

THE EFFECT OF JOB STRESS AND QUIET QUITTING ON TURNOVER INTENTION WITH BURNOUT AS A MEDIATION VARIABLE AMONG MOTOR SAILING VESSEL CREWS IN BONTANG CITY

Ade Bukti Ramadhan¹, Irsan Tricahyadinata², Irwansyah³

¹ Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda, Indonesia

² Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda, Indonesia

³ Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda, Indonesia

Email: adhebuktiramadhan030297@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of job stress and quiet quitting on turnover intention with burnout as a mediating variable among Motor Sailing Vessel (MSV) crews in Bontang City, Indonesia. Although prior studies have explored the relationships between job stress, burnout, and turnover intention, limited research investigates the mediating role of burnout in the relationship between quiet quitting and turnover intention, particularly in traditional maritime sectors. This research adopts a quantitative explanatory design using a census method involving 395 MSV crew members. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results reveal that job stress and quiet quitting significantly and positively affect burnout. Burnout also has a significant positive effect on turnover intention. However, job stress and quiet quitting do not directly influence turnover intention. Instead, burnout fully mediates these relationships. The study contributes to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory by confirming burnout as a key psychological mechanism linking work stressors and withdrawal behavior to turnover intention in maritime contexts. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of stress management and burnout prevention strategies to reduce workforce turnover.

Keywords: *Job Stress, Quiet Quitting, Burnout, Turnover Intention MSV Crew*

INTRODUCTION

The maritime industry is a critical pillar of Indonesia's national logistics system, especially for archipelagic regions [1]. Motor Sailing Vessels (MSVs) serve as essential feeders connecting small and medium ports, particularly in Eastern Indonesia [2], including Bontang City. However, data from the Indonesian MSV Owners Association (APKLI, 2023) shows that turnover intention among MSV crews reaches 28.7% nationally, with Bontang recording 32.3% [2]. This figure is much higher than the average in land logistics (around 18%). High turnover disrupts logistics distribution, increases replacement costs, and raises safety risks.

The extreme working conditions at sea long voyages, physical hazards, income uncertainty, and social isolation lead to chronic job stress [3], [4]. According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, stress arises when job demands exceed available resources [5], [6]. When chronic stress is not managed, it results in burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment [7], [8]. Burnout has been identified as a primary cause of turnover intention in high-risk industries, including shipping [9], [10]. Furthermore, prolonged stress and burnout can trigger quiet quitting, i.e., working only at minimum formal requirements without extra initiative [11], [12].

While many studies have examined stress, burnout, and turnover intention in formal sectors (healthcare, hospitality, education), research on traditional MSV crews in Indonesia remains limited [13], [14]. Moreover, the mediating role of burnout between quiet quitting and turnover intention has rarely been explored in the maritime context. Therefore, this study aims to answer: (1) Does job stress affect burnout? (2) Does quiet quitting affect burnout? (3) Does job stress affect turnover intention? (4) Does quiet quitting affect turnover intention? (5) Does burnout affect turnover intention? (6) Does burnout mediate the effect of job stress on turnover intention? (7) Does burnout mediate the effect of quiet quitting on turnover intention?

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Job Stress

Job stress is a psychological condition when work demands exceed an individual's coping capacity [5], [15]. Based on JD-R theory, job demands (workload, role conflict, time pressure) increase burnout, while job resources (autonomy, social support) reduce it. For MSV crews, stress originates from physical workload, role ambiguity, and isolation. Indicators include role overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, time pressure, low job control, and low social support.

2.2 Quite Quitting

Quiet quitting is the behavior of limiting work to only formal duties, without extra effort or emotional involvement [11], [16]. It is an adaptive response to burnout and effort-reward imbalance [17]. Indicators include avoidance of extra effort, time boundaries, reduced participation, refusal of unpaid extra tasks, social withdrawal, and low extra-role motivation.

2.3 Burnout

Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy due to chronic work stress [7], [18]. The JD-R model explains it as a consequence of high demands and low resources. For seafarers, lack of recovery leads to energy depletion [9]. Indicators: exhaustion, mental distance, emotional/cognitive impairment, reduced efficacy, and psychological distress.

2.4 Turnover

Turnover intention is a conscious plan to leave the job within a certain period [19], [20]. It is the strongest predictor of actual turnover. Burnout and job stress directly increase turnover intention [13], [21]. Indicators: intent to quit, thoughts of leaving, job search intention, and likelihood of leaving.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The research was conducted on all active Motor Sailing Vessel (MSV) cargo crews operating in Bontang City waters during 2025. The population totaled 395 individuals, and a census technique was applied, making the sample size equal to the population (N=395). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire comprised four variable constructs: job stress (6 items adapted from Bakker & Demerouti [5], quiet quitting (6 items adapted from Serenko [11] and Galanis et al. [17]), burnout (6 items adapted from Maslach & Leiter [7] and Yulia et al. [9]), and turnover intention (4 items adapted from Robbins & Judge [19] and Kim & Sohn [21]). Before full deployment, a pilot test was conducted on 30 respondents to ensure clarity and reliability. Data analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4 software. The measurement model was evaluated through outer loadings (minimum 0.70), Average Variance Extracted (AVE, minimum 0.50), and composite reliability (minimum 0.70). The structural model was assessed using R-square, Q-square predictive relevance, and path coefficients. Hypothesis testing was conducted using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples to determine t-statistics and p-values, including the assessment of direct and indirect (mediation) effects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive statistics showed that the mean scores for all variables were in the moderate-to-high range: job stress (3.72), quiet quitting (3.49), burnout (3.66), and turnover intention (3.63). This indicates that MSV crews in Bontang experience considerable work pressure, display withdrawal behaviors, feel emotionally exhausted, and have a notable intention to leave their jobs. The measurement model evaluation revealed that all outer loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.74 to 0.90. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct was above 0.50: job stress (0.56), quiet quitting (0.55), burnout (0.60), and turnover intention (0.63). Composite reliability values ranged from 0.87 to 0.90, confirming high internal consistency. Discriminant validity was established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, where the square root of each construct's AVE (diagonal values: JS=0.876, QQ=0.887, BO=0.890, TI=0.891) was greater than its correlations with other constructs (see Table 1). The structural model evaluation showed that job stress and quiet quitting together explained 51.9% of the variance in burnout ($R^2 = 0.519$). Meanwhile, the model explained 36.9% of the variance in turnover intention ($R^2 = 0.369$). The Q^2 values for burnout (0.387) and turnover intention (0.275) were both positive, indicating adequate predictive relevance. Hypothesis testing using bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples) yielded the following results (see Table 2). Job stress had a significant positive effect on burnout ($\beta = 0.426$, $t = 12.109$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Quiet quitting

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also had a significant positive effect on burnout ($\beta = 0.460, t = 12.674, p < 0.001$), supporting H2. However, the direct effects of job stress on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.068, t = 1.375, p = 0.169$) and quiet quitting on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.069, t = 1.352, p = 0.176$) were not significant, thus H3 and H4 were not supported. Burnout had a strong significant positive effect on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.522, t = 10.184, p < 0.001$), supporting H5. Finally, the indirect effect of job stress on turnover intention through burnout was significant ($\beta = 0.222, t = 7.559, p < 0.001$), and the indirect effect of quiet quitting on turnover intention through burnout was also significant ($\beta = 0.240, t = 7.410, p < 0.001$). Since the direct paths were non-significant while the indirect paths were significant, these results indicate full mediation, supporting H6 and H7. The findings confirm that both job stress and quiet quitting are significant positive predictors of burnout among MSV crews, aligning with the JD-R theory which states that high job demands and low resources lead to emotional exhaustion [5], [22]. Interestingly, the direct effects of job stress and quiet quitting on turnover intention were not significant. This suggests that experiencing work pressure or even reducing one’s work effort does not directly cause crews to want to leave their jobs. Instead, it is the accumulated feeling of burnout—emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficacy—that triggers the intention to quit. Burnout had a strong direct effect on turnover intention, consistent with prior research in high-risk occupations [13], [21]. The full mediation effects (H6 and H7) highlight that burnout is the critical psychological mechanism that transforms external stressors and passive withdrawal behaviors into an active desire to leave the organization. In the context of traditional shipping in Bontang, crews may tolerate high stress or engage in quiet quitting as coping strategies, but only when these conditions lead to severe burnout do they seriously consider leaving. This finding has important practical implications: to reduce turnover, shipping companies should focus not only on reducing stress or quiet quitting directly, but more importantly on preventing and managing burnout through improved work schedules, social support, and recovery opportunities.

Table 1. Fornell Larcker Criterion

Construct	BO	JS	QQ	TI
BO	0.890			
JS	0.574	0.876		
QQ	0.597	0.322	0.887	
TI	0.602	0.390	0.403	0.891

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Table 2. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coeff.	T-Statistic	P Value	Result
H1	JS → BO	0.426	12.109	0.000	Supported
H2	QQ → BO	0.460	12.674	0.000	Supported
H3	JS → TI	0.068	1.375	0.169	Not Supported
H4	QQ → TI	0.069	1.352	0.176	Not Supported
H5	BO → TI	0.522	10.184	0.000	Supported
H6	JS → BO → TI	0.222	7.559	0.000	Supported (Full)
H7	QQ → BO → TI	0.240	7.410	0.000	Supported (Full)

Source: SmartPLS bootstrapping output (2026)

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that job stress and quiet quitting significantly increase burnout, which in turn increases turnover intention. Burnout fully mediates these relationships, emphasizing its central role in employee withdrawal behavior. The study contributes to theory by extending the JD-R model in the maritime sector and highlighting quiet quitting as an emerging factor. Practically, organizations should implement stress management and burnout prevention strategies. Future research should explore moderating variables such as leadership and social support and apply longitudinal designs.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

	<p>Ade Bukti Ramadhan    is a graduate of the Master of Management program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda, Indonesia. He completed his undergraduate studies at the same university. His research interests include human resource management, organizational behavior, and occupational health, with a focus on the maritime sector.</p> <p>Email.: adhebuktiramadhan030297@gmail.com</p>
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