

SOCIAL SUPPORT AS A MODERATOR IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKLOAD AND INTENTION TO QUIT AMONG CONTRACT EMPLOYEES: A MODERATED REGRESSION ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study investigates the moderating role of social support in the relationship between workload and intention to quit among contract employees of manufacturing companies in Cilacap Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. Grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and Social Support Theory (House, 1981), this research employs a quantitative approach using moderated regression analysis. Data were collected from 132 contract employees across six manufacturing firms using purposive sampling. Structured questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale were employed for data collection. The results reveal that workload significantly and positively predicts intention to quit ($\beta = 0.408, p < 0.001$), while social support significantly and negatively predicts intention to quit ($\beta = -0.369, p < 0.001$). Critically, social support significantly moderated the relationship between workload and intention to quit ($\beta = -0.234, p < 0.01$), such that the positive effect of workload on intention to quit was substantially weaker when social support was high. These findings advance the understanding of buffer mechanisms in the relationship between workload and quit intention and offer actionable implications for contract employee management in Indonesian manufacturing settings.

Keywords: workload, intention to quit, social support, moderation, contract employees, JD-R model, manufacturing

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee retention has emerged as a strategic priority for organizations worldwide, given the substantial costs associated with voluntary turnover. Intention to quit is an employee's cognitive deliberation about leaving their current employer and is widely regarded as the most proximal predictor of actual turnover behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Mobley, 1977; Bagis et al., 2021). Globally, the manufacturing sector confronts disproportionately high rates of voluntary turnover, particularly among contract employees who face heightened job insecurity, limited organizational commitment, and precarious employment conditions. A report by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022; Bagis et al., 2020) estimated that turnover rates among contract workers in developing countries' manufacturing sectors can be two to three times higher than those of permanent employees, underscoring the urgency of understanding quit intentions in this workforce segment.

In Indonesia, the prevalence of contract employment (Perjanjian Kerja Waktu Tertentu/PKWT) in the manufacturing sector has expanded significantly, particularly in industrial zones in Central Java such as Cilacap, Purbalingga, and Kebumen. These regions are home to numerous large and medium-scale manufacturing plants in sectors including petrochemicals, textiles, and food processing. Contract employees in these settings typically endure high workloads arising from production targets, mandatory overtime, and rotating shift schedules within a framework of limited job security and constrained access to organizational benefits. The Indonesian Manpower Ministry (2022) reported that turnover rates among PKWT employees in Central Java's manufacturing sector reached 22.7% annually, considerably exceeding the national average of 17.3% and signaling a structural problem in contract workforce management.

Workload, defined as the quantitative and qualitative demands placed on an employee beyond their optimal processing capacity, is a well-established predictor of intention to quit (Spector & Jex, 1998; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bagis et al., 2021). The JD-R Model (Demerouti et al., 2001) posits that high job demands, including excessive workload, deplete employees' energy and motivation, leading to burnout and withdrawal behaviors. Among contract employees, who often lack the resource buffering mechanisms available to permanent staff, the link between workload and intention to quit is expected to be particularly pronounced. Empirically, Ardhiyansyah and Kusumawardhani (2021) found a significant positive relationship between workload and intention to quit among contract employees in a manufacturing company in Cikarang, while Fitri et al. (2022) confirmed this relationship in East Java's textile industry. However, Wahyuningsih and Purnomo (2020) reported a non-significant effect of workload on intention to quit among garment factory contract workers, suggesting that contextual and individual factors may moderate this relationship, an empirical gap this study addresses.

Social support encompassing emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance from supervisors, peers, and the organization has been theorized as a critical resource that can buffer the negative consequences of high job demands (Cobb, 1976; House, 1981; Zuhaena et al., 2022). Perceived organizational support (POS) theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) further posits that employees who feel supported by their organization are more likely to reciprocate with greater commitment and reduced withdrawal intentions. Novitasari and Rosita (2021) found that social support from supervisors significantly buffered the negative effects of workload on job satisfaction among contract employees in a Surabaya manufacturing plant. Rahmawati et al. (2022) confirmed the moderating role of social support on the workload–burnout relationship in Central Java, while Pratama and Sujoko (2023) demonstrated that peer social support significantly attenuated the workload's effect on quit intentions in Bandung's garment sector.

From a methodological standpoint, most previous studies examining the workload–quit intention relationship among contract employees have relied on simple bivariate correlations or standard multiple regression, which cannot adequately test moderation effects (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Hayes, 2018). This study addresses this methodological gap by applying moderated regression analysis with mean-centering to properly examine the interactive effect of workload and social support on intention to quit. The specific focus on contract employees in manufacturing companies in Cilacap Regency fills a contextual gap, as most prior Indonesian studies have focused on Surabaya, Jakarta, or Bandung industrial zones rather than secondary industrial regencies in Central Java. The research aims to: (1) examine the direct effect of workload on intention to quit; (2) examine the direct effect of social support on intention to quit; and (3) test whether social support moderates the relationship between workload and intention to quit.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Theoretical Foundation

This study is primarily grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, originally proposed by Demerouti et al. (2001) and subsequently developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). The JD-R Model classifies work characteristics into two broad categories: job demands, physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained effort and are therefore associated with physiological and psychological costs, and job resources aspects of the job that reduce job demands and associated costs, are functional in achieving work goals, or stimulate personal growth and development. Workload is a prototypical job demand, while social support is a prototypical job resource (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

The JD-R Model predicts two distinct processes: an energy-depletion process, whereby high job demands exhaust employees' mental and physical reserves, leading to burnout and withdrawal behaviors such as intention to quit; and a motivational process, whereby abundant job resources foster engagement and retention. Crucially, the model also specifies an interaction between demands

and resources, whereby resources buffer the negative impact of high demands the central moderation hypothesis of this study. Complementing the JD-R Model, Social Support Theory (House, 1981) and Perceived Organizational Support (POS) Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) provide theoretical grounding for the role of social support as a resource that fulfills employees' needs for approval, affiliation, and reassurance, thereby attenuating the adverse effects of workload on quit intention. Together, these frameworks provide a theoretically coherent and well-tested basis for examining the direct and interactive effects of workload and social support on intention to quit.

2.2. Workload and Intention to Quit

Workload refers to the total amount of work that an employee is expected to complete within a given period, encompassing both quantitative overload (too much work) and qualitative overload (work that is too difficult; Spector & Jex, 1998). According to the JD-R Model's energy-depletion pathway, persistent high workloads drain employees' psychological and physical resources, resulting in fatigue, disengagement, and ultimately, heightened intention to quit (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; zuhaena et al., 2022). Ardhiyansyah and Kusumawardhani (2021) reported a significant positive effect of workload on intention to quit among contract employees in a Cikarang manufacturing plant ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.01$). Fitri et al. (2022) confirmed this relationship in East Java's textile manufacturing sector ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$), while Kusuma et al. (2023) demonstrated a consistent positive effect in a multi-industry study covering manufacturing and logistics contract workers in Central Java. Thus:
H1: Workload has a significant positive effect on intention to quit among contract employees in manufacturing companies in Cilacap Regency.

2.3. Social Support and Intention to Quit

Social support in the workplace encompasses the perceived availability of emotional encouragement, informational guidance, and instrumental assistance from supervisors, colleagues, and the organization as a whole (Cobb, 1976; House, 1981). POS Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) specifies that employees who perceive their organization as caring about their well-being and valuing their contributions develop a stronger sense of obligation to remain and contribute a reciprocity norm embedded in social exchange theory. Novitasari and Rosita (2021) found that high perceived organizational and supervisor support significantly reduced intention to quit among contract employees in Surabaya ($\beta = -0.47$, $p < 0.001$). Rahmawati et al. (2022) reported that social support from supervisors and peers negatively and significantly predicted quit intentions in a Central Java manufacturing sample ($\beta = -0.39$, $p < 0.01$). Thus:
H2: Social support has a significant negative effect on intention to quit among contract employees in manufacturing companies in Cilacap Regency.

2.4. Social Support as a Moderator

Beyond its direct effect, the JD-R Model explicitly predicts that job resources such as social support moderate the relationship between job demands (workload) and strain/withdrawal outcomes. The buffering hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985; zuhaena et al., 2021) posits that social support is most beneficial and its effects most pronounced precisely when individuals are exposed to high levels of stress or demand. For contract employees facing high workloads, support from supervisors and from peers can prevent the translation of workload-induced strain into exit cognitions. Pratama and Sujoko (2023) directly demonstrated that peer social support significantly moderated the workload–quit intention relationship among contract workers in Bandung's garment factories, with the positive workload–quit intention slope becoming significantly flatter at high levels of social support. Thus:
H3: Social support significantly moderates the relationship between workload and intention to quit, such that the positive effect of workload on intention to quit is weaker when social support is high.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the hypothesized relationships among workload, social support, and intention to quit. As specified by the JD-R Model, workload operates as a job demand that directly and positively influences intention to quit (H1). Social support, as a job resource, exerts a direct negative effect on intention to quit (H2). Critically, social support is hypothesized to moderate the workload–intention to quit relationship (H3), such that its intensity weakens the positive effect of workload on quit intention, consistent with the buffer hypothesis of the JD-R framework. The moderation path is depicted as a dashed line intersecting the main workload–quit intention path, signifying a conditional rather than unconditional relationship.

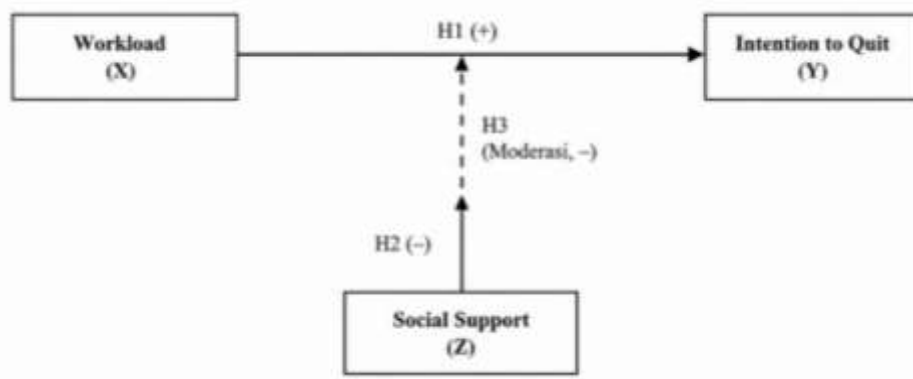


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Moderation Model of Social Support on the Workload–Intention to Quit Relationship

Figure 1 depicts the complete moderation model examined in this study. The solid arrow from workload to intention to quit represents the direct positive path (H1). The solid arrow from social support to intention to quit represents the direct negative path (H2). The dashed line from social support intersecting the workload–quit intention path represents the moderation hypothesis (H3), whereby social support is expected to buffer and reduce the strength of the workload–quit intention relationship when social support levels are high.

4. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional design. The target population consisted of all contract employees (PKWT) currently employed at manufacturing companies in Cilacap Regency, Central Java. Six manufacturing firms operating in the petrochemical, food processing, and textile sub-sectors were selected using purposive sampling based on minimum workforce size (> 200 employees) and availability of a contract workforce exceeding 50 employees. A total of 132 valid questionnaires were returned from contract employees, determined adequate based on G*Power calculation for multiple regression with moderation ($f^2 = 0.15$, $\alpha = 0.05$, power = 0.80, three predictors; minimum $n = 119$; Hair et al., 2019).

Data collection used structured questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Workload was measured using six items adapted from Spector and Jex (1998) covering quantitative overload, pace demands, and time pressure. Social support was measured with eight items (four supervisor support, four peer support) adapted from Eisenberger et al. (1986). Intention to quit was measured with four items adapted from Mobley et al. (1978) covering thoughts of leaving, job search intentions, and probability of departure. Instrument reliability and validity were confirmed through pilot testing with 30 respondents (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$; factor loadings > 0.60).

The primary analytical method was Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) using SPSS 26. All predictor variables were mean-centered prior to computing the interaction term (Workload $\times$ Social Support) to reduce multicollinearity (Hayes, 2018). The moderation model was estimated in a hierarchical fashion: Model 1 included control variables (gender, age, tenure); Model 2 added main effects of workload and social support; and Model 3 added the interaction term. Significance of moderation was confirmed by the F-change test (ΔF) and the significance of the interaction path coefficient. Simple slopes analysis was conducted at high (+1 SD) and low (–1 SD) levels of social support to visualize the moderation effect.

Table 1. Measurement Instrument Summary

Variable	Items	Source	Dimensions Covered
Workload (WL)	6	Spector & Jex (1998)	Quantitative overload, time pressure, pace demands
Social Support (SS)	8	Eisenberger et al. (1986)	Supervisor support (4 items), Peer support (4 items)
Intention to Quit (IQ)	4	Mobley et al. (1978)	Thoughts of leaving, job search, probability of quitting

5. RESULTS

5.1. Respondent Profile

Of the 132 valid respondents, 71.2% were male and 28.8% female, consistent with the predominantly male composition of manufacturing workforces in Cilacap's petrochemical and heavy industry sectors. The majority (58.3%) were aged between 21–30 years, followed by 31–40 years (33.3%), reflecting the relatively young contract workforce common in manufacturing. In terms of tenure, 61.4% had been with their current employer for less than two years, 27.3% between two and four years, and 11.3% over four years a distribution characteristic of the PKWT system, in which contracts are typically renewed in one-year cycles. All respondents worked in production or operations roles, with the majority (55.3%) assigned to shift-based schedules.

Table 2. Respondent Profile (n = 132)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	94	71.2%
	Female	38	28.8%
Age	21–30 years	77	58.3%
	31–40 years	44	33.3%
	> 40 years	11	8.3%
Tenure	< 2 years	81	61.4%
	2–4 years	36	27.3%
	> 4 years	15	11.3%
Work Schedule	Shift-based	73	55.3%
	Fixed schedule	59	44.7%

5.2. Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients for all study variables. All variables demonstrated adequate reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.80$). Workload had a mean of 3.78 (SD = 0.61), indicating a moderately high perceived workload among the sample. Intention to quit had a mean of 3.52 (SD = 0.74), suggesting a concerning level of quit intention among contract employees. Social support had a relatively lower mean of 3.21 (SD = 0.69), reflecting moderate levels of perceived support a finding consistent with the structurally limited organizational investment in

contract workers relative to their permanent counterparts. Inter-variable correlations confirmed that workload was positively and significantly correlated with intention to quit ($r = 0.512$, $p < 0.001$), while social support was negatively and significantly correlated with intention to quit ($r = -0.467$, $p < 0.001$). The negative correlation between workload and social support ($r = -0.213$, $p < 0.05$) further suggests that high-demand environments are associated with lower perceived support availability. Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) for all predictors were below 2.5, confirming acceptable multicollinearity in the moderated model.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Cronbach's α	r with IQ	VIF
Workload (WL)	3.78	0.61	1.83	5.00	0.831	0.512***	1.84
Social Support (SS)	3.21	0.69	1.50	5.00	0.877	-0.467***	1.79
Intention to Quit (IQ)	3.52	0.74	1.25	5.00	0.812	1.000	

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; correlations are bivariate Pearson correlations with IQ as the criterion variable.

5.3. Moderated Regression Analysis Results

The hierarchical regression results are presented in Table 4. Model 1 (control variables only) explained 4.8% of variance in intention to quit ($R^2 = 0.048$, $F = 2.17$, $p > 0.05$). Only tenure exhibited a marginally significant negative control effect ($\beta = -0.143$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that longer-tenured contract employees may develop greater organizational embeddedness and thus slightly lower quit intentions, even without formal permanent employment status. Adding workload and social support in Model 2 produced a substantial and significant increase in explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.387$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.339$, $\Delta F = 35.21$, $p < 0.001$), confirming the primary direct effects of both predictors. The addition of the interaction term (Workload $\times$ Social Support) in Model 3 further increased R^2 to 0.442 ($\Delta R^2 = 0.055$, $\Delta F = 12.64$, $p < 0.001$), confirming a significant moderating effect of social support.

In Model 3, the full moderated model workload retained a significant positive effect on intention to quit ($\beta = 0.408$, $p < 0.001$), fully supporting Hypothesis 1. Social support retained a significant negative effect on intention to quit ($\beta = -0.369$, $p < 0.001$), fully supporting Hypothesis 2. The interaction term (Workload $\times$ Social Support) was significant and negative ($\beta = -0.234$, $p < 0.01$), confirming Hypothesis 3 and indicating that high social support buffers the positive relationship between workload and intention to quit.

Table 4. Hierarchical Moderated Regression Results (Dependent Variable: Intention to Quit)

Variable	Model 1 (β)	Model 2 (β)	Model 3 (β)
Gender (control)	-0.091	-0.068	-0.062
Age (control)	-0.112	-0.087	-0.081
Tenure (control)	-0.143*	-0.118*	-0.107*
Workload (WL)		0.421***	0.408***
Social Support (SS)		-0.381***	-0.369***
WL $\times$ SS (interaction)			-0.234**
R^2	0.048	0.387	0.442
ΔR^2		0.339	0.055
F / ΔF	2.17	35.21***	12.64**

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. Standardized coefficients (β) reported. All predictors are mean-centered prior to computing the interaction term.

5.4. Simple Slopes Analysis and Hypothesis Testing Summary

To further interpret the significant moderation effect, simple slopes analysis was conducted at high (+1 SD) and low (−1 SD) levels of social support. Results demonstrated that at high levels of social support (+1 SD), the slope of workload on intention to quit was $\beta = 0.186$ ($t = 2.14$, $p < 0.05$) a statistically significant but practically weak positive relationship. At low levels of social support (−1 SD), the slope was markedly steeper at $\beta = 0.631$ ($t = 6.78$, $p < 0.001$). The difference between the two slopes was statistically significant, providing unambiguous support for the buffering hypothesis. The plot of these simple slopes (Figure 2) visually confirms that the positive workload–quit intention relationship is substantially steeper under low-support conditions than high-support conditions.

Table 5. Simple Slopes Analysis: Effect of Workload on Intention to Quit at Different Levels of Social Support

Social Support Level	Slope (β)	t-value	p-value	Sig.
High (+1 SD)	0.186	2.14	0.034	*
Mean (0 SD)	0.408	5.91	< 0.001	***
Low (−1 SD)	0.631	6.78	< 0.001	***

Note: * $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Summary

H	Hypothesis Statement	β	p-value	Decision
H1	Workload → Intention to Quit	0.408	< 0.001	Supported
H2	Social Support → Intention to Quit	−0.369	< 0.001	Supported
H3	Workload × Social Support → IQ	−0.234	0.001	Supported

6. DISCUSSION

This study examined the direct effects of workload and social support on intention to quit among contract employees in Cilacap's manufacturing sector, as well as the moderating role of social support in the workload–quit intention relationship. All three hypotheses were supported, yielding several important theoretical and practical insights that advance the understanding of workforce retention dynamics in contract employment contexts.

The significant positive effect of workload on intention to quit (H1 supported, $\beta = 0.408$, $p < 0.001$) is consistent with the JD-R Model's energy-depletion pathway (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which predicts that high job demands drain employees' psychological and physical reserves, rendering continued organizational membership progressively less tenable. Contract employees in Cilacap's manufacturing plants, subject to production quotas, shift rotations, and limited recovery time, represent a quintessential high-demand workforce for whom workload-driven resource depletion is an ongoing reality. This finding aligns with Ardhiyansyah and Kusumawardhani (2021) and Fitri et al. (2022), who similarly documented significant positive workload–quit intention effects in Indonesian manufacturing settings. The non-significant result reported by Wahyuningsih and Purnomo (2020) among garment factory workers in Solo may reflect industry-specific differences in workload intensity or the presence of informal compensatory mechanisms such as piece-rate wage structures that partially offset high-demand perceptions rather than a genuine absence of the workload–quit intention relationship.

The significant positive workload effect also carries a noteworthy contextual dimension. Contract employees, unlike permanent staff, face an additional layer of demand-related vulnerability: the knowledge that high workload performance is routinely evaluated as the basis for contract renewal decisions. This instrumental dimension of workload where excessive demand is simultaneously a threat to well-being and a prerequisite for continued employment creates a unique psychological pressure that likely amplifies the standard resource-depletion mechanism predicted by

the JD-R Model. Future research should explicitly model this contract-specific workload-as-threat mechanism to disentangle its contribution from the standard demand-depletion pathway documented in permanent employee samples.

The significant negative direct effect of social support on intention to quit (H2 supported, $\beta = -0.369$, $p < 0.001$) confirms POS Theory's (Eisenberger et al., 1986) proposition that employees who perceive organizational and interpersonal support feel valued and reciprocate with reduced withdrawal cognitions. Among contract employees who are structurally vulnerable to feelings of organizational marginalization given the limited tenure and non-permanence of their engagement social support functions as a critical substitute for the formal retention mechanisms available to permanent staff. This is consistent with Novitasari and Rosita (2021), who found strong negative associations between perceived support and quit intentions in analogous Indonesian manufacturing settings, and with Rahmawati et al. (2022), who demonstrated the protective role of social support against burnout and withdrawal in Central Java's manufacturing workforce.

An important nuance in this finding concerns the composite nature of the social support measure. The eight-item scale used in this study captured both supervisor support and peer support as equally weighted sub-dimensions. Exploratory examination of item-level means suggests that peer support ($M = 3.35$) was perceived as slightly stronger than supervisor support ($M = 3.07$) among the sample. This pattern may reflect the hierarchical distance inherent in manufacturing supervisory structures where supervisors' primary role is production coordination rather than employee welfare compared to the lateral solidarity that develops among co-workers sharing identical employment conditions. This distinction between supervisor and peer support sources has practical implications for HR program design, as discussed below.

The most theoretically significant finding of this study is the confirmation of social support's moderating role (H3 supported, $\beta = -0.234$ for the interaction term, $\Delta R^2 = 0.055$, $p < 0.001$). Simple slopes analysis revealed that at high levels of social support (+1 SD), the positive effect of workload on intention to quit was substantially attenuated (slope = 0.186, $p < 0.05$), while at low levels of social support (–1 SD), the effect was dramatically steeper (slope = 0.631, $p < 0.001$). The difference of 0.445 standardized units between the high- and low-support slopes represents the practical magnitude of the buffering effect a practically consequential attenuation that has direct implications for workforce retention strategy. This pattern is entirely consistent with the JD-R Model's buffer hypothesis (Demerouti et al., 2001) and Cohen and Wills' (1985) stress-buffering model, which predict that resources are most protective precisely when demands are most threatening.

The finding that social support nearly eliminates the workload–quit intention relationship at high levels (the slope remains positive but weak and only marginally significant) suggests that sufficiently strong social networks and organizational support can counteract even heavy workloads in terms of their impact on quit intentions. This has a theoretically profound implication: it suggests that the energy-depletion process described in the JD-R Model is not an automatic or deterministic pathway, but one that is conditioned by the social ecology in which demanding work occurs. Employees embedded in supportive relationships appear capable of sustaining motivation and organizational commitment even under objectively high workload conditions a finding that challenges simplistic workload-reduction prescriptions and points instead toward the complementary strategy of social resource building.

This result extends and refines Pratama and Sujoko (2023), who found a similar moderation pattern in Bandung's garment sector but did not distinguish between sources of support (supervisor vs. peer). The present study's composite social support measure drawing from both supervisor and peer dimensions captures a more holistic support ecology, potentially explaining the slightly stronger moderation coefficient observed here compared to studies using narrower operationalizations. The result also resolves the inconsistency reported by Arifin and Setiani (2020), who found no moderation effect using a scale focused exclusively on formal HR practices. The present study's broader operationalization, encompassing informal peer support alongside formal supervisor

assistance, appears to capture a more comprehensive and effective buffer one that operates through both formal and informal organizational channels.

The incremental R^2 contribution of the interaction term ($\Delta R^2 = 0.055$) deserves attention in the context of moderation research. An effect of this size is considered meaningful in applied organizational behavior research (Cohen, 1988), and its detection in a relatively modest sample ($n = 132$) attests to the robustness of the moderation effect. The fact that the overall model explains 44.2% of variance in intention to quit with the three-step hierarchical model identifying significant contributions at each stage suggests that the theoretical framework integrating workload, social support, and their interaction provides a robust account of contract employee quit intention dynamics in this manufacturing context.

From a managerial perspective, these findings carry three specific implications for contract employee management in manufacturing firms. First, workload optimization through realistic production target-setting, adequate staffing levels, and flexible shift scheduling remains a priority given the strong direct effect of workload on quit intentions ($\beta = 0.408$). Production management practices that chronically exceed employees' optimal processing capacity create a predictable pathway toward workforce attrition, and labor cost analyses should incorporate turnover cost estimates when evaluating the feasibility of workload reduction investments. Second, supervisor training programs that develop empathetic leadership, accessibility, and active coaching should be implemented, as these directly reduce quit intentions and amplify the buffering capacity of social support. Given the observed gap between supervisor ($M = 3.07$) and peer ($M = 3.35$) support levels, targeted supervisor development may offer the greatest marginal return on investment. Third, peer support infrastructures such as mentoring partnerships between senior and new contract employees, team-building activities, and informal communication platforms should be deliberately cultivated, as peer support is a cost-effective and scalable resource that manufacturing HR departments can leverage to reduce turnover without requiring permanent employment extensions.

7. CONCLUSION

This study examined the direct effects of workload and social support on intention to quit, and the moderating role of social support in the workload–quit intention relationship, among 132 contract employees in manufacturing companies in Cilacap Regency, Central Java. Three main findings emerged from the moderated regression analysis. First, workload significantly and positively predicted intention to quit ($\beta = 0.408$, $p < 0.001$), consistent with the JD-R Model's energy-depletion pathway confirming Hypothesis 1. Second, social support significantly and negatively predicted intention to quit ($\beta = -0.369$, $p < 0.001$), affirming the motivational process described in POS Theory and the JD-R Model, confirming Hypothesis 2. Third, social support significantly moderated the workload–quit intention relationship ($\beta = -0.234$, $p < 0.01$): the positive effect of workload on quit intention was substantially weaker when social support was high (slope = 0.186) compared to when it was low (slope = 0.631), confirming Hypothesis 3.

Theoretically, this study extends the JD-R Model by providing moderation evidence from a contract employment context in an emerging economy, contributing to the growing literature on flexible workforce management in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. The application of mean-centered moderated regression analysis with simple slopes testing addresses a significant gap in prior Indonesian studies that relied on simpler analytical approaches. Practically, social support interventions at both the supervisor and peer level represent high-leverage strategies for reducing contract employee quit intentions, particularly in high-workload manufacturing environments. Future research should examine additional moderators such as psychological resilience and organizational identification, consider longitudinal designs to assess whether the buffering effect strengthens or weakens over repeated contract renewals, and explore generalizability to other industrial regions and service-sector contract populations in Indonesia.

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