
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Understanding Employee Retention in High-Turnover Industries: The Role of Wellbeing, Work Engagement, and Workplace Spirituality

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of employee wellbeing and work engagement on intention to stay, with workplace spirituality serving as a moderating variable in the Food and Beverage (F&B) sector. This study is guided by Social Exchange Theory (SET) and employs a quantitative approach using a Likert-scale questionnaire. Data were collected from 180 F&B employees in Yogyakarta, a major province in Indonesia. The constructs were measured with validated instruments and analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results indicate that employee wellbeing and work engagement both have significant and positive effects on intention to stay. However, workplace spirituality does not significantly moderate these relationships. These findings suggest that enhancing wellbeing and engagement is essential for retaining employees. The influence of workplace spirituality may vary depending on the organizational context. Future research is recommended to investigate alternative moderating variables, such as resilience or perceived organizational support, within the framework of Social Exchange Theory, and to conduct generational comparisons to gain deeper insights into variations in employee retention behavior.

KEYWORDS

Employee Wellbeing, Work Engagement, Workplace Spirituality, Intention to Stay, Social Exchange Theory, F&B Sector

ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The Food and Beverage (F&B) industry faces a persistent challenge of employee turnover, with annual rates reaching as high as 60%. This alarming figure significantly increases operational costs and undermines service quality (Chante' Miller & Banks-Hall, 2020; Santhanam et al., 2017). The issue is particularly pronounced among millennials, a generation that places high importance on the alignment between personal values and organizational purpose. Globally, 91% of 1,339 millennial employees and recent graduates reported leaving their employers within three years in pursuit of roles that better align with their aspirations (Jeanne Meister, 2012). A similar trend is evident in Indonesia, where employee turnover has shown considerable fluctuations. According to the international recruitment firm Talentvis, the turnover rate reached 15.8% in 2020 and has continued to exhibit an upward trajectory in subsequent years, indicating a persistent challenge in employee retention within the Indonesian labor market. The Deloitte Millennial Survey further supports this pattern, revealing that 43% of Indonesian millennials intend to leave their current jobs within two years, while only 28% plan to stay longer than five years (Tohmatsu, 2018).

This high turnover trend imposes considerable financial burdens on organizations. Estimates suggest that replacing an employee can cost up to 1.5 times their annual salary—or 90% to 100%, depending on the role's seniority (Cappelli & Keller, 2013; Wilson, 2012). These economic implications highlight the strategic importance of understanding the factors that contribute to employees' intention to stay, rather than merely focusing on their reasons for leaving. While previous research has largely concentrated on turnover intentions (Queiri & Dwaikat, 2016; Richman et al., 2008; Zabedah bt Othman et al., 2019), a more balanced exploration of retention drivers is essential for fostering long-term organizational (Johanim et al., 2012; McCloskey & McCain, 1987).

Among the key predictors of retention frequently cited in the literature are employee wellbeing and work engagement. However, empirical findings remain inconclusive. For instance, Desiana et al. (2024) found that employee wellbeing did not directly reduce turnover intentions, while Hamif et al. (2022) suggested that wellbeing increases engagement but has no direct influence on retention. Similarly, Malik et al. (2024) observed that work engagement alone may not lead to a higher intention to stay in the service sector. These inconsistencies point to the need for examining potential moderating variables that could strengthen the links between wellbeing, engagement, and retention.

One such moderating factor is workplace spirituality, which encompasses a sense of purpose, connectedness, and alignment between individual and organizational values. Scholars argue that workplace spirituality fosters emotional attachment by imbuing work with deeper meaning and providing a sense of belonging and support (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Cook et al., 2013; Milliman et al., 2018).

Despite these developments, the majority of turnover research remains centered on the intention to leave. Research specifically focusing on intention to stay, particularly within the F&B sector, remains scarce—despite the sector's high attrition rate. Studies on employee retention have tended to focus on sectors such as education, healthcare, hospitality, and manufacturing (Aboobaker et al., 2019; Febriani et al., 2023; Ledi et al., 2023; Smithikrai & Phetkham, 2019), overlooking the unique operational pressures and irregular schedules that characterize F&B roles (Lippert et al., 2022).

Furthermore, most retention studies have been conducted in Western contexts or within more formalized sectors (Gelencsér et al., 2023). The F&B industry in Indonesia—particularly in Yogyakarta Province, where culinary entrepreneurship is rapidly expanding (Bapperida DIY, 2025)—has received minimal scholarly attention. This underrepresentation limits our understanding of retention dynamics in non-traditional work settings marked by low wages, customer-facing roles, and informal management structures (Kashif et al., 2017).

This study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that when organizations invest in employee wellbeing, foster engagement, and support spiritual values in the workplace, employees are likely to reciprocate through enhanced commitment and a stronger intention to stay. By investigating these relationships in the context of Indonesia's F&B sector, this study seeks to address an important gap in the retention literature and offer actionable insights for both practitioners and scholars.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Grand Theory (Social Exchange Theory)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains the reciprocal relationship between employees and organizations, where employees respond positively when they feel valued and supported by their employers (Eisenberger et al., 2001). This theory suggests that when organizations invest in employee wellbeing and engagement, employees develop a sense of obligation and loyalty, leading to a higher intention to stay (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005; Wayne et al., 1997). In the context of this study, SET provides a framework for understanding how workplace spirituality can strengthen the relationship between employee wellbeing, work engagement, and intention to stay (Milliman et al., 2018).

2.2 Intention to Stay

Intention to stay is the likelihood of an employee remaining with an organization over time (McCloskey & McCain, 1987). This construct is influenced by various factors, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived support from the employer (Johanim et al., 2012). Employees who have a strong intention to stay demonstrate higher engagement, reduced turnover intention, and contribute positively to organizational stability (Zeytinoglu et al., 2012). The cost of employee turnover is substantial, making it essential for organizations to understand and address the factors influencing (Cappelli & Keller, 2013).

2.3 Employee Wellbeing

Employee wellbeing encompasses physical, psychological, and social aspects that affect employees' overall quality of life and work experience (Zheng et al., 2015). It includes life wellbeing, work wellbeing, and psychological wellbeing. Life wellbeing refers to overall life satisfaction and emotional stability, work wellbeing focuses on job satisfaction and a positive work environment, while psychological wellbeing pertains to mental health and stress levels (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Diener et al., 2009). Studies show that organizations prioritizing employee wellbeing experience lower turnover, higher productivity, and increased job satisfaction (Harter et al., 2003; Robertson & Cooper, 2010).

H1: Employee wellbeing positively influences the intention to stay.

2.4 Work Engagement

Work engagement is a motivational state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Vigor reflects high energy and resilience at work, dedication signifies strong involvement and a sense of purpose, while absorption indicates deep focus and immersion in tasks (Llorens et al., 2006; Xanthopoulou et al., 2008). Employees with high work engagement show enthusiasm, commitment, and deep involvement in their tasks (Kahn, 1990). Engaged employees tend to be more productive, exhibit lower turnover intention, and contribute positively to organizational success (Bellamkonda &

Pattusamy, 2022; Ghosh et al., 2013). Organizations fostering work engagement benefit from enhanced job performance, employee retention, and overall workplace satisfaction (Karatepe et al., 2020; Rahmadani et al., 2022).

H2: Work engagement positively influences the intention to stay.

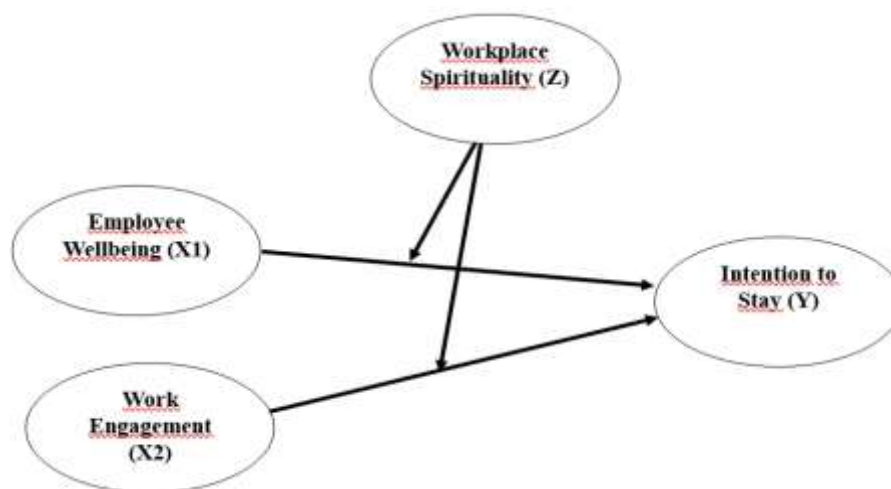
2.5 Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality is the recognition of deeper meaning in work, fostering a sense of connectedness with colleagues, and aligning personal values with organizational culture (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). It consists of dimensions such as compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work, and (Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Febriani et al. (2023) found that workplace spirituality significantly increases employees' intention to stay by instilling a sense of meaning and adherence to company values. Similarly, Aboobaker et al. (2019) highlighted its positive impact on wellbeing, which in turn influences retention. Furthermore, workplace spirituality enhances work engagement by providing meaningful work experiences and social support (Bella et al., 2018; Musa et al., 2021; Saks, 2011). Thus, workplace spirituality is expected to moderate the relationship between both employee wellbeing and work engagement with the intention to stay. When employees experience a spiritually supportive work environment, they feel valued, motivated, and more inclined to remain in their organization (Herman et al., 2023; Ledi et al., 2023).

H3: Workplace spirituality moderates the influence of employee wellbeing on intention to stay.

H4: Workplace spirituality moderates the influence of work engagement on intention to stay.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of this research



3. Methodology

3.1 Type of Research, Sample, and Procedure

This research employs a quantitative research design. The study utilized both online and paper questionnaires, which were distributed over a three-week period to F&B employees. Ethical participation was ensured through consent forms. Responses were collected from a sample of 180 employees, selected through random sampling, representing five distinct F&B establishments in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Respondents filled out the questionnaire by entering the most appropriate response on a Likert scale of 1-5. Analytical procedures involved Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess moderation effects and test the theoretical model's validity.

3.2 Measurement Construct

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is a multivariate analysis approach that enables researchers to investigate complex relationships between variables. The primary purpose of using PLS-SEM is to support prediction and theory development (Hair et al., 2013). This method facilitates the examination of relationships between latent variables by assessing the direct links between exogenous and endogenous variables. Latent variables that cannot be directly observed or measured must be inferred and assessed through specific indicators. In component measurement, each variable is represented by several indicators. These indicators are scored on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Employee Wellbeing. Employee wellbeing was assessed utilizing a 9-item scale adapted from the Job-Related Affective Well-being Scale (JAWS) developed by Katwyk et al. (2000) and its abbreviated version by Basińska et al. (2014). This scale encompasses three dimensions: *life wellbeing* (e.g., "I am in a good life situation."), *work wellbeing* (e.g., "I am satisfied with my job responsibilities"), and *psychological wellbeing* (e.g., "I feel like I've grown as an individual.").

Work Engagement. Work engagement was measured through a 6-item adaptation of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) by Schaufeli et al., (2006). The scale comprises three dimensions: *vigor* (e.g., "I feel full of energy at work"), *dedication* (e.g., "My work gives me inspiration"), and *absorption* (e.g., "I got carried away while working.").

Workplace Spirituality. Workplace spirituality was evaluated using a 12-item scale developed by Pawinee & Duchon (2009). This scale consists of four dimensions: *compassion* (e.g., "I am aware and empathetic toward others' struggles"), *mindfulness* (e.g., "I feel like I'm working without much awareness, like I'm working automatically."), *meaningful work* (e.g., "My job aligns with my personal values"), and *transcendence* (e.g., "I enjoy my work").

Intention to Stay. Intention to stay was assessed using a 4-item scale adapted from Price and Mueller (1986). Example items include: "I plan to continue working here for a long time" and "I am reluctant to leave this organization."

Table 1. Details of the Instrument

No	Variable	Indicator	Item Number
1.	<i>Employee Wellbeing</i>	1. <i>life wellbeing</i> 2. <i>work wellbeing</i> 3. <i>psychological wellbeing</i>	EWB1, EWB2, EWB3, EWB4, EWB5, EWB6, EWB7, EWB8, EWB9
2.	<i>Work Engagement</i>	1. <i>Vigor</i> 2. <i>Dedication</i> 3. <i>Absorption</i>	WE1, WE2, WE3, WE4, WE5, WE6
3.	<i>Workplace Spirituality</i>	1. <i>Compassion</i> 2. <i>Mindfulness</i> 3. <i>Meaningful Work</i> 4. <i>Transcendence</i>	WS1, WS2, WS3, WS4, WS5, WS6, WS7, WS8, WS9, WS10, WS11, WS12
4.	<i>Intention to Stay</i>		ITS1, ITS2, ITS3, ITS4
Total			31

Source: Primary data, 2025

The Outer model, also known as the measurement model, is responsible for assessing the relationships between observed indicators and their respective latent constructs. Evaluation of the outer model is conducted through several key tests, namely convergent validity, discriminant validity, and indicator reliability. Convergent validity and discriminant validity are assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where an AVE value of ≥ 0.50 indicates that the indicators account for an adequate proportion of variance from their respective constructs. Discriminant validity is tested using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), or cross loadings, ensuring that each construct correlates more strongly with its own indicators than with those of other constructs. Meanwhile, reliability is measured through Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA), with CR values ≥ 0.70 indicating good reliability. Once these criteria are satisfied, the constructs are considered valid and can be used for further analysis in the inner model (structural model).

The Inner Model is used to examine the relationships between latent constructs to validate hypotheses and assess the influence of variables within the conceptual framework. The evaluation involves several key statistical tests, such as R^2 (Coefficient of Determination) to measure the extent to which independent variables explain the variance in the dependent variable, Path Coefficients to assess the direction and strength of the relationships among variables, as well as Effect Size (f^2) to determine the significance and impact of each variable in the model. If the evaluation results meet the established thresholds, the Inner Model is considered to have good predictive power and can be used to empirically test theories or answer research questions.

Following the evaluation of the measurement and structural models, the next step involves hypothesis testing to assess the significance of the relationships between variables. This is conducted by analyzing the bootstrapping results, focusing on the T-statistic and P-value. A hypothesis is accepted if the P-value is below 0.05 and the T-statistic exceeds 1.967 (Ketchen, 2013).

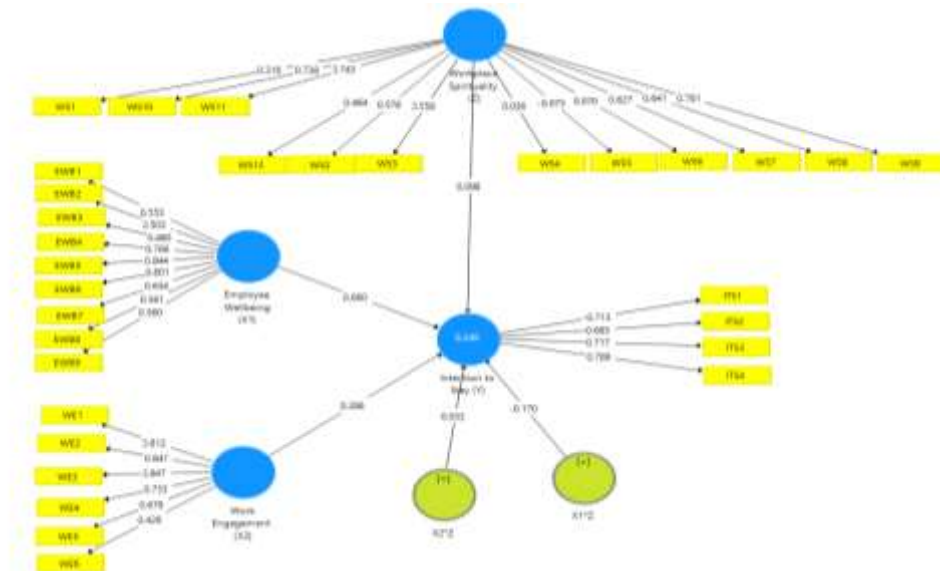
4. Results

4.1 Outer Model

4.1.1 Convergent Validity

The expected outer loading values to meet the criteria for convergent validity should generally exceed 0.50, indicating that the indicators are sufficiently correlated with the latent variables being measured. Any loading factor below 0.50 should be removed (Saregar et al., 2024). Based on the calculation results, several indicators exhibited outer loading values below 0.50; consequently, these indicators were excluded from further analysis.

Figure 2. Diagram of Path Analysis and Hypothesis Model



After removing several indicators below 0.50, the variables are considered valid and ready for the next stage of testing. The following outer model was adjusted

Table 2. Outer Loading

	Employee Wellbeing (X1)	Intention to Stay (Y)	Work Engagement(X2)	Workplace Spirituality (Z)
EWB2	0.741			
EWB3	0.709			
EWB4	0.685			
EWB5	0.697			
EWB6	0.736			
EWB7	0.658			
EWB8	0.730			
EWB9	0.752			
ITS1		0.791		
ITS2		0.715		
ITS4		0.775		
WE1			0.716	
WE2			0.680	
WE3			0.761	
WE5			0.732	
WE6			0.716	
WS11				0.764
WS3				0.741
WS4				0.770
WS6				0.751
WS9				0.690

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output, data processed 2025

4.1.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is tested using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), and cross loadings. The Fornell-Larcker criterion states that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for a given variable should be greater than its correlation with any other variable in the model. As shown in Table 2, the bold diagonal values—representing the square root of the AVE for each construct—are compared against the off-diagonal correlations. Discriminant validity is confirmed when these diagonal values exceed the correlations with other variables in the same row and column.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Test

	Employee Wellbeing (X1)	Intention to Stay (Y)	Work Engagement(X2)	Workplace Spirituality (Z)
Employee Wellbeing (X1)	0.714			
Intention to Stay (Y)	0.390	0.761		
Work Engagement (X2)	-0.033	0.252	0.722	
Workplace Spirituality (Z)	- 0.022	-0.038	0.089	0.744

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output, data processed 2025

The Fornell-Larcker test confirms discriminant validity, as the square root of AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs, ensuring distinctiveness and minimizing overlap.

Discriminant validity is further assessed using cross-loading values, requiring each indicator to load higher on its own construct than on others. If an indicator exhibits a higher loading on a different construct, it indicates overlap, compromising discriminant validity.

Table 4. Cross-loading

	EWB(X1)	ITS(Y)	WE(X2)	WS(Z)
EWB9	0.752	0.302	0.003	-0.054
EWB2	0.741	0.272	-0.031	-0.004
EWB6	0.736	0.289	-0.035	0.075
EWB8	0.730	0.288	-0.085	-0.076
EWB3	0.709	0.309	0.020	-0.049
EWB5	0.697	0.236	0.007	0.096
EWB4	0.685	0.303	-0.061	-0.081
EWB7	0.658	0.200	0.000	-0.000
ITS1	0.350	0.791	0.162	0.033
ITS4	0.299	0.775	0.205	-0.074
ITS2	0.235	0.715	0.213	-0.049
WE5	0.111	0.210	0.732	0.117
WS11	0.024	-0.034	0.051	0.764
WS3	-0.002	-0.023	0.045	0.741
WS4	-0.014	-0.035	0.064	0.770
WE3	-0.040	0.187	0.761	-0.002
WE1	-0.053	0.196	0.716	0.092
WS6	-0.054	-0.021	0.113	0.751
WS9	-0.064	-0.021	0.074	0.690
WE6	-0.068	0.163	0.716	0.030
WE2	-0.117	0.139	0.680	0.077

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output, data processed 2025

In general, all the indicators in the table have the highest loading value on their original constructs, which means that they meet discriminant validity based on the cross-loading test.

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) is an alternative approach to assessing discriminant validity, introduced due to concerns about the sensitivity of Cross Loading and the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. It utilizes a multitrait-multimethod matrix, comparing correlations between different variables (heterotrait) and within the same variable (monotrait). A high HTMT value may indicate insufficient distinction between constructs in the model.

Table 5. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Employee Wellbeing (X1)	Intention to Stay (Y)	Work Engagement (X2)	Workplace Spirituality (Z)
Employee Wellbeing (X1)				
Intention to Stay (Y)	0.514			
Work Engagement (X2)	0.148	0.356		
Workplace Spirituality (Z)	0.125	0.106	0.135	

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output, data processed 2025

Based on the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) analysis presented in the table, all HTMT values are below the threshold of 0.90, thereby confirming the validity of the measurement instruments employed in this study.

4.1.3 Reliability

The following table presents the construction of reliability and validity in PLS-SEM, outlining reliability tests based on Composite Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and AVE values.

Table 6. Reliability Test

Variabel	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	(AVE)
Employee Wellbeing	0.863	0.866	0.893
Intention to Stay	0.637	0.642	0.805
Work Engagement	0.772	0.777	0.844
Workplace Spirituality	0.802	0.823	0.861

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output, data processed 2025

The results of the reliability testing indicate that all variables exhibit a Composite Reliability value of ≥ 0.70 , demonstrating strong construct reliability. Additionally, an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of ≥ 0.50 was achieved, confirming that each construct adequately explains the variance of its indicators. Regarding Cronbach's Alpha, almost all variables attained a value of ≥ 0.70 , except for the intention to stay variable, which recorded a value of 0.637. Since Cronbach's Alpha value is close to the threshold and meets the validity criteria, it is retained. These findings suggest that the research model is both valid and reliable.

4.2 Inner Model

4.2.1 R-Square

The evaluation of R Square (R^2) and Adjusted R Square (R^2 Adjusted) was conducted to assess the extent to which independent constructs explain the variance in the dependent construct. According to Table, the "intention to stay" construct (Y) has an R^2 value of 0.281 and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.260, indicating that the independent variables in the model account for 28.1% of the variance in intention to stay. The remaining variance may be influenced by other exogenous variables.

Table 7. R Square and Adjusted R values

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Intention to Stay	0.281	0.260

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output, data processed 2025

Based on Cohen's (2013) view, the interpretation of R^2 in social research can be categorised as small (0.02), medium (0.13), and large (0.26). Meanwhile, in the view of Hair et al (2011), R^2 can be classified into thresholds of 0.75

(large), 0.50 (moderate), and 0.25 (low). Thus, the R^2 value of 0.281 in this model can be categorised as a large size according to Cohen's criteria and is classified as low according to Hair's criteria.

4.2.2 F-Square

F square is utilized to measure effect size, indicating the extent of influence an independent variable has on a dependent variable within the structural model. The interpretation of F square values follows Cohen's (2013) guidelines, where a value of 0.02 indicates a small effect, 0.15 indicates a medium effect, and 0.35 indicates a large effect.

Table 8. F Square Value

	Intention to Stay (Y)
Employee Wellbeing (X1)	0.204
Work Engagement (X2)	0.096

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output, data processed 2025

The findings of the analysis demonstrate that employee wellbeing (X1) exhibits an f square of 0.204, thereby indicating a moderate effect on the intention to stay (Y). Concurrently, the coefficient of determination (R^2) for work engagement (X2) is 0.096, indicating that the influence on the intention to stay (Y) variable is negligible.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

4.3.1 Direct Effect

The direct effect is characterized as the influence of an independent variable on a dependent variable without the mediation of any intermediary variables. In the context of this analysis, path coefficients are employed to quantify the direct impact of one variable on another. A relationship is deemed significant when the T-statistic exceeds the threshold of 1.96 and the P-value is below 0.05; conversely, relationships that do not meet these criteria are classified as non-significant. The subsequent section presents the results of the path coefficients derived from the bootstrapping analysis.

Table 9. Direct Effect Hypothesis Test

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values
Employee Wellbeing (X1) → Intention to Stay (Y)	0.384	5.733	0.000
Work Engagement (X2) → Intention to Stay (Y)	0.264	3.995	0.000

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output, data processed 2025

Employee Wellbeing (X1) → Intention to Stay (Y)

The analysis shows that Employee Wellbeing has a positive influence on Intention to Stay, with a path coefficient of 0.384. The T-statistic value of 5.733 (> 1.96) and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05) indicate that the relationship is statistically significant.

Work Engagement (X2) → Intention to Stay (Y)

A path coefficient of 0.264 indicates a positive influence. The T-statistic value of 3.995 (> 1.96) and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05) suggest a statistically significant relationship.

4.3.2 Moderation Effect

The indirect effect is employed to assess the influence of independent variables on dependent variables through mediators or moderators. This study utilizes a moderator variable, specifically Workplace Spirituality. An indirect effect through moderation occurs when the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is either strengthened or weakened by the presence of the moderator variable. If the indirect relationship is significant (P-value < 0.05), it indicates that the moderator variable plays a crucial role in the model.

Table 10. Hypothesis Test for Indirect Effect

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values
X1*Z → Intention to Stay (Y)	0.180	1.654	0.099
X2*Z → Intention to Stay (Y)	0.155	1.697	0.090

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output, data processed 2025

Employee Wellbeing (X1) * Workplace Spirituality (Z) → Intention to Stay (Y)

Based on the analysis, a path coefficient of 0.180 indicates a positive moderating effect. However, the T-statistic value of 1.654 (below the threshold of 1.96) and a P-value of 0.099 (> 0.05) indicate that the relationship is not statistically significant.

Work Engagement (X2) * Workplace Spirituality (Z) → Intention to Stay (Y)

The path coefficient of 0.155 indicates a positive direction of moderation. However, the T-statistic value of 1.697 (< 1.96) and a P-value of 0.090 (> 0.05) show that the effect is not statistically significant.

5. Discussion

a. Employee Wellbeing on Intention to Stay

Employee wellbeing exerts a robust, statistically significant positive influence on intention to stay ($\beta = 0.384$, $p = 0.000$), supporting H1. This aligns with Social Exchange Theory (SET), where employees reciprocate organizational investments in their wellbeing with loyalty. The significant t-statistic (5.733) and effect size (38.4%) underscore wellbeing's critical role in retention, particularly in the high-turnover F&B sector. These results are consistent with prior empirical studies. Gelencsér et al. (2023) emphasize the role of work-related wellbeing as a key driver of employee retention, while Bartram et al. (2023) highlight that HR practices centered on employee wellbeing can reduce burnout and create a supportive work environment. Moreover, Mehta et al. (2024) affirm the positive effect of psychological wellbeing on intention to stay in the hospitality industry, and Sarwar et al. (2020) demonstrate that job insecurity negatively impacts wellbeing, consequently increasing turnover intentions.

b. Work Engagement on Intention to Stay

Work engagement positively influences employees' intention to stay (H2), with a path coefficient of 0.264 (26.4%). Employees with high vigor, dedication, and absorption are more committed to their organizations. Statistically, work engagement significantly affects retention (t-statistic = 3.995, $p = 0.000$), highlighting its importance in the high-turnover F&B sector. The present findings are in accordance with those obtained in previous research. As Weng et al. (2023) demonstrate, work engagement strengthens employees' connections with their organisations, thereby improving retention. In a similar vein, Siahaan and Gatari's (2020) study found that work engagement exhibited a negative correlation with turnover intention, suggesting that higher levels of engagement are associated with reduced intentions to leave. Furthermore, Bellamkonda and Pattusamy (2022) demonstrate that work engagement acts as a mediator in the relationship between happiness and intention to stay, thereby indicating that engaged employees exhibit higher levels of loyalty. These findings are consistent with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that employees who feel valued by their organisations tend to demonstrate greater loyalty in return.

c. Workplace Spirituality's Moderating Role (Wellbeing → Intention to Stay)

Workplace spirituality's moderating effect on the wellbeing-retention link was directionally positive but statistically insignificant ($\beta = 0.180$, $t = 1.654$, $p = 0.099$), rejecting H3. Despite a positive trend, workplace spirituality lacks statistical significance in influencing the relationship between employee well-being and retention in the F&B sector. As per Social Exchange Theory (SET), organizational well-being initiatives may already fulfill employees' reciprocal expectations, minimizing the need for spiritual alignment (Eisenberger et al., 2001). This finding is consistent with Almaaitah et al. (2017), who argue that strong HR practices, including wellbeing, can directly impact retention without requiring a moderator. Moreover, Cohen et al. (2013) explain that dominant main effects often limit the explanatory power of moderating variables. The nature of the F&B sector—fast-paced and operational—also plays a role, as employees tend to prioritize tangible needs over abstract concepts like meaningful work. Milliman et al. (2003) support this, noting workplace spirituality has greater relevance in reflective settings such as education. While spirituality may hold theoretical value (Aboobaker et al., 2019), its practical impact in the F&B context appears minimal due to sector-specific dynamics and employee priorities.

d. Workplace Spirituality's Moderating Role (Engagement → Intention to Stay)

The moderating effect of workplace spirituality on the relationship between work engagement and intention to stay was positive ($\beta = 0.155$), but not statistically significant ($T = 1.697$, $p = 0.090$). Although the result indicates a potential positive moderation, it lacks sufficient statistical strength to support Hypothesis 4, indicating that spirituality does not strengthen engagement's impact on retention in the F&B sector. According to Social Exchange Theory, engagement already reflects a reciprocal exchange, where employees' commitment is driven by organizational support (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), reducing the need for spiritual reinforcement. Agarwal & Gupta (2018) found that engaged employees are motivated to stay due to emotional ties to their work, rather than spiritual factors. In the F&B context, the transactional nature of work limits the relevance of spiritual values. García-Sierra et al. (2016) argue that practical elements like supervisor support and career opportunities are more influential in sustaining engagement. Moreover, cultural norms in high-turnover sectors favor immediate job satisfaction over deeper existential fulfillment. Therefore, while workplace spirituality may benefit other industries, its moderating effect on engagement-retention in the F&B sector is minimal.

6. Conclusion and Implications

This study found that employee well-being and work engagement are significant predictors of employees' intention to stay in the F&B sector, whereas workplace spirituality (as a moderator) did not have a statistically significant effect. In other words, employees with higher perceived well-being and engagement reported stronger commitment to remain, while variations in workplace spirituality did not meaningfully alter this relationship. From a theoretical standpoint, these results align with Social Exchange Theory: when organizations visibly invest in employees' welfare and engagement, employees reciprocate with greater loyalty. The strong positive effects of well-being and engagement suggest that tangible organizational support (e.g. health benefits, reasonable workloads, opportunities for career growth) is "paid back" by employees through increased intention to stay. By contrast, the lack of impact from workplace spirituality programs may indicate that, in this context, employees prioritize concrete support over abstract spiritual initiatives.

The practical implications are clear. F&B managers should prioritize tangible well-being initiatives, such as flexible scheduling, comprehensive health benefits, and employee recognition programs, to address industry-specific stressors like irregular working hours and high customer-facing demands. Additionally, fostering a supportive work environment through improved working conditions and career development opportunities can enhance employee retention. Given the limited impact of workplace spirituality, companies should ensure that their investments align with employees' practical needs rather than abstract concepts. Strengthening these concrete support systems will encourage employees to reciprocate with loyalty, in line with Social Exchange Theory (SET).

7. Limitations and Further Research

This study has several limitations that warrant consideration. First, the findings are context-bound to F&B sector employees in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, limiting generalizability to other industries (e.g., manufacturing, education) or regions with differing socio-cultural dynamics. Second, while the sample size (N=180) met the minimum requirements for PLS-SEM, it constrained the exploration of complex moderation effects. Third, reliance on self-reported data risks social desirability bias and response inaccuracies, particularly regarding sensitive topics like workplace spirituality. Fourth, the insignificant moderating role of workplace spirituality may reflect the F&B sector's task-oriented nature, where pragmatic concerns (e.g., workload, service speed) overshadow abstract spiritual values. Finally, the respondent pool skewed toward young employees (aged 20–30) with short tenures (<1 year), limiting insights into long-term retention drivers among senior staff.

Future studies should address these gaps through mixed methods designs, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to explore subjective perceptions of spirituality and retention. Cross-sector comparisons (e.g., education, healthcare) could test whether workplace spirituality gains relevance in less transactional environments. Researchers should also investigate alternative moderators aligned with F&B dynamics, such as perceived organizational support (POS) or transformational leadership, within the Social Exchange Theory framework. Additionally, multigroup analyses comparing generational cohorts (e.g., Gen Z vs. Gen X) could reveal age-related variations in wellbeing and engagement impacts. For practitioners, prioritizing tangible wellbeing initiatives (e.g., flexible shifts, mental health support) and engagement strategies (e.g., recognition programs) is critical, while workplace spirituality efforts should focus on pragmatic interventions like team-building activities rather than abstract ideals. These steps would strengthen retention models in high-turnover sectors while advancing SET's applicability across contexts

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