

## JOB DEMANDS & TURNOVER INTENTION: CHANGES IN WORK SITUATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

*The prolonged pandemic caused Job Demands at Company X to increase due to the shift in working conditions to WFH which led to the emergence of Turnover Intention. Job Demands are the physical, psychological, social and organizational aspects of work that have an impact on physical or psychological aspects (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007), while Turnover Intention is the probability that someone will leave the organization in the near future (Jackson S. & Jackson L., 2019). This study uses the Stress Appraisal Theory by Richard Lazarus (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007), uses an explanatory quantitative approach with a survey method with 50 participants. The results showed that Job Demands had a significant effect on Turnover Intention ( $p=0.012$ ), and only one dimension of Job Demands, namely Role Conflict, which shows a significant effect on Turnover Intention, which is equal to  $p=0,291$ . Referring to the questions and research objectives, the conclusion is that the increase in Job Demands had a significant effect on the Turnover Intention of Company X employees during the pandemic.*

**Keywords:** Job Demands, Turnover Intention, COVID-19 Pandemic

## JOB DEMANDS DAN TURNOVER INTENTION : PERUBAHAN SITUASI KERJA SELAMA PANDEMI COVID-19

### ABSTRAK

Pandemi berkepanjangan mengakibatkan *Job Demands* di Perusahaan X meningkat karena peralihan kondisi kerja ke WFH yang berujung pada timbulnya *Turnover Intention*. *Job Demands* adalah aspek fisik, psikologis, sosial dan organisasi dari pekerjaan yang berdampak pada aspek fisik atau psikologis (Bakker dan Demerouti, 2007), sedangkan *Turnover Intention* adalah probabilitas seseorang akan meninggalkan organisasi dalam waktu dekat (Jackson S. & Jackson L., 2019). Penelitian ini menggunakan *Stress Appraisal Theory* oleh Richard Lazarus (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007), menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif yang bersifat eksplanatif dengan metode survei dengan jumlah partisipan 50 orang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan *Job Demands* berpengaruh secara signifikan terhadap *Turnover Intention* dengan nilai  $p=0,012$ , dan hanya satu dimensi dari *Job Demands* yaitu *Role Conflict* yang menunjukkan pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap *Turnover Intention* yaitu  $p=0,291$ . Mengacu kepada pertanyaan dan tujuan penelitian, ditarik kesimpulan bahwa meningkatnya *Job Demands* berpengaruh secara signifikan terhadap *Turnover Intention* pada karyawan Perusahaan X di masa pandemi.

**Kata Kunci:** Job Demands, Turnover Intention, Pandemi COVID-19

## **Introduction**

There is an increasing number of studies examining how workplace variables contribute to work stress and turnover intention (Lambert et al., 2021). Coupled with the current global conditions which are struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic. China was the first country to identify COVID-19 as the cause of the outbreak. The increasing threat of epidemics is causing a global mood of anxiety and depression due to disrupted travel plans, social isolation, and media overload (Wang et al., 2020), and can impact mental health now and in the future (Holmes et al., 2020).

This pandemic condition that has not yet improved requires many companies to lay off employees or switch to a new work style, namely WFH (Work From Home) to ensure they reduce their risk of contracting the virus and infecting others (Brooks et al., 2020).

Quarantine is often an unpleasant experience for those undergoing it. Required separation from loved ones, loss of freedom, uncertainty of disease status, and boredom can sometimes create dramatic effects (Brooks et al., 2020). Apart from quarantine regulations, the work from home policy also contributed to cases of depression experienced by many office workers during the pandemic.

Faced with new conditions that occur suddenly, it requires that many people inevitably have to be able to adapt quickly. Of course, this is not easy for everyone to accept, especially with the emergence of problems such as working hours that have become excessive because employees work from home. There are no clear working hours, so you feel lonely because you can't interact with other people besides family members at home. As the years go by, this problem gradually triggers new problems in the psychological condition of office workers, namely the condition of increasing job demands which can lead to the emergence of turnover intention among employees in the company.

During the pandemic, there have been many studies examining the effect of job demands on other variables. Most of these studies were conducted in companies engaged in the health sector (Pranjic et al., (2022); Sullivan et al., (2021); Hashimoto et al., (2021); Milosevic et al., (2022), etc.). As has happened to many companies engaged in the health sector regarding the psychological condition of workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the same problem has also occurred with Company X employees, such as working hours that have become longer, workloads and demands have increased, lack of work-life balance, and loss of sense of security caused by unclear work situations, roles and tasks.

Company X is a company engaged in the academic field of Mandarin or what is commonly called the Chinese Academic Center which is devoted to early childhood, namely for children with an age range of 3-12 years. Company X is a sub-school of international schools that have Mandarin with the Singaporean curriculum as a subject, so that the teaching of Mandarin itself will be fully managed by Company X. As a Chinese Academic Center that has stepped on the global market, Company X is indeed famous for its method which is different from other Chinese Academic Centers, namely for example one of the most well-known methods for its quality is because Company X has applications that students have to work on every day, because what Company X puts forward is building daily habits within students, so that even though students don't learn Chinese every day in class, they can still practice Mandarin independently every day, and this method has been proven to improve students' Chinese skills more quickly than other methods. used by other Chinese Academic Centers, because students who study Mandarin at Company X are always in the Top 10 Students at school. However, the situations and conditions of the satisfactory results obtained by the parents of students as clients are not in balance with the situations and conditions experienced by employees who work at Company X. In Company X, where in their daily lives before the pandemic, the employees' days were passed in very pleasant working conditions as employees work very closely with children. However, since the pandemic, all employees are faced with various pressures on daily basis, as stated by one of the senior employees:

*"In the past, we weren't like this, miss, it used to be more fun, we played and sang more. Nowadays we are in front of a computer all day, processing this data, inputting that data, every day it's monotonous to look at the database, there's no longer any joking around, and everyone wants to joke now, everyone's mood is more sensitive now, everyone gets angry easily."*

Then, the pressures that occur include working hours that are too long, namely more than 12 hours in one day, even though before the pandemic conditions, employees worked only 8 hours in one day, as stated by an employee who holds a Student Care position:

*"I almost always work early in the morning until my family doesn't feel like I'm at home so I spend the whole day in my room working. My working hours are so long that I don't have time for toilet time, I have to wait for the weekend before I have time for toilet time, I never eat in the dining room anymore, I always eat in my room, because of Laoshi's habit of always using our lunch time for impromptu meetings"*

Apart from working hours, employees are also faced with a workload that is many times greater than before the pandemic, which is because companies have to save on expenses for paying employees so that each employee is given as much work load as possible as stated by one of the employees who also holds the position of Student Care:

*“In the past, when we were working offline, the most we had to handle was just 50 children at a time because before there were a lot of Student Cares, now there are a lot of people who have resigned, so every time a Student Care resigns, the number of other Student Cares will immediately explode in number of children and now I hold 160 children. I'm so annoyed why I don't just want to add more employees. If it's like this, it's clear that there are no employees working optimally, how do you handle 160 children at the same time?”*

The lack of work-life balance (balance between office and personal life) is also a big problem because employees work from Monday to Sunday and on national holiday when employees should be off, so employees can never have time for themselves or for their family and relatives. The increase in working hours and workload is also not balanced by an increase in salary, benefits or rewards by the company, as stated by one of the employees who holds the position of Student Care who is considered by the supervisor to be the best employee:

*“I have no holiday miss, even on Indonesia's Independence Day we work especially on Saturday Sunday, so yes I always go in. I've never been allowed to take a day off, I've tried to force one day off on Saturdays but I got bombed by phone calls. As for the salary, it only increases once according to the agreement after the probation period is over, the salary will increase, but that's also only Rp. 500,000. I don't know, laoshi always said he was keeping track of our work performance points, I also don't know where the points are, maybe they're recorded but never used as a bonus or any reward”.*

Therefore, understanding the factors that cause employees to leave their jobs is very important to increase organizational effectiveness (Griffeth & Hom, 2001). Thus, it is not surprising that for decades researchers have tried to identify the factors that lead to the emergence of turnover intention. As research conducted by Jang and George (2012) whose results show that job satisfaction among employees positively reduces the level of turnover intention. Then, Kim and Jogaratnam, (2010) found that stress and pressure can also increase turnover intention. However, not many studies have investigated the extent to which job demands affect turnover intention directly, without the inclusion of other variables.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the extent to which job demands affect the turnover intention of Company X employees, especially during a pandemic. The results of this research are expected to help facilitate a more comprehensive

understanding of working conditions during the pandemic to maintain employee retention so that companies can retain employees with high potential so they remain loyal to the company and their work.

## **Methods**

### **Research Design**

The research design used in this study is a quantitative research approach that is explanatory in nature using survey methods via questionnaires. This study consists of two variables, namely job demands as the independent variable and turnover intention as the dependent variable.

### **Research Participants**

Due to the small number of participants, namely only 50 participants, this study made the entire population of Company X employees as research participants. The characteristics of the respondents in this study were employees with at least 3 years of service, male and female, and held job positions as Student Care, Class Host, IT, Finance, and teaching staff.

Out of a total of 50 respondents, 16 (32%) were male, while 34 (68%) were female. Then, out of a total of 50 respondents, 23 (46%) of respondents held positions as Student Care, 2 (4%) of respondents held positions of Class Hosts, 6 (12%) of respondents held positions of IT, 2 (4%) of respondents held the position of Finance, while 17 (34%) of the other respondents held the position of Teacher. Furthermore, out of a total of 50 respondents, 3 (6%) respondents had 3-5 years of service, 30 (60%) of respondents had 6-10 years of service, 11 (22%) of respondents had 11-15 years of service, while the other 6 (12%) respondents had a working period of 16-20 years.

### **Research Sampling Techniques**

The sampling technique in this study is non-probability sampling, which is a sampling technique that does not provide equal opportunities or opportunities for each element or member of the population to be selected as a sample (Sugiyono, 2018). The non-probability sampling technique used by the authors in this study is convenience.

### **Research Variable Measurement Tool**

#### ***Job Demands***

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007), job demands are the physical, psychological, social and organizational aspects of work that require effort to achieve and have an impact on certain physical or psychological aspects that can make work feel burdensome and inhibiting. Fulfillment of these aspects requires sustained physical, cognitive, and emotional effort, and thus places a certain psychological (eg, fatigue and sleep deprivation) and physiological (eg, hypertension, increased hormonal activity, and tachycardia) burden on working individuals (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker et al., 2014; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Job demands are workplace factors that make work burdensome and hinder success. In the current study, job demands are perceptions of a job being hazardous (ie, carrying the risk of injury), role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload (Lambert et al., 2021).

Job demands cover all aspects of the work context that require a lot of energy (Bakker, 2015), such as work pressure, excessive workload, time pressure, extensive physical effort, task complexity, conflict with leaders and co-workers, role ambiguity, job insecurity, and various stressful events (Bakker et al., 2014; Schaufeli and Taris, 2014; Bakker, 2015; Schaufeli, 2017). Employees who are faced with prolonged, extensive job demands may become chronically exhausted and psychologically alienated from their jobs.

Bakker & Demerouti stated that job demands can lead to fatigue and other health complaints, which are related to pressure at work (Zamralita, 2021). According to Bakker et al. (Yener, 2013) poorly designed jobs or high job demands drain physical resources and cause energy depletion (emotional exhaustion) and health problems (health processes). High job demands can also lead to a decline in employee attitudes and behavior towards their work, in other words their level of attachment can be damaged resulting in burnout syndrome (Yener, 2013).

According to Bakker et al., job demands can be a stressor at work when employees require high effort and do not recover properly (Zamralita, 2021). Doing many tasks in daily work such as intervention, documentation, administrative work, and communicating with superiors or colleagues often causes high job demands (Kim, 2016).

The job demands variable in this study was measured using The Job Demands-Resources Questionnaire developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2014). The JD-R Questionnaire consists of 40 items, with 23 items measuring job demands. This tool has 5 dimensions, namely (a) emotional demands (six items); (b) hassle (five items); (c) work pressure (four items); (d) cognitive demands (four items); and (e) role conflict (four items).

Examples of statement items on each aspect are as follows: First, on the emotional demand aspect with the example item "My job demands emotion". In the second aspect, namely hassle with the example item "When I work, I have to deal with troublesome administration". In the third aspect, namely work pressure with the example of the item "I have to work fast". In the fourth aspect, namely cognitive demand with the example of the item "At work I need full concentration". And on the last aspect, namely role conflict with the example item "When working I receive conflicting task demands from 2 or more people".

Cronbach's alpha values for emotional demand, hassle, work pressure, cognitive demands, and role conflict are 0.772, 0.840, 0.696, 0.794, and 0.842. The JD-R Questionnaire uses a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Then, after repeated measurements, all Job Demands variable items (23 items) showed good internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.926$ ).

### ***Turnover Intention***

Turnover intention is a desire where an employee will leave or resign from their job. As revealed by Bothma et al. (in Jackson S. & Jackson L., 2019), turnover intention is the tendency or probability that someone will leave the organization at some point in the near future, for example in the next three months, next six months, one year to come, and the next two years.

Jung et al. (in Yin et al., 2022) verified that job insecurity significantly affects turnover intention. Then, Bufquin et al. (in Yin et al., 2022) revealed that there was a positive effect of psychological pressure on turnover intention during the COVID-19 pandemic. Irshad et al. (2020) also shows that psychological anxiety affects turnover intention. Then, according to Nair et al. (2016) factors that cause turnover intention include better job opportunities, educational factors, wages, supervision, personal characteristics of employees such as intelligence, attitude, interest, length of work and individual reactions to work such as work stress and workload. Then internal factors are factors that come from employee personal characteristics such as intelligence, attitude, interest, length of work and individual reactions to work such as work stress and workload.

Thus, the antecedent factors that affect turnover intention in general focus on employee emotions, such as psychological stress and anxiety caused by the work climate, such as operational performance and job security. For example, many hotels have become places of isolation for people suspected of being infected with COVID-19 due to a decrease

in room occupancy rates after the outbreak of the pandemic. In addition, employees may be concerned about providing face-to-face services to normal customers because some individuals infected with COVID-19 may be asymptomatic. In doing so, they were able to avoid physical contact and maintain social distance from customers, leading to a further decline in hotel occupancy rates. Employees tend to leave low-performing businesses because of an unsafe work climate (Yin et al., 2022).

The employee turnover intention variable in this study is measured using the Turnover Intention Questionnaire that has been adapted by Roswani. Examples of statement items in the measurement of turnover intention are "I am considering leaving this company" and "I will leave my current position if I get another suitable offer."

Cronbach's alpha value for turnover intention is 0.83. The Turnover Intention Questionnaire uses a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Then, after repeated measurements, all Turnover Intention variables (14 items) showed good internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.796$ ).

## Result

### Description of Research Variables

#### Description of Job Demands on Participants

**Table 1.1**  
**Description of Variable Job Demands on Participants**

<b>Variabel</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Emotional Demands</i>	3.50	5.00	4.3	.297	High
<i>Hassle</i>	3.40	5.00	4.4	.349	High
<i>Work Pressure</i>	3.25	5.00	4.3	.391	High
<i>Cognitive Demands</i>	3.50	5.00	4.3	.378	High
<i>Role Conflict</i>	3.50	5.00	4.4	.401	High

The job demands variable in this study was measured using a Likert Scale in which the assessment was measured with a score of 1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree), with a median value of 3 (neutral). Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, it was found that the value of the variable job demands through the dimensions of emotional demands (M=4.3, SD=0.297), hassle (M=4.4, SD=0.349), work pressure (M=4.3, SD=0.391), cognitive demands (M=4.3, SD=0.378), and role conflict (M=4.4, SD=0.401) in participants is high because the mean value is greater than the mean value of 3. So, based on the results of the



data processing it can be concluded that the participants in this study feel their level of workload is high after switching to WFH caused by pandemic conditions.

### Description of Turnover Intention on Participants

**Table 1.2**

**Description of Variable Turnover Intention on Participants**

Variabel	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
<i>Turnover Intention</i>	3.57	5.00	4.2	.343	High

The turnover intention variable in this study was measured using a Likert Scale where the assessment was measured with a score of 1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree), with a median value of 3 (neutral). Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, it was found that the value of the variable turnover intention in the participants was relatively high (M=4.2, SD=0.343) because the mean value was greater than the mean value of 3. So, based on the results of the data processing it could be concluded that the participants in this study had an attitude or plans to look for new job options at other companies.

### Correlation Test Results

**Table 1.3**

**Correlation Matrix of Job Demands and Turnover Intention**

No	Variabel	Mean	Std.	1.0	2.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
1.0	<i>JOB DEMANDS</i>	4.3	0.228	1.00						
1.1	Emotional Demands	4.3	.297	.626**	.002	1.00				
1.2	Hassle	4.4	.349	.669**	.182	.342*	1.00			
1.3	Work Pressure	4.3	.391	.683**	.019	.203	.240	1.00		
1.4	<i>Cognitive Demands</i>	4.3	.378	.509**	.272	.037	.150	.369**	1.00	
1.5	<i>Role Conflict</i>	4.4	.401	.707**	.291*	.335*	.348*	.426**	.161	1.00
2.0	<i>TURNOVER INTENTION</i>	4.2	.343	.234	1.00					

Based on the results of the correlation test, it was found that all dimensions of job demands had a significant effect on the job demands themselves, meaning that the job demands measurement tool used in this study was appropriate. However, of the five dimensions of job demands, only the role conflict dimension has a significant effect on turnover intention, which is equal to 0.291, meaning that in this study the factors that influence employees to have turnover intention are unclear roles within the company and the fact that employees have two or more opposite expectations given by superiors that make employees finally have turnover intention.

Then, the results of the data analysis above also prove that there is a significant relationship between the first dimension and the other job demands dimensions. We can see that role conflict has a significant effect on emotional demands, which is equal to 0.335, meaning that the role is unclear in the company and there is a factor that the boss has two or more opposite expectations that burden the emotional state of employees in carrying out their daily work. In addition, role conflict also has a significant effect on hassle, which is equal to 0.348, meaning that the unclear role in the company and the presence of a factor that the boss has two or more opposite expectations become an inhibiting factor or a barrier between the individual and his goals in the context of work. Furthermore, it can also be seen that role conflict has a significant effect on work pressure, which is equal to 0.426, meaning that the unclear role in the company and the factor that superiors have two or more opposite expectations creates tension or pressure related to the work tasks being carried out because employees need to perform multiple tasks in a short period of time.

In addition to the role conflict dimension, the results of the data analysis above also show that hassles have a significant effect on emotional demands, which is equal to 0.342, meaning barriers or barriers between individuals and their goals (in the context of work), for example equipment damage or co-worker behavior that is inappropriate to burdensome conditions. emotional performance of employees in carrying out their daily work. Cognitive demands also appear to have a significant effect on work pressure, which is equal to 0.369, meaning that tasks that require a lot of concentration cause tension or pressure related to the work tasks being carried out because employees need to do many tasks in a short period of time.

## Hypothesis Test Results

**Table 1.4**  
**Job Demands Regression Test Results on Turnover Intention**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Signifikansi (p)
	B	Std. Error	
(Constant)	37.414	12.955	.006
Job Demands	.214	.128	.012

Based on the data in the table above, the value of A = 37.414 is obtained, meaning that if there are job demands, the turnover intention value is 37.414. Then, the value B = 0.214 is obtained, meaning that for every 1% increase in the level of job demands, the turnover intention will increase by 0.214. Next, the sig. 0.012 < 0.05 which can be concluded that job demands have a significant effect on turnover intention. Based on the results of the data calculation above, it can be concluded that job demands have a positive effect on turnover intention with the regression equation  $Y=37.414 + 0.214$ .

## Discussion

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion previously described regarding the effect of job demands on the turnover intention of Company X employees during the pandemic, based on the results of the correlation test in **Table 1.3**, the results of the data analysis show that all dimensions of job demands play a significant role in the job demands itself, means that the job demands measurement tool used in this study is appropriate. However, of the five dimensions of job demands, only the role conflict dimension has a significant effect on turnover intention, which is equal to 0.291, meaning that in this study the factors that have proven to influence employees' turnover intention are unclear roles within the company and the fact that employees have two or more opposite expectations given by supervisor.

Then, the results of the data analysis also prove that there is a significant relationship between the first dimension and the other job demands dimensions. We can see that role conflict has a significant effect on emotional demands, which is equal to 0.335, meaning that the role is unclear in the company and there is a factor that the boss has two or more opposite expectations that burden the emotional state of employees in carrying out their daily work. In addition, role conflict also has a significant effect on hassle, which is equal to 0.348, meaning that the unclear role in the company and the factor that superiors have two or more opposite expectations are inhibiting factors or barriers between individuals and their goals in the

context of work. Furthermore, it can also be seen that role conflict has a significant influence on work pressure which is equal to 0.426, meaning that the unclear role in the company and the factor that superiors have two or more opposite expectations creates tension or pressure related to the work tasks being carried out because employees need to perform multiple tasks in a short period of time.

In addition to the role conflict dimension, the results of the data analysis above also show that hassles have a significant effect on emotional demands, which is equal to 0.342, meaning barriers or barriers between individuals and their goals (in the context of work), for example equipment damage or co-worker behavior that is inappropriate to burdensome conditions. employees' emotions in carrying out their daily work. Cognitive demands also appear to have a significant effect on work pressure, which is equal to 0.369, meaning that tasks that require a lot of concentration cause tension or pressure related to the work tasks being carried out because employees need to do many tasks in a short period of time.

So, based on the presentation of the results of the data analysis above, it can be concluded that the change from normal conditions to the pandemic caused employees working at Company X to have a high level of turnover intention caused by an increase in the level of job demands within the company. Then, role conflict seems to have a significant impact on increasing the level of turnover intention compared to other dimensions of job demands due to the pandemic conditions which caused companies to switch employee working conditions from WFO (Work From Office) to WFH (Work From Home). becomes unclear and messy, because employees in division one have to carry out tasks from their own division and other divisions, coupled with conflicting expectations from one another given by superiors who feel employees are very heavy and demanding this is what causes employees have turnover intention. And it was found that the results of this study were in line with what happened in the field as previously seen from the results of interviews conducted at the initial stage before data collection was carried out.

## **Conclusion**

Referring to the research questions and objectives, based on the results of the data analysis and discussion above, the researcher can draw conclusions that the increase in job demands has a significant effect on the turnover intention of Company X employees during the pandemic. Then, the fact that of the five dimensions of job demands, only the role conflict dimension has a significant effect on turnover intention also attracts the attention of

researchers, because the results of this study can be developed further to examine whether other populations or samples can produce different data.

### **Suggestion**

In this study, it can be seen that the pandemic condition has made job demands significantly affect turnover intention, but only one dimension of job demands has proven to have an effect on turnover intention, namely the role conflict dimension. So the researcher sees this as a research gap and can be used as a reference for future research by testing a larger number of participants in other companies that are still struggling to deal with the pandemic to analyze if the five dimensions of the job demands variable can show a significant effect. significant to turnover intention.

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