

Burnout as a Mediator of Turnover Intention in the Digital Post–New Normal Era

Panita Yimcharoen
*International Business and
Entrepreneurship*
Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology
Bangkok, Thailand
panita@tni.ac.th

Kwankeaw Samakthai
Cybersecurity Risk Management
National Institute of Development
Administration
Bangkok, Thailand
6720415001@stu.nida.ac.th

Sirawat Temtontinon
Business and Management
Tamkang University
Taipei, Taiwan
sirawatttem@gmail.com

Abstract—This study examines the role of burnout as a mediator between individual-level factors (Job stress, Resilience), organizational-level factors (Quality of work life), and Turnover intention in the workplace of the digital post–new normal era. A quantitative method was studied, and data were purposively collected from 208 respondents who are private-sector employees in Bangkok using a self-administered questionnaire. Hierarchical regression analysis was employed to analyze the data. The results revealed that job stress ($\beta = .254$, $p < 0.01$) and resilience ($\beta = -.182$, $p < 0.05$) significantly affect turnover intention. Quality of work life ($\beta = -.421$, $p < 0.01$) had a significant negative influence on turnover intention. Burnout had a significant positive influence on turnover intention ($\beta = .455$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, burnout partially mediated the relationships in the model. These findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of burnout and Job Demands–Resources Theory by confirming burnout as a psychological mechanism that bridges job stress, resilience, and quality of work life with turnover intention in the era of digital transformation following the new normal. Thereby, HR should manage and balance workload and promote employees' quality of work life, which can buffer the effect of burnout and turnover intention. HR policies and initiatives can be implemented through social support, policies promoting work-life balance, psychological safety, skill development, and compensation satisfaction.

Keywords—Burnout; Job stress; Resilience; Quality of Worklife; Turnover Intention

I. INTRODUCTION

“Quiet hiring”, a strategic HR practice, has been adopted by companies during the digital post-new normal era, focusing on utilizing existing employees rather than hiring new ones through upskilling/reskilling, internal mobility, and job-role expansion. Without proper management, employees can feel burdened, exploited, and job insecure, resulting in disengagement, burnout, and turnover [1].

Job insecurity and organizational change are sources of structural stress [2]. Employees surviving in the digital era face increased job demands, role overload, and emotional exhaustion due to structural stress [3]. Working in a hybrid work mode, communication overload, platform switching, and prolonged screen time blur the boundaries between work and life [4]. Cascio and Boudreau estimated that the cost of employee turnover is 50%–200% of an employee's annual salary [5]. Therefore, HR needs to be attentive to these factors to alleviate employee turnover intention. However,

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory is insufficient to manage increased job stress.

As proposed by the Job Demands–Resources Theory (JD–R), upskilling/reskilling, hybrid work, and job-role expansion are considered job demands that continuously consume employees' physical and mental resources, resulting in job stress and emotional exhaustion, especially when organizations cannot provide sufficient job resources [6]. Thereby, employees place greater importance on work-life quality, mental health, and work-life balance, extending Herzberg's theory [7]. Several studies have examined the relationship among job stress, burnout, and intention to leave in the post-new normal era, limited research in the Thai context has explored how individual level (resilience) and organizational level (quality of work life) resources can enhance coping ability to mitigate the effect of job stress on turnover intention through burnout, especially significant changes in work nature and employee expectations in the post–new normal digital workplace.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is defined as a psychological and predictive process indicating that an employee wishes to leave their current position to seek a new job or exit the profession, thereby terminating their career [8],[9]. In the post–new normal digital era, the intention to leave is also linked to quiet quitting, whereby employees reduce their engagement to the minimum level required to maintain work-life balance [10]. Several studies reveal that factors influencing turnover intention include psychological or internal individual-level factors, such as burnout, job stress, and resilience [8],[11],[12], as well as organizational-level factors, including quality of worklife [13].

B. Job Stress and Turnover Intention

Job stress is a condition in which an individual responds psychologically and physically in a negative manner to excessive pressure from job demands and time constraints [8]. The study of private-sector employees in Jakarta reveals that job stress had a significantly positive effect on turnover intention, with a high coefficient of correlation ($\beta = 0.539$, $p < .001$) [8].

In addition, a study of teachers in China reported that using social media for work outside of work hours led to technostress and was positively correlated with resignation

intention [17]. A medical study from Sweden indicated that job stress is a major factor explaining 34-36% of the variance in employees' resignation intention [9]. Several international studies have confirmed a consistent positive correlation, supporting Hypothesis 1.

H1: Job stress has a positive and significant effect on employees' turnover intention

C. Resilience and Turnover Intention

Resilience refers to an individual's ability to "bounce back" and effectively cope with stress, obstacles at work, or adverse events [12]. A study of professional nurses in Ghana reported that resilience was significantly negatively associated with turnover intention ($\beta = -0.5699$, $p < .0001$) [12]. Similarly, a cross-sectional study of professional nurses in Greece found a significant negative association between resilience and scores on the Quiet Quitting Scale ($\beta = -0.324$, $p < .0001$) [14]. In addition, a study of a group of nurses in Thailand showed that every 1 unit increase in resilience significantly reduced the likelihood of quitting ($OR = 0.98$, $p = 0.044$) [15]. Recent research has consistently demonstrated that resilience reduces the likelihood of quitting. Resilience received increasing attention in the context of work, particularly in medical settings, which creates an opportunity to examine its role in new work contexts under new normal conditions.

H2: Resilience has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention

D. Quality of Work Life and Turnover Intention

Quality of work life (QWL) refers to employee well-being and organizational effectiveness, encompassing job security, work environment, career advancement opportunities, work-life balance, benefits, and interpersonal relationships [13]. In the post-COVID-19 context, employees have experienced heavier workloads and accumulated stress. As a result, they perceive QWL as an important form of organizational support, and they may opt for resignation as a self-protective mechanism when facing adverse events [10]. A study of private higher education institutions in China found that QWL had a significant negative effect on turnover intention ($\beta = -0.592$, $p = 0.006$) [13]. Similarly, in Sweden, a study of 207 nurses proved that QWL explained 34-36% of the variance in turnover intention [9].

According to a study of 128 nurses in the Philippines, Quality of Nursing Work Life (QNWL) was negatively correlated with intention to resign within six months ($r = -0.323$, $p < .01$) and intention to leave the profession ($r = -0.309$, $p < .01$) [16]. These findings suggest that a higher perceived quality of work life significantly reduces the likelihood of resigning from both the organization and the profession, thereby supporting H3.

H3: Quality of work life has a negative and significant effect on employees' turnover intention

E. Burnout and Turnover Intention

Following Maslach's concept (1981), burnout is defined by emotional exhaustion - feeling drained, and having emotional resources overloaded from work - depersonalization, emotional distance, and reduced personal accomplishment, worthlessness in work [15]. A study from Saudi Arabia demonstrated that medical personnel respondents reported significantly higher average burnout scores, considering resignation, than those not considering leaving. (75.5 vs. 66.54, $p < .001$) [11]. Similarly, a study among teachers in China reported that Chinese teachers' burnout had a strong positive influence on turnover intention, with a coefficient of influence as strong as 0.66 ($\beta = 0.66$, $p < .001$) [17]. The role of burnout is a key psychological mechanism driving withdrawal behavior. Empirical studies confirm that burnout increases the risk of turnover intention, supporting H4.

H4: Burnout has a positive and significant effect on employees' turnover intention

F. Burnout as a Mediator between Job Stress and Turnover Intention

In line with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, job demands can erode employees' mental and physical resources, leading to burnout [17]. When employees reach this state, they tend to protect themselves from stressful situations by resigning. Structural stress increases the risk of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, causing one-third of employees to consider quitting their jobs [11]. Job stress causes resignation through a mediating variable, burnout [18], thereby supporting H5.

H5: Burnout mediates the relationship between job stress and Turnover Intention

G. Burnout as a Mediator between Quality of Work Life and Turnover Intention

A previous study confirmed that quality of work life (QWL) can reduce the risk of turnover intention through a mediator, burnout. A study of university faculty confirms that diminishing burnout rate through quality of work (QWL) plays a significant role in reducing turnover rates [13]. A study of professional nurses reported that negative dimensions of quality of work life cause emotional exhaustion and burnout, which later affects their resignation within 6 months [16]. Previous research confirmed that quality of work life (QWL) plays a significant role in diminishing burnout levels and turnover rates, supporting H 6.

H6: Burnout mediates the relationship between quality of work life and turnover intention

H. Burnout as a Mediator between Resilience and Turnover Intention

Resilience is a resource that buffers the impact of job demands, according to the job demands-resources theory [17]. An employee with high resilience has a positive psychological state even when facing heavy workloads [11].

A study of Chinese teachers demonstrated that resilience has a lesser influence on stress, increasing the risk of resignation due to burnout [17]. A study of nurses in Thailand reported that resilience decreases the likelihood of employees experiencing emotional exhaustion and a loss of personal accomplishment, key predictors of employees' turnover intention [15]. Previous studies confirmed that resilience is an important factor that diminishes the negative impact of emotional exhaustion on job resignation, thereby supporting H 7

H7: Burnout mediates the relationship between resilience and turnover intention

I. Conceptual Framework

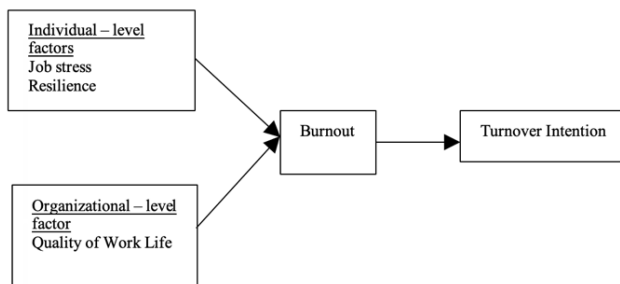


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Burnout as a Mediator of Turnover Intention in the Digital Post-New Normal Era

III. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a quantitative approach, collecting primary data through a standardized questionnaire. Non-probability sampling was used, and purposive sampling (judgmental sampling) was employed to select respondents who are private-sector employees working in a digital work environment in the Bangkok area. An optimal sample size of 208 individuals was determined to ensure reliable results [9]. A pilot study was conducted to improve the questionnaire and the research design before actual data collection. The initial sample consisted of 30 individuals ($N = 30$). The test results showed that the measurement instruments for the variables Job Stress, Resilience, Quality of Work Life, Burnout, and Turnover Intention had acceptable internal consistency, with a Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.70$.

TABLE I RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-30	32	15.4
	31-45	78	37.5
	46-60	98	47.1
Gender	Male	82	39.4
	Female	121	58.2
	LGBT	5	2.4

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Work Experience	<1 year	26	12.5
	1-5 years	53	25.5
	6-10 years	30	14.4
	>10 years	99	47.6
Hours per week	<40 hours per week	24	11.5
	40 - 50 hours per week	138	66.4
	51 - 60 hours per week	34	16.4
	61 - 70 hours per week	7	3.4
	> 70 hours per week	5	2.4

In the Demographic table, more than half of the respondents are female (58.22%), followed by males (39.4%). Almost half of respondent, employees work for more than 10 years (47.6%). Two-thirds of respondents have been working from 40 to 50 hours per week (66.4%).

TABLE II MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS OF VARIABLES

	Mean	SD	JS	RES	QWL	BO	TI
JS	2.82	0.88					
RES	3.74	0.55	-0.169*	1.000			
QWL	3.64	0.75	-0.440**	0.405**	1.000		
BO	2.80	0.98	0.713**	-0.278**	-0.544**	1.000	
TI	3.07	1.1	0.552**	-0.214**	-0.501**	0.663**	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From the table, it is shown that Resilience (RES) and Quality of Worklife (QWL) had comparatively high mean values (Mean = 3.74 and 3.64, respectively), indicating that employees perceived good well-being, and could recover from stress. Meanwhile, Job Stress (JS) and Burnout (BO) had moderate mean levels.

Correlation analysis using the Pearson correlation coefficient demonstrated that there are relationships among job stress, resilience, quality of work life, burnout, and turnover intention, which confirms theories and the model. There was no multicollinearity problem, as all variables had variance inflation factor (VIF) values in the range of 1.64-2.56 ($VIF < 5$), and Tolerance values in the range of .39-.61, which are above the minimum threshold (.20). Employees experiencing burnout were more likely to have turnover intention. ($r = 0.663$, $p < 0.01$) When job stress levels increase, there was a tendency for burnout ($r = 0.713$, $p < 0.01$) and turnover intention ($r = 0.552$, $p < 0.01$) to increase as well. Conversely, resilience (RES) had a low to moderate negative correlation with burnout (BO) ($r = -0.278$, $p < 0.01$) and turnover intention (TI) ($r = -0.214$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that

individuals who can bounce back from stress experience lower burnout and a reduced risk of turnover intention. A good quality of work life was also found to significantly reduce burnout ($r = -0.544, p < 0.01$) and turnover intention ($r = -0.501, p < 0.01$).

TABLE III RESULTS OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON TURNOVER INTENTION (TI)

Variables	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β	Model 4 β
Block 1: Demographic				
Age	-.12	—	—	—
Gender	0.08	—	—	—
Work Experience	-.15*	—	—	—
Hours per week	0.10	—	—	—
Block 2: Individual level				
Job stress	—	.254**	.211**	.187*
Resilience	—	-.182*	-.156*	0.144
Block 3: Organizational level				
Quality of worklife	—	—	-.421**	-.349**
Block 4: Mediator				
Burnout	—	—	—	.455**
R ²	0.138	0.388	0.467	0.533
ΔR^2	—	.250**	.079**	.067**
Sig. F Change	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001

Note β = Standardized coefficient, $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$

In summary, hierarchical multiple regression analysis shows that demographic factors, job stress, resilience, and quality of work life play both direct and indirect roles in employees' turnover intention through burnout. The results of Model 1 presented that work experience had a statistically significant negative influence on turnover intention ($\beta = -.15, p < .05$), and the model explained 13.8% of the variance ($R^2 = .138, p < .001$). The results of Model 2 demonstrated that job stress and resilience significantly increased the explanatory power of turnover intention, 38.8% to a greater extent than demographic factors. ($\Delta R^2 = .250, p < .001$). Employees who experienced considerable stress ($\beta = .254, p < 0.01$) and lower resilience ($\beta = -.182, p < 0.05$) were more likely to have turnover intention. Furthermore, the quality of work life ($\beta = -.421, p < 0.01$) had a significant negative influence on turnover intention. The inclusion of quality of work life resulted in substantial improvement in explanatory power, explaining 46.7% ($\Delta R^2 = .079, p < .001$), even after controlling for individual-level and demographic factors. When burnout was added to the model, explanatory power further increased to 53.3% ($\Delta R^2 = .067, p < .001$). This

indicates that burnout had a significant positive influence on turnover intention ($\beta = .455, p < .01$). Furthermore, considering the changes in coefficients, the influence of job stress and quality of work life decreased, and the resilience became non-significant after adding burnout to the model, indicating that burnout serves as a partial mediator between these factors, consistent with Baron and Kenny's mediation approach [19].

IV. DISCUSSION

The results are congruent with previous research in various occupations, indicating that job stress is a key driver to turnover intention. This also supports the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory. Hypothesis 1 is therefore supported [8], [9], [17]. Conversely, resilience showed a significant negative effect on turnover intention in the model. Resilience becomes a psychological resource that supports employees in coping with pressure, providing empirical support for Hypothesis 2 [12], [14], [15]. This result is congruent with research in several countries, which reports that a higher perceived quality of work life reduces the likelihood of turnover intention, particularly in the digital post–new normal era, where QWL has received considerable attention from employees. Hypothesis 3 is therefore supported [9], [10], [16]. These findings are also consistent with a literature, indicating that burnout is a major predictor of turnover intention. When employees experience burnout, resignation is an alternative for self-protection from a stressful environment, thereby supporting hypothesis 4 [15], [17]. Burnout functions as a partial mediator for the relationship among job stress, resilience, quality of work life, and turnover intention. The results are consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which suggests that burnout is a psychological outcome resulting in an imbalance between job demands and organizational resources. Therefore, the results support H5-H7, which is aligned with the criteria proposed by Baron and Kenny and previous studies [11], [12], [16], [19].

V. LIMITATIONS

Future research should incorporate contextual moderating factors such as HR policies and industry type to enhance the generalization of the results. In addition, factors that influence resilience can buffer the effects of burnout and turnover intention. Studying only quantitative research methods may limit understanding of employees' experiences and in-depth perspectives.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory has received considerable attention, as it has been re-examined to complement existing knowledge in the digital post–new normal era that can serve as a foundation for developing theoretical models in future research, such as technostress, digital overload, and antecedents of resilience.

Human resource policymakers should place greater emphasis on employees' well-being, quality of work life, and a safe workplace, as these factors support long-term organizational success and employee retention. Research findings can be utilized to design policies aimed at lowering

job stress and promoting QWL through several programs, including social support, work-life balance initiatives, psychological safety, skill development, and compensation satisfaction.

Managers and human resource practitioners should strive to maintain a balance between job demands and job resources. Quiet hiring, in particular, should be managed carefully. When job demands increase, corresponding job resources – such as a mentor, training, workload adjustment, employee voice mechanism, and a safe environment – should be enhanced to adapt to stress and change or to prevent burnout.

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