have had three vaccinations, including a booster which is also an obligation from the government. Employees should also try to find solutions in dealing with the Covid-19 they are experiencing so that personal and organizational interests can go hand in hand. Various rules and policies have been established as an appeal to be able to accept, adapt, and survive amid a pandemic, as well as efforts to keep employees productive at work by maintaining a balance between physical health and mental health. Not a few employees who were interviewed answered that they felt grateful to have still the opportunity to survive during a problematic pandemic, with the high rate of layoffs at other companies. Being grateful can make individuals happier, live a calmer life, and even be healthier than those who are less grateful. To be grateful, employee needs to remind themselves of positive things to be grateful for every day, from the small things to the big things. In this way, it will help employees to be able to accept circumstances when faced with difficult situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Because employees do not have a fear of covid, employees also do not feel job burnout. Because employees do not work under stress, they do not have emotional exhaustion and tension.

For the second hypothesis, it has been proven that job burnout positively affects the intention to leave. These results are also following several previous studies such as those conducted by [41]; [42]; [43]; [22]; [27]. Frontline employees in several business sectors do not feel any mental or emotional exhaustion due to constant stress while doing their job. Based on a review from Harvard Business, employee burnout is caused by problems with the company and not because of the people. Therefore, the company where frontline employees work has created a more relaxed and positive environment. A positive environment will also provide opportunities for employees to carry out social interactions and

form a mutually supportive co-worker network. Employees feel that the workload is per their abilities of employees. Apart from that, the company has also designed stimulating jobs so that employees can use and develop their skills. Employees have also been allowed to make decisions or determine actions that will affect work. Besides that, the leadership also knows each employee's personality, starting from who is sensitive to criticism, which tends to be skeptical, and who is a perfectionist or high achiever. Leaders must know the best strategy for dealing with various employee personalities in the company. Because frontline employees do not feel any job burnout, employees do not have the desire to leave the company. Employees still want to work in their respective companies, especially in a situation like now. Getting a new job is not an easy thing. Many layoffs are everywhere, and many companies have gone out of business due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the following hypothesis, where there is a positive influence between fear of covid and intention to leave, it can be explained that if employees have a high fear of covid, they will decide to leave the company. However, if employees do not feel fear of covid, they will still work loyally in their workplaces. Frontline employees who are not afraid of the threat of contracting Covid-19 may feel worried about the economic situation, which could decline [44]. In the results of this study, where employees do not have a fear of covid, employees also do not have the desire to stop working. The results of this study are supported by research from [30]; [19]; [29]; [20]; [31].

For the last hypothesis, it has been proven that there is a positive influence between fear of covid and intention to leave by significantly mediating job burnout. It can be explained that if employees feel fear of Covid-19, they want to leave the company to move to work in another company, especially if they also feel high job burnout. However, because frontline employees have no fear of Covid-19 and do not feel pressure at work because the company provides much flexibility in doing their respective jobs, they will also remain loyal to work for the company. Employees have had many choices during this pandemic, where there is a choice in work. They can work from anywhere, and only one day a week must be present in the office. There are also companies in the Education sector that implement a limited offline teaching system, where lecturers can carry out the teaching and learning process from home for twelve meetings and four face-to-face meetings ahead of the midterm and final semester exams. Airline companies make it easy for one month to come to work, then one month later standby at home. They will be asked to enter if needed to replace another new employee. Likewise, in the Health sector, there is a reduction in work shifts and the addition of medical personnel to compensate for reduced working hours. With various methods implemented by each company, it can help employees to reduce work stress because working in any sector will experience work stress, which has an impact on job burnout and can result in high employee turnover in each company. This research is also supported by several previous studies from [45]; [31]; [27]; [46].

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion previously described, the conclusion is fear of covid have a positive influence on intention to leave mediated by job burnout of frontline employees in Jakarta. Companies have been remarkably effective in treating their employees during the Covid 19 pandemic so that employees have low fear of covid and burnout and remain loyal to the company. As a result, they do not want to leave the company where employees work now. This research was only conducted on frontline employees. Suggestions for further research to add future career anxiety.

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