

## ANTECEDENTS OF TURNOVER INTENTION AND THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AS A MEDIATOR IN TRAVEL AGENT EMPLOYEES IN INDONESIA

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to analyze the influence of workplace friendship, work stress, and psychological empowerment on turnover intention in travel agent companies in Indonesia, mediated by organizational citizenship behavior. This study used a quantitative approach with 1,020 respondents as the main subject who are the members of the Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA) and have worked for more than 3 months. Cross-sectional and one-shot data collection is conducted through the distribution of questionnaires in the form of Google Forms. The proposed model includes 10 hypotheses which are tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The majority of respondents are women aged 25–34 years, with high school education, 1–5 years of work experience, and working in the front office division. The results show that workplace friendship and psychological empowerment have a significant positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior, while work stress had a significant positive effect on turnover intention. Organizational citizenship behavior does not act as a mediating variable. This study proposes the concept of mission power in the job (MPJ) as the meaning of work that can reduce turnover intention. In addition, the effectiveness of workplace friendship is strengthened through teamwork communication (TWC), while time load, mental effort load, and psychological load are the main sources of work stress for travel agent employees.

**Keywords:** workplace friendship, work stress, psychological empowerment, organizational citizenship behavior, turnover intention.

### INTRODUCTION

The travel agency industry plays a strategic role in the tourism sector, where service quality and customer experience are crucially determined by the competence and performance of human resources (HR). However, this sector faces a serious problem in the form of high employee turnover, which has the potential to degrade service quality, disrupt operational stability, and hinder business sustainability. Turnover intention among travel agency employees is influenced by various factors, including

high work stress, low psychological empowerment, and weak social support from coworkers. The unique characteristics of the travel agency industry such as high levels of uncertainty, vulnerability to crises, intense competition, heavy workloads, and excessive customer expectations create significant emotional stress for employees and increase the intention to leave the organization. Research by Raza et al. (2021) confirms that these characteristics contribute to the high turnover intention of travel agency employees in Indonesia.

At a macro level, the travel agency sector in Indonesia experienced a significant decline in its workforce between 2019 and 2024 is approximately 60,000 people, or almost half the total workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic was a major factor worsening the tourism industry, leading to a decline in travel activity, business closures, and employee layoffs. Data from the Indonesian Travel and Tourism Association (ASITA) (2024) shows a decreasing trend in the number of travel agency companies in Indonesia from 2018 to 2024, influenced by increasing competition, changing in travel behavior, demand for service innovation, and financial pressures resulting from the pandemic.

To support this phenomenon, researchers conducted pre-research on 100 employees from 10 leading travel agents in Jakarta. The pre-research results strongly indicated high turnover intentions, with the majority of employees reporting frequent thoughts of leaving, actively seeking job opportunities at other companies, and being willing to resign immediately if they received a better offer. These findings confirm that turnover intention is a real problem facing the travel agent industry.

Previous research indicates that turnover intention studies in the travel agency sector are relatively limited. Loretta et al. (2024) in Hong Kong highlighted controllable and uncontrollable factors in turnover intention, while Shahrbanoo et al. (2020) in Iran emphasized the importance of avoiding favoritism and unprofessional relationships in the workplace to suppress the desire to leave. High turnover intention results in decreased commitment and stability in the work environment, and has the potential to reduce organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). However, under certain conditions, turnover can also trigger an increase in OCB among remaining employees. Therefore, organizations need to strategically manage turnover intentions to maintain OCB.

Organizational citizenship behavior plays a crucial role in the success of travel agents. Cheris et al. (2015) emphasized that OCB encourages employees to provide better service, collaborate effectively, and innovate in product and service development. OCB also serves as an indicator of employee commitment, loyalty, and support for the organization. Various studies have shown that OCB contributes to increased organizational efficiency, employee performance, customer satisfaction, and reduced absenteeism and turnover rates. In the context of travel agents in Indonesia, OCB has been shown to strengthen employee loyalty and maintain operational stability amidst industry competition.

ASITA's internal data (2018–2024) shows that the majority of travel agent employees have worked for less than 10 years, while only around 16–23% have stayed for more than 10 years. This finding suggests a relationship between long-term loyalty and OCB, where experienced employees who demonstrate proactive, cooperative, and helpful behaviors beyond formal duties tend to have higher commitment. Research by Vinno (2020) and Manisha et al. (2022) confirms that OCB negatively influences turnover intention, meaning that the higher the OCB, the lower the employee's desire to leave the organization.

One of the main factors influencing OCB and turnover intention is workplace friendship. Workplace friendship is a social relationship between coworkers that involves emotional support, information exchange, and assistance. Research shows that workplace friendship plays a role in reducing turnover intention and work stress, as well as increasing job satisfaction, mental well-being, and team productivity. Hsu Yu et al. (2022) and Kavita and Amarkant (2021) found that social support from coworkers acts as a stress buffer and reduces turnover intention. Furthermore, workplace friendship has been shown to have a positive effect on OCB, as it encourages mutual assistance, knowledge sharing, and commitment to organizational goals.

On the other hand, work stress is a dominant factor that increases turnover intention among travel agent employees. High customer demands, strict work targets, irregular working hours, and the obligation to be on call outside of working hours cause significant psychological stress. Research by Medio et al. (2020) and Wagih et al. (2022) shows that work stress has a positive effect on turnover intention. Although some studies have found that low levels of stress can motivate employees and encourage OCB, most studies conclude that high levels of work stress actually decrease OCB and increase turnover intention.

Furthermore, psychological empowerment is a key factor in suppressing turnover intention and increasing OCB. Psychological empowerment reflects to what extent the employees feel they have control, competence, meaning, and impact in their work. Increasing psychological empowerment in travel agents can be done through technical training, such as Global Distribution System (GDS) and payment key management (PKM) training, which has been proven to increase employee confidence and work effectiveness. Research shows that psychological empowerment negatively affects turnover intention and positively influences OCB, because employees who feel psychologically empowered tend to be more loyal, engaged, and willing to contribute beyond their formal roles.

Overall, previous research studies have shown inconsistent results regarding the influence of workplace friendship, work stress, and psychological empowerment on turnover intention and OCB. Furthermore, research that places OCB as a mediating variable in the context of the travel agent industry in Indonesia is still very limited. This condition is reinforced by the high turnover intention post-pandemic and emphasizes

the urgency in developing an integrated research model. Therefore, this study proposes the construct "Antecedents of Turnover Intention and the Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior as a Mediator for Employees of Travel Agent Companies in Indonesia" to provide theoretical and practical contributions to human resource management in the travel agent industry.

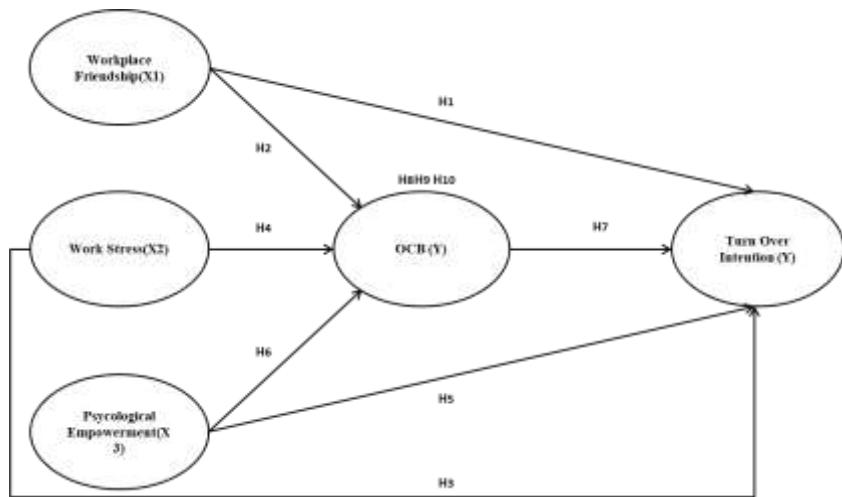
## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study aims to analyze the influence of workplace friendship, work stress, and psychological empowerment on turnover intention, with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as a mediating variable. This study uses a hypothesis testing approach focusing on examining the relationship between constructs based on hypothesis formulation and empirical data analysis, as proposed by Sekaran and Bougie (2019).

The unit of analysis in this study was employees of travel agent companies in Indonesia who are members of the Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA). Data collection was conducted cross-sectionally (one-shot) meaning the data was collected at a specific point in time in March 2025. Primary data was obtained through the distribution of online questionnaires to respondents, while secondary data was collected through literature studies sourced from scientific journals, reference books, and information searches through the internet that were relevant to this study.

The study population included all employees of travel agent companies affiliated with ASITA. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling by selecting respondents based on certain criteria considering the capability in providing information according to the research objectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). Referring to Hair et al. (2019) the minimum sample in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)-based research is five times the number of indicators thus the result is a minimum of 330 respondents and a maximum of 660 respondents. The data analysis methods used included descriptive statistical analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM analysis was used to test the structural relationships between research variables simultaneously.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**  
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 Company employeesTravel Agent in Indonesia



Source: data processed in 2024

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### 1. The Influence of Workplace Friendship on Turnover Intention

Hypothesis 1 testing aims to analyze the negative influence of workplace friendship on turnover intention. The SEM-PLS analysis results show an estimated coefficient value of 0.009 with a p-value of 0.438 ( $>0.05$ ). This finding indicates that workplace friendship does not significantly influence turnover intention, thus  $H_0$  is supported and  $H_1$  is not supported. As a result, the hypothesis stating that workplace friendship has a negative influence on turnover intention is not empirically proven.

These results indicate that while workplace friendships can create a sense of social comfort, their presence is not strong enough to suppress travel agent employees' intentions to leave the company. Turnover intention among travel agent employees is more influenced by structural and contextual factors such as high workloads, short-collection policies, tour contracts, limited career paths, and the uncertainty of the tourism industry.

However, further analysis at the indicator level revealed more specific findings. Three indicators within the friendship opportunity dimension show a significant negative effect on turnover intention: WF12 (working collectively), WF13 (freedom to communicate), and WF14 (organizational support for social interaction). All three indicators are significant at the 95% confidence level, indicating that teamwork and communication significantly contribute to reducing turnover intention, although the

workplace friendship variable is not significant. This finding provides novelty by proposing the concept of Teamwork Communication (TWC) as an important mechanism in the travel agent context.

## **2. The Influence of Workplace Friendship on Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Hypothesis 2 testing aims to examine the positive influence of workplace friendship on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The analysis results show an estimated coefficient of 0.174 with a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05), thus supporting H<sub>1</sub>. This finding proves that the higher the workplace friendship, the higher the OCB behavior of travel agent employees.

These results indicate that workplace friendships create a more comfortable work environment, a sense of belonging, and emotional support that encourage employees to engage in volunteer behavior outside of formal tasks. These findings align with research by Methot et al. (2015), Chiang & Hsieh (2022), Chia et al. (2018), and Hazem et al. (2023) which stated that workplace friendships increase prosocial behavior and employee extracurricular contributions.

In the dynamic and service-oriented context of travel agencies, workplace friendships serve as a source of social support that helps employees cope with work pressure and encourage team collaboration. Employees with strong friendships are more willing to help coworkers, share information, and maintain service quality. Thus, it contributes to increased OCB and organizational effectiveness.

## **3. The Influence of Work Stress on Turnover Intention**

Hypothesis 3 tested the positive effect of work stress on turnover intention. The analysis shows an estimated coefficient of 0.219 with a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05) so that supports the hypothesis. This finding indicates that the higher the level of work stress, the further the employee's intention to leave the company.

These results confirm the research by Ji-Young (2019), Khan (2020), Li et al. (2021), Wagih et al. (2022), and Rebbeca et al. (2022) stated that prolonged work pressure increases turnover intention. In the travel agent industry, pressure derived from demands for fast service, high sales targets, irregular working hours, and the risk of administrative errors, such as ticket issuance.

Indicator analysis revealed four of the most significant work stress indicators: WS13 (time load), WS21 (mental effort load), WS32 (confusion), and WS33 (frustration). These four indicators represent the primary sources of work stress that significantly drive turnover intention. This novelty finding confirms that the dimensions of time, mental effort load, and psychological stress are the primary triggers of turnover intention among travel agent employees.

## **4. The Influence of Work Stress on Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Hypothesis 4 tested the negative effect of work stress on OCB. The analysis showed a coefficient of 0.081 with a p-value of 0.027 (>0.05), thus the hypothesis was not supported. This finding indicates that work stress does not significantly reduce OCB.

These results do not support those of Reza et al. (2018) and Vinno (2020) but are in line with those of Agheli et al. (2018), Cyndi et al. (2022), and Maligaling & Ching (2024). In the context of travel agents, work stress experienced by employees tends to be a challenge stressor not a hindrance stressor that encourages caution and teamwork rather than a decrease in voluntary behavior.

Tour leader contract factors, additional compensation when leading a group, and travel opportunities are reasons why employees continue to demonstrate OCB despite experiencing high work stress.

### **5. The Influence of Psychological Empowerment on Turnover Intention**

Hypothesis 5 tested the negative influence of psychological empowerment on turnover intention. The analysis shows a coefficient of -0.098 with a p-value of 0.118 ( $>0.05$ ) and rejects the hypothesis. This finding indicates that psychological empowerment does not have a significant direct effect on turnover intention.

These results are in line with Ertaş & Kale (2023), Mega & Sinto (2022), and Jinliang Ding et al. (2023) whose finding stated that psychological empowerment does not always directly suppress turnover intention but rather through other mediators such as job satisfaction or emotional exhaustion.

However, indicator analysis shows that the meaning dimension (PE12) has a significant negative effect on turnover intention (p-value 0.001). This finding points to the concept of mission power in the job in which power of job meaning in encouraging commitment and reducing turnover intentions. Travel agent employees who view their work as part of the organization's important mission tend to have stronger emotional attachments.

### **6. The Influence of Psychological Empowerment on Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Hypothesis 6 tested the positive influence of psychological empowerment on OCB. The analysis shows a coefficient of 0.584 with a p-value of 0.000 ( $<0.05$ ) and it supports the hypothesis. This finding confirms the research of Karavardar (2016), Rushana et al. (2019), and David & Elizabeth (2020).

Psychological empowerment encourages travel agent employees to demonstrate extra-curricular behaviors such as helping coworkers, providing additional services, and taking the initiative to resolve customer issues. Empowerment through GDS training, involvement in decision-making, and a supportive work environment has been shown to increase OCB and organizational effectiveness.

### **7. The Influence of Organizational Citizenship Behavior on Turnover Intention**

Hypothesis 7 tested the negative effect of OCB on turnover intention. The analysis shows a coefficient of 0.028 with a p-value of 0.372 ( $>0.05$ ), thus the hypothesis is not supported. This finding indicates that OCB is not significant in reducing turnover intention.

These results align with those of Sarahi et al. (2017), Irma & Fatiya (2021), Yin et al. (2022), and Gilbert et al. (2021) who stated that OCB has a low negative and insignificant effect on turnover intention. In the travel agency industry, OCB is voluntary and often not accompanied by rewards, making it insufficient to retain employees.

#### **8. The Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Mediating the Effect of Workplace Friendship on Turnover Intention**

Hypothesis 8 testing shows an estimated coefficient value of 0.005 with a p-value of 0.363 ( $>0.05$ ), so that  $H_0$  is supported and  $H_1$  is not supported. These results confirm that organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) does not mediate the effect of workplace friendship on turnover intention. Although workplace friendship can increase OCB, this increase in voluntary behavior is not strong enough to reduce employee intentions to leave the company. In the context of travel agents, friendships at work provide temporary social comfort and are not able to commensurate with structural factors such as workload, compensation, and career opportunities that are more dominant in influencing turnover intention.

#### **9. The Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Mediating the Effect of Work Stress on Turnover Intention**

The results of Hypothesis 9 testing shows an estimated coefficient of 0.002 with a p-value of 0.383 ( $>0.05$ ), indicating that OCB does not mediate the effect of work stress on turnover intention. This finding describes that work stress has a strong direct influence on employee turnover intention without going through voluntary behavioral mechanisms. For travel agent employees, high work pressure directly encourages turnover intentions, so organizational citizenship behavior does not function as a buffer in mitigating the negative impact of work stress.

#### **10. The Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Mediating the Influence of Psychological Empowerment on Turnover Intention**

Testing Hypothesis 10 yielded an estimated coefficient of 0.016 with a p-value of 0.362 ( $>0.05$ ) and it supports  $H_0$ . These results indicate that organizational citizenship behavior does not mediate the effect of psychological empowerment on turnover intention. Psychological empowerment tends to directly influence the decision to stay or leave, especially for productive-age employees with a high career orientation and job mobility. Therefore, although psychological empowerment increases, OCB as a mediating role in reducing turnover intention is not empirically proven.

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Workplace friendship has not been proven to reduce turnover intention, since it not only creates work harmony and friendships but also facilitates the exchange of information about job opportunities and encourages employees to seek more profitable employment alternatives.

2. Workplace friendship has been shown to increase organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as friendship creates comfort, caring, and encourages voluntary contributions from employees outside of formal duties.
3. Work stress has been shown to increase turnover intention, indicating that work pressure is a major factor driving employee desire to leave, and it needs to be managed by companies.
4. Work stress has not been proven to reduce OCB since employees continue to demonstrate proactive behavior and teamwork, supported by a service culture, professional responsibility, and the existence of work contracts such as tour leaders.
5. Psychological empowerment has not been proven to reduce turnover intention when external factors such as target pressure, penalty policies, industry limitations, and other job opportunities are more dominant in influencing employee turnover decisions.
6. Psychological empowerment has been shown to increase OCB, where employees who feel empowered tend to be more active in helping coworkers, providing extra services, and maintaining the company's image.
7. Organizational citizenship behavior has not been proven to reduce turnover intention since employees' voluntary contributions are not strong enough to keep them in the company.
8. OCB has not been proven to mediate the influence of workplace friendship on turnover intention as a friendship at work only provides temporary comfort without encouraging long-term loyalty.
9. OCB has not been proven to mediate the influence of work stress on turnover intention since high work pressure directly drives employee turnover intention.
10. OCB has not been proven to mediate the influence of psychological empowerment on turnover intention because the decision to stay or leave is more determined by personal perceptions and external opportunities, not through voluntary behavior.

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