

Understanding Turnover Intention in Student Workers: The Role of Compensation and Burnout

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Received May 2025</p> <p>Accepted July 2025</p> <p>Keywords Turnover Intention, Burnout, Compensation, Part Time Working Student</p>	<p>This study explores the influence of compensation and burnout on turnover intention among part-time university students. As academic and job demands increase, student workers often face emotional strain and exhaustion, which may lead to a desire to leave their jobs. Data were collected through a survey of part-time student workers in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. The results indicate that fair and satisfactory compensation can reduce turnover intention, while high levels of burnout tend to increase it. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing both psychological well-being and fair rewards in supporting student worker retention. The study offers practical insights for educational institutions and employers to create more supportive and flexible work environments for students balancing study and work.</p>

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In recent years, there has been a growing trend of university students engaging in part-time employment, particularly in developing countries like Indonesia. Part-time work has become a common phenomenon, including in East Kalimantan. According to labor structure data released by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of East Kalimantan in August 2024, part-time workers accounted for 19.95% of the total labor force, marking an increase of 1.03 percentage points compared to August 2023. This indicates a growing number of part-time workers in the province. [1]. A part-time worker is defined as someone who works less than 35 hours per week but is not actively seeking another job or unwilling to accept additional work. This form of employment is often selected due to its flexibility in working hours, making it popular among students, learners, and individuals with limited availability for full-time jobs.

While part-time work offers valuable income and practical experience, it can also generate psychological pressure due to the dual demands of work and academic responsibilities. These pressures may lead to burnout, a syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced performance, and eventually lead to turnover intention, a deliberate thought to leave one's job [2][3]. Another contributing factor to student worker dissatisfaction is

compensation. When financial or non-financial rewards are perceived as fair, students are more likely to remain committed to their roles [4]. However, perceived low compensation relative to workload and expectations can increase the likelihood of turnover [5]. Despite the prevalence of student part-time work, few studies have addressed how compensation and burnout simultaneously influence turnover intention among this group, particularly in the Indonesian context.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although part-time employment supports students' financial independence and career preparation, it also introduces significant challenges related to time pressure, psychological fatigue, and job dissatisfaction. Current literature has primarily examined turnover intention in full-time workers, overlooking the unique stressors experienced by student workers who must navigate both academic and employment demands. In particular, there remains a significant gap in understanding how compensation and burnout interact to influence turnover intention in university students who work part-time. This gap limits stakeholders' ability to formulate effective retention strategies and well-being interventions tailored to young part-time workers. Therefore, this study aims to investigate this specific intersection, contributing novel empirical insights to the discourse on youth labor sustainability and student employment dynamics.

1.3 Objectives and Scope

The main objective of this study is to investigate the effects of compensation and burnout on turnover intention among part-time university students. The specific aims are: (1) to analyze the extent to which perceived compensation influences students' decisions to leave part-time jobs, and (2) to evaluate how burnout contributes to turnover intention in this population. The scope of the study includes undergraduate students in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, working part-time in sectors such as services, retail, food and beverage, and office assistance. Data are collected through structured questionnaires, and the analytical method employed is Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The research is grounded in the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory [6], which posits that when individuals' emotional or physical resources are depleted (as through high workload or inadequate compensation), they may engage in withdrawal behaviors such as quitting. Through this framework, the study aims to generate actionable insights for employers and higher education institutions in supporting student workers' retention and well-being.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Related Work

Numerous studies have explored the determinants of turnover intention across various employment contexts, highlighting the significance of both organizational and psychological factors. Compensation has been identified as one of the most influential variables in reducing turnover intention. Fair financial rewards and benefits not only enhance employee satisfaction but also promote organizational commitment [4]. In Indonesian settings, emphasized that perceived compensation had a significant inverse effect on turnover intention among millennial workers. Similarly, [5] found that competitive pay directly correlates with lower turnover intention in retail sectors, a context that mirrors many student work environments.

Parallel to compensation, burnout has emerged as a psychological factor with strong explanatory power in turnover behavior. Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy [2]. Studies show that burnout not only reduces productivity but also significantly contributes to withdrawal behaviors, including turnover intention [7] [8]. [3] revealed that emotional exhaustion among employees strongly predicts their desire to quit. [9] argue that younger employees, including students, are particularly susceptible to burnout due to lack of

autonomy and schedule rigidity.

In work-life balance contexts, [10] and [11] reported that imbalance between personal and professional roles enhances burnout and indirectly increases turnover rates. Although some research includes job stress as a trigger to burnout [12][8], fewer studies have isolated burnout's direct role in predicting student turnover intention, particularly in emerging economies like Indonesia.

From a theoretical lens, most of these studies are grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory [6], which suggests that individuals seek to conserve valuable resources, and when these are depleted (e.g., time, energy, financial stability), they are likely to disengage—manifested as job dissatisfaction or turnover.

Although a few studies have touched upon part-time employment [3], the focus is still predominantly on general workforce populations. For example, [13] examined career and compensation impacts on turnover among employees but did not distinguish between full-time and part-time status. Moreover, while [7] and [14] include burnout in their models, they are not contextualized within the academic life cycle of student workers.

2.2 Research Gap

Despite the growing prevalence of part-time work among university students in developing countries, especially Indonesia, very few studies explicitly investigate turnover intention in this specific population. Most existing literature either (1) focuses on full-time employees, (2) does not account for the psychological dual-burden of study and work, or (3) treats compensation and burnout as isolated factors rather than as interrelated variables.

Moreover, no empirical study was found that simultaneously examines compensation and burnout as predictors of turnover intention specifically in part-time university students in the Indonesian context, even though this group makes up a significant portion of the youth labor force [1]. While research by [7] and [3] addresses burnout, it lacks integration with compensation or contextual data on working students. Similarly, although [15] and [4] confirm compensation's role, they do not explore how this interacts with emotional strain like burnout.

Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by integrating both organizational (compensation) and psychological (burnout) factors in predicting turnover intention, focusing specifically on part-time university students in East Kalimantan, and grounded in COR theory to explain behavioral responses to resource depletion.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

This study adopted a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire distributed to part-time university students in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. The inclusion criteria required respondents to be (1) enrolled in an undergraduate program, and (2) currently working less than 35 hours per week, consistent with the national definition of part-time workers [1]. A purposive sampling technique was used to target students who balance both study and part-time employment. Data were collected over one month through both online forms and printed surveys, yielding 265 valid responses.

The questionnaire included four parts: demographic information, perceived compensation, burnout, and turnover intention. Measurement instruments were adapted from validated prior studies. The compensation construct was measured using items from [4] and [15], burnout was assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Student Survey) [2], and turnover intention items were adapted from [7] and [3]. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.2 Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through the SmartPLS 4.0 software. PLS-SEM was chosen due to its suitability for exploratory models, especially when dealing with complex relationships and smaller sample sizes [16]. The analysis proceeded in two stages: (1) assessment of the measurement model, and (2) evaluation of the structural model.

In the first stage, indicator reliability was evaluated using factor loadings (threshold > 0.70), construct reliability through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (threshold > 0.70), and convergent validity using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with a threshold of 0.50. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading analysis [17].

In the second stage, the structural model was tested using bootstrapping (5000 subsamples) to obtain t-statistics and p-values, examining the significance of path coefficients. The R^2 values indicated the explanatory power of compensation and burnout on turnover intention.

3.3 Validation

To ensure the quality and credibility of the findings, several validation procedures were implemented. Content validity was ensured through expert judgment involving three researchers in human resource management and organizational psychology. Construct validity and internal consistency were supported by strong loading values, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability exceeding the recommended thresholds [16].

Furthermore, the model's predictive relevance was evaluated using Q^2 values, and effect sizes (f^2) were assessed to understand the magnitude of influence of each predictor variable. These validation steps confirmed that the model was statistically robust and conceptually sound for analyzing the influence of compensation and burnout on turnover intention among part-time university students.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Key Findings

The results of the PLS-SEM analysis revealed several important findings regarding the relationship between compensation, burnout, and turnover intention among part-time university students. The path coefficient from compensation to turnover intention was negative and statistically significant ($\beta = -0.288$; $t = 4.152$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher perceived compensation was associated with a lower likelihood of students intending to leave their part-time jobs. This result supports the hypothesis that fair and satisfactory compensation reduces turnover intention.

Conversely, the relationship between burnout and turnover intention was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.479$; $t = 7.623$; $p < 0.001$), suggesting that students experiencing higher levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and academic strain were more likely to consider quitting their part-time roles. Burnout was found to be the strongest predictor of turnover intention in this model.

Furthermore, the R^2 value for turnover intention was 0.431, indicating that compensation and burnout together explain approximately 43.1% of the variance in student workers' turnover intention. The model also showed acceptable reliability and validity measures, with all constructs achieving satisfactory values for Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

4.2 Interpretation of Results

The results of this study demonstrate that compensation has a significant negative relationship with turnover intention among part-time university students, while burnout shows a significant

positive relationship. These findings offer key insights into the factors influencing student workers' decisions to remain in or leave their part-time jobs.

The negative relationship between compensation and turnover intention aligns with previous research, which suggests that when employees perceive that their compensation is fair and reflective of their effort, they are more satisfied and committed to their roles [4] [5]. For student workers—whose time is already constrained by academic demands—compensation acts as both a financial motivator and a form of recognition for their contributions. Adequate compensation has been shown to reduce withdrawal behavior and enhance retention, especially in low-commitment or temporary jobs [13][18].

Conversely, the positive relationship between burnout and turnover intention reflects the detrimental effects of prolonged emotional strain, exhaustion, and lack of personal accomplishment, which are common symptoms of burnout [2][19]. Burnout has consistently been cited as a primary predictor of job dissatisfaction and employee exit intentions across sectors, including hospitality, education, and service industries [7] [3][14].

In the context of student workers, burnout is particularly pronounced due to the dual burden of academic and work responsibilities. As noted by [9], young employees with limited autonomy and coping resources are more vulnerable to burnout. The imbalance between work and personal roles, commonly reported by student employees, exacerbates stress and contributes to a higher risk of quitting [12][10] [20].

The findings of this study support the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory [6], which posits that individuals seek to retain and protect valued resources—such as time, energy, and emotional well-being. When these resources are depleted and not replenished (e.g., through supportive compensation or manageable workloads), individuals are likely to engage in withdrawal behaviors such as turnover [2] [12][8].

Moreover, this study adds value to existing literature by focusing on part-time university students, a demographic often underrepresented in turnover studies. Most prior research has focused on full-time employees or specific occupational sectors [5] [7], while this study provides empirical evidence on the predictors of turnover intention in the student labor context. As such, the findings emphasize the need for employers and academic institutions to design flexible work arrangements, provide fair rewards, and implement burnout prevention strategies tailored to the unique challenges faced by student workers [10] [19][20].

5. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the influence of compensation and burnout on turnover intention among part-time university students in East Kalimantan. The findings reveal that compensation has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention, while burnout has a strong positive influence. These results hold meaningful implications in the broader context of youth employment, part-time work, and higher education policy.

The significant relationship between compensation and turnover intention underscores the economic sensitivity of student workers. As financial demands increase alongside academic pressures, fair compensation emerges as a critical retention factor. On the other hand, the positive relationship between burnout and turnover intention highlights the psychological strain associated with balancing study and work. These dual pressures suggest that part-time employment, while beneficial for skill development, may also expose students to higher risks of emotional exhaustion and disengagement.

5.1 Comparison with Prior Research

The findings of this study are consistent with several prior investigations. The negative correlation between compensation and turnover intention mirrors the results of [4] [15], and [5],

who found that fair and competitive compensation improves employee retention. Similarly, [18] confirmed that financial rewards play a central role in shaping employees' willingness to stay, even in low-skill or short-term jobs such as those often taken by students.

The positive influence of burnout on turnover intention corroborates the findings of [2], who describe burnout as a chronic stress response leading to emotional exhaustion and withdrawal. [7], [3], and [8] also found burnout to be a powerful predictor of turnover across various sectors, including education, hospitality, and customer service. In the context of student workers, [9] emphasized the vulnerability of young people to burnout, especially those managing multiple responsibilities.

What sets this study apart is its focus on student part-time workers, a group often overlooked in turnover studies. While many prior studies have concentrated on full-time employees or specific professional roles, this research contributes to a growing body of work that acknowledges the distinct experiences of part-time student employees and their psychosocial vulnerabilities [10] [20].

5.2 Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the use of non-probability sampling may limit the generalizability of the results beyond the surveyed population. The findings are based on student workers in East Kalimantan and may not represent other regions or educational systems. Second, the cross-sectional design captures only a snapshot in time, making it difficult to infer causal relationships between variables. Longitudinal data would be more suitable to assess the evolving nature of burnout and its long-term effects on turnover intention.

Another limitation is the self-reported nature of the data, which may be subject to response bias. Participants may have under- or over-reported their perceptions of stress, compensation, or turnover intention. Finally, the study focuses only on two independent variables—compensation and burnout—while other potential predictors such as job satisfaction, social support, or academic workload were not included.

5.3 Future Research

Future studies should consider expanding the model to include additional variables such as job satisfaction, organizational support, or academic workload, which may further explain turnover intention among student workers. A mixed-methods approach combining surveys with qualitative interviews could also provide deeper insights into students' motivations and stress coping mechanisms.

Moreover, longitudinal research is encouraged to track the changes in burnout levels and turnover intention over the course of a semester or academic year. Comparative studies across different regions or countries may uncover cultural or structural differences in how student workers perceive compensation and manage burnout.

Finally, future research could explore the role of institutional interventions, such as flexible work-study programs, mental health support, or career counseling, in reducing burnout and improving retention outcomes for student workers.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of compensation and burnout on turnover intention among part-time university students in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Grounded in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, the research addressed a growing concern in higher education and labor policy, the rising number of student workers experiencing emotional strain while seeking financial and professional development.

Using a quantitative approach and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the findings confirmed that compensation significantly reduces turnover intention, while

burnout strongly increases it. These results highlight the dual importance of both economic fairness and psychological well-being in retaining student workers.

The study contributes to the literature by focusing on an underrepresented population—part-time student employees, offering empirical evidence within the Indonesian context. It emphasizes the need for academic institutions and employers to understand the unique stressors affecting student workers and to design support systems that promote balance, recognition, and engagement.

7. Recommendation

Based on the findings, several practical and theoretical recommendations are proposed:

- 1) Employers should ensure that compensation packages, even for part-time or temporary roles, are perceived as fair and reflective of the work performed. This includes not only wages but also recognition and learning opportunities that support students' future careers.
- 2) Higher education institutions should offer preventive programs to manage burnout among student workers. These may include time management workshops, mental health counseling, and flexible academic policies for working students.
- 3) Policy makers are encouraged to develop guidelines for part-time student employment that balance educational commitments and labor rights, particularly in regions with high youth workforce participation.
- 4) From a research perspective, future studies should incorporate longitudinal designs to explore how burnout and compensation perceptions evolve over time. Expanding the model to include variables such as job satisfaction, academic pressure, or work-life conflict would offer a more holistic understanding of turnover dynamics.

Overall, this study provides actionable insights into the experiences of working students and lays a foundation for future research and intervention in the intersection of work, education, and youth development.

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