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Retention and performance in industrial forest plantations: A structural equation modeling approach

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Abstract

This study investigates the effects of workload, distributive justice, and perceived organizational support on employee retention and performance in the Industrial Plantation Forest Workforce of East Kalimantan. Amid the physically demanding and strategically significant nature of this sector, understanding the drivers of workforce sustainability is essential. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed using a survey distributed to 291 contract workers from four plantation districts under the Sinar Mas Group. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The results show that distributive justice and perceived organizational support significantly influence employee retention. Moreover, perceived organizational support demonstrates a strong and positive effect on employee performance. In contrast, workload does not have a significant impact on either retention or performance, suggesting that the demanding nature of plantation work may be perceived as a norm rather than a stressor. Additionally, employee retention was not found to significantly influence psychological well-being, indicating that longer tenure alone does not guarantee improved emotional or mental health outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of fairness in reward systems and organizational care in fostering loyalty and effectiveness among workers. The study contributes empirical evidence for workforce management in labor-intensive industries and highlights the need for organizations to move beyond workload management and prioritize equitable treatment and psychosocial support to ensure long-term sustainability and performance.

Keywords: Distributive justice, Employee performance, Employee retention, Perceived organizational support, Plantation workforce. Workload.

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1. Introduction

Psychological well-being has emerged as a critical concern in today's demanding work environments, particularly in labor-intensive sectors such as the Industrial Plantation Forest (HTI) sector in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. This form of well-being reflects an individual's emotional, mental, and social health and includes key dimensions such as autonomy, environmental mastery, and positive relations [1]. Workers in HTI face unique stressors, including physically challenging terrain, inconsistent compensation, and performance pressures from field supervisors. These stressors not only affect their physical endurance but also diminish their psychological well-being, ultimately impairing job satisfaction, motivation, and workforce sustainability [2, 3].

Several workplace factors have been identified as key determinants of psychological well-being, namely workload, distributive justice, perceived organizational support (POS), employee performance, and retention. Excessive workload both physical and mental, can lead to emotional exhaustion and disengagement, which contribute to decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover [4, 5]. On the other hand, when employees perceive organizational support and fairness in reward distribution, they are more likely to experience a sense of belonging, enhanced motivation, and improved well-being [6-8]. These job demands and resources interact in ways that are critical to sustaining both psychological health and organizational productivity, especially in high-risk, outdoor labor settings.

Despite the growing attention to mental health and well-being in the workplace, limited empirical evidence exists on how these factors operate collectively in the context of forest-based labor systems such as HTI. Prior research often concentrates on formal, urban-based organizational settings with stable employment conditions, thereby overlooking the unique occupational dynamics and stressors present in field-based operations [9-11]. In HTI, challenges such as steep terrain, fluctuating wages, and stringent performance audits can exacerbate stress and diminish affective commitment [12]. As such, this research addresses a critical gap by analyzing how workload management influences employee retention and psychological well-being in this under-researched yet economically vital sector.

Furthermore, the roles of distributive justice and perceived organizational support have not been fully explored in relation to employee retention and performance within the HTI context. When employees perceive fairness in pay and incentives relative to the complexity of tasks, especially in challenging environments, they are more likely to stay and perform well [13, 14]. Conversely, perceived injustice and the absence of organizational support often lead to dissatisfaction and voluntary turnover. POS, which reflects an employee's belief that their contributions are recognized and that their well-being is valued, plays a significant buffering role against job stress and emotional fatigue [15, 16]. Thus, integrating these variables into a single analytical framework is essential for understanding workforce sustainability in HTI.

In addition to retention, employee performance significantly contributes to psychological well-being. Productive workers often experience higher self-efficacy, a sense of control, and satisfaction with life, which are essential elements of psychological wellness [17, 18]. Conversely, underperformance often triggered by excessive workload and insufficient support can result in anxiety, low morale, and reduced well-being [19, 20]. Employees who achieve consistent performance gains are not only valuable to the organization but also benefit from increased career security and financial stability, both of which are known predictors of long-term psychological well-being [21, 22].

Given this context, the purpose of this study is to analyze and examine the effects of workload, distributive justice, and perceived organizational support on employee retention and performance within the Industrial Plantation Forest workforce in East Kalimantan. In addition, this study investigates how retention and performance subsequently affect psychological well-being. By adopting the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model [23] and Social Exchange Theory [24] as theoretical underpinnings, this study presents an integrative framework that links occupational pressures, support systems, and psychological outcomes in a high-demand industry. The novelty of this research lies in its empirical focus on the HTI sector an area largely overlooked in the international literature while offering practical implications for sustainable human resource management under physically and psychologically demanding conditions.

2. Literature Review

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which posits that employee outcomes such as performance and retention are shaped by the interaction between job demands (e.g., workload) and job resources (e.g., organizational support and distributive justice) [23]. Excessive workload, as a job demand, can lead to emotional exhaustion and reduced job satisfaction, which in turn increases turnover intention. Conversely, job resources such as perceived organizational support (POS) and fairness in reward distribution act as buffers that mitigate the negative

impact of job demands by fostering psychological well-being, affective commitment, and motivation. This model is complemented by Social Exchange Theory, which explains that when employees perceive fair treatment and support from their organization, they reciprocate through positive work behaviors such as enhanced performance and a stronger intention to remain with the organization [24].

Workload plays a critical role in shaping employee retention, particularly within resource-based sectors such as the industrial plantation forest workforce in East Kalimantan. Workload encompasses both physical and mental tasks that must be completed within a specific timeframe [4] and excessive demands may lead to stress and decreased job satisfaction. According to Sarkar [5], high workloads can reduce affective commitment and job satisfaction, ultimately accelerating employees' decisions to leave the organization. Employee retention is defined as a strategy used by management to retain competent employees for a predetermined period [9]. Therefore, an imbalance in workload management can negatively impact retention. Organizations must adopt strategies such as flexible working arrangements, work-life balance, and organizational support to sustain employee commitment over time [25, 26].

Moreover, excessive workload not only imposes physical strain but also triggers emotional stress and frustration, ultimately affecting career satisfaction and organizational commitment. Tariq et al. [27] found that work overload leads to negative emotions such as frustration, which in turn diminishes job satisfaction and occupational commitment. Similarly, Salleh et al. [28] revealed that workload significantly influences job satisfaction and talent retention, especially in high-pressure industries like oil and gas. Inegbedion et al. [29] further emphasized that employees' perceptions of workload balance are key determinants of job satisfaction. Additionally, implementing reduced load work arrangements (RLWAs), when combined with perceived job autonomy and organizational justice, can enhance employee motivation and work-life balance [30, 31]. Beyond workload, Ranta and Ylinen [32] highlighted that access to strategic employee benefits such as family-related perks and flexible arrangements positively impacts satisfaction and firm performance. Furthermore, Abet et al. [33] demonstrated that organizational commitment plays a moderating role in reducing turnover intentions, underscoring the importance of both psychological support and effective workload management. Therefore, improving employee retention in labor-intensive sectors such as industrial plantation forestry requires not only balancing workload demands but also fostering a supportive organizational environment that enhances both emotional well-being and long-term engagement.

In addition, distributive justice serves as a significant determinant in employee retention. When employees perceive that their rewards, including salary, benefits, and bonuses, are proportional to their contributions, they are more likely to remain within the organization [13]. Conversely, inequity in reward distribution can lower job satisfaction and increase turnover intention [34]. The inability to retain high-quality employees renders investments in human capital ineffective [35, 36]. Organizations that uphold distributive justice cultivate a sense of fairness and recognition, encouraging employees to stay longer and continue contributing to organizational success [37, 38].

Recent studies further emphasize the critical role of distributive justice in employee retention. Fair reward distribution has been shown to enhance both job attitudes and life satisfaction [31, 39-41]. A positive perception of distributive justice also strengthens organizational commitment [42-44]. Perceptions of fairness reduce turnover intentions, particularly when supported by supervisory support [45-47]. Although focused on procedural justice, fairness perceptions in general are found to significantly lower employees' intention to leave [48-50]. Distributive justice also indirectly affects retention through pay satisfaction, especially in culturally specific contexts [51-54]. Furthermore, perceptions of distributive injustice during crises can heighten turnover intention and lead to defensive, unethical behavior [55, 56]. These findings reinforce the importance of equitable reward systems in sustaining workforce stability and organizational integrity.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is another vital factor influencing retention, as it refers to employees' beliefs regarding how much the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being [16]. POS positively influences affective commitment and reduces job-related stress, fostering a strong emotional bond between employees and their organization [57]. When employees perceive strong support, they are more likely to remain loyal and motivated to contribute further [58]. Thus, POS acts as a protective factor that decreases employees' intention to leave by enhancing their psychological connection with the organization and improving their work environment [59-62].

Regarding performance, workload has a dual effect. While an optimal workload can enhance motivation and efficiency [63-65] excessive workload can lead to fatigue, anxiety, and a decline in employee performance [66]. Performance itself is defined as the output achieved by individuals in fulfilling responsibilities within a specific period [67-70]. A balanced workload supports job performance by maintaining employee well-being and productivity [71-74].

Distributive justice also significantly impacts employee performance. Fair treatment in terms of compensation, incentives, and benefits enhances job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation, which in turn leads to higher productivity and better job quality [75, 76]. Organizational justice builds mutual trust between employees and employers, contributing to organizational commitment and positive work behaviors that support company goals [77-79]. When employees perceive fairness in rewards and resource allocation, they are more inclined to exert greater effort and demonstrate high performance [80, 81]. Thus, fairness within organizations should be a strategic priority to foster employee performance and organizational efficiency [82-85].

To strengthen psychological well-being, organizations must adopt comprehensive strategies that address both retention and performance through employee experience, onboarding, and motivation. For instance, onboarding practices that promote organizational identification significantly reduce turnover intentions via improved workplace well-being [86, 87]. Similarly, positive employee experiences, including supportive leadership and career development, enhance engagement and emotional resilience [88]. Employer branding also contributes to well-being by boosting organizational commitment and retention, which in turn drives performance [89, 90]. Motivation plays a central role in this process, as it directly influences both job satisfaction and firm outcomes [91-93]. Retention strategies that recognize social network dynamics can

further mitigate turnover, particularly in emotionally strained teams [94-98]. Moreover, excessive turnover disrupts psychological stability and organizational functioning, highlighting the need for retention-oriented assessment tools [11, 99, 100]. Finally, retention is especially vital in high-pressure roles, where personal and job-related factors strongly affect satisfaction and loyalty [101-103]. Together, these insights underscore the importance of a holistic approach to fostering psychological well-being in support of sustainable organizational performance.

Finally, both employee retention and performance are strongly linked to psychological well-being. Employees who remain with the company for longer periods tend to experience career stability, which enhances their sense of security and psychological health [90, 104]. Likewise, good performance contributes to positive emotions and self-confidence, fostering psychological well-being [20]. Psychological well-being refers to an individual's happiness and optimal functioning at work [105], and it plays a key role in influencing both motivation and loyalty [106, 107]. Therefore, companies should develop strategies that simultaneously enhance retention and performance to improve overall employee well-being and organizational outcomes [108-110].

The purpose of this study is to analyze and examine the effects of workload, distributive justice, and perceived organizational support on employee retention and performance within the Industrial Plantation Forest Workforce in East Kalimantan. Additionally, this study seeks to investigate how employee retention and performance contribute to psychological well-being. Grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model and Social Exchange Theory, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between job demands, job resources, and psychological outcomes in the forestry sector. Based on the theoretical and empirical insights presented earlier, as well as the conceptual framework developed, the hypotheses of this study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Workload has a significant effect on employee retention in the Industrial Plantation Forest Workforce in East Kalimantan.

Hypothesis 2: Distributive justice has a significant effect on employee retention in the industrial plantation forest workforce in East Kalimantan.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived organizational support has a significant effect on employee retention in the industrial plantation forest workforce in East Kalimantan.

Hypothesis 4: Workload has a significant effect on employee performance in the industrial plantation forest workforce in East Kalimantan.

Hypothesis 5: Distributive justice has a significant effect on employee performance in the Industrial Plantation Forest Workforce in East Kalimantan.

Hypothesis 6: Perceived organizational support has a significant effect on employee performance in the Industrial Plantation Forest Workforce in East Kalimantan.

Hypothesis 7: Employee retention has a significant effect on psychological well-being in the industrial plantation forest workforce in East Kalimantan.

Hypothesis 8: Employee performance has a significant effect on psychological well-being in the industrial plantation forest workforce in East Kalimantan.

3. Method

This study adopts a quantitative approach with a descriptive and explanatory research design. The descriptive design is used to portray the characteristics and behaviors of the Industrial Plantation Forest (HTI) workforce in East Kalimantan, estimate the prevalence of specific traits, and identify the relationships between key variables. The explanatory design aims to examine the causal relationships between workload, distributive justice, perceived organizational support, employee retention, and performance. This research is cross-sectional in nature, conducted at a single point in time, and utilizes survey techniques to gather data. The results are intended to empirically test hypotheses derived from existing theories and contribute to the development of new insights in human resource management within labor-intensive sectors.

The population in this study consists of 1,200 non-permanent daily workers employed in the Industrial Plantation Forest (HTI) sector in East Kalimantan. These workers are typically engaged in planting and maintenance activities and are hired based on operational needs. The sampling method follows the Krejcie and Morgan [111] formula, which recommends a sample size of 291 respondents for a population of this size. The sample was drawn using proportional random sampling from several HTI companies operating in the region: PT Surya Hutani Jaya (Sebulu District, 86 workers), PT Surya Hutani Jaya (Santan District, 93 workers), PT Surya Hutani Jaya (Muara Bengkal District, 73 workers), and PT Sumalindo Hutani Jaya (Seimang District, 39 workers). This sampling method ensures representation across the selected districts and reflects the diversity of labor experiences within the HTI sector.

The demographic profile of respondents was analyzed based on age, gender, educational background, and work experience. The majority of the workforce falls within the productive age range of 36–45 years (30.93%), and a significant portion has over 15 years of experience in the HTI sector (32.30%), reflecting both maturity and sector-specific expertise. Most respondents are male (68.04%), aligning with the physical nature of plantation labor. Educationally, the largest group has completed junior high school (44.33%), indicating that while formal education levels are relatively modest, practical skills and experience are highly valued in this field. The following table summarizes the key characteristics of the respondents:

Table 1.

Summary of Respondent Characteristics.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)	18–24	44	15.12
	25–34	59	20.27
	35–44	90	30.93
	45–54	77	26.46
	55 and above	21	7.22
Gender	Male	198	68.04
	Female	93	31.96
Education Level	Elementary School (SD)	105	36.08
	Junior High School (SMP)	129	44.33
	Senior High School (SMA)	57	19.59
Work Experience in HTI	Less than 6 years	23	7.9
	7–10 years	42	14.43
	11–13 years	49	16.84
	15–16 years	94	32.3
	17 years and above	83	28.52
Total Respondents		291	100

Data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire distributed to respondents via direct interaction, face-to-face interviews, or correspondence. The questionnaire was designed to be concise, visually appealing, and easy to understand. To encourage a high response rate, confidentiality was guaranteed, and participation was voluntary. The items in the questionnaire were developed based on operational definitions and established indicators for each research variable. The questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5) to assess perceptions and attitudes related to workload, distributive justice, organizational support, retention, performance, and psychological well-being.

Each variable was measured using multiple indicators grounded in previous literature. Workload was assessed through five dimensions: physical demand, psychological strain, emotional fatigue, quantitative overload, and qualitative task complexity. Distributive justice was measured using three equity-based indicators: contribution-based fairness, equality-based fairness, and need-based fairness. Perceived organizational support was measured through indicators reflecting organizational care, recognition, fair treatment, and problem-solving support. Retention was assessed based on the organization’s ability to influence employee longevity, recognition, job design, and interpersonal relationships. Employee performance was measured using six indicators: quality, quantity, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, need for supervision, and interpersonal impact. Psychological well-being was measured through six components: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.

The study received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of Mulawarman University, ensuring that all research protocols adhered to national and international ethical standards for studies involving human participants. Informed written consent was obtained from all respondents, with a clear explanation of the study’s academic purpose, data confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of participation stated at the beginning of the questionnaire. Prior to data collection, a formal letter of research intent was submitted and approved by the management of PT Surya Hutani Jaya and PT Sumalindo Hutani Jaya, granting access to field workers in their respective plantation districts. All procedures were conducted in accordance with ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki and monitored by the Institute for Research and Community Service at Mulawarman University.

For data analysis, this study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3.0 software. PLS-SEM is suitable for testing complex models with multiple constructs, particularly in social science research involving latent variables and non-normal data distributions [112-115]. The analysis commenced with an evaluation of the measurement model (outer model), which examined indicator reliability, convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted > 0.50), discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion), and internal consistency reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability > 0.70). The structural model (inner model) was assessed using R-squared (R^2) values for explanatory power, Q-squared (Q^2) values for predictive relevance, and bootstrapping for significance testing of path coefficients. This analytical framework facilitated comprehensive hypothesis testing and the assessment of mediating effects among the studied constructs.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Board of Postgraduate Studies and Research at Mulawarman University, Indonesia, confirming that the research complied with ethical requirements for studies involving human participants. All respondents were asked to provide written informed consent, which explained the academic purpose of the research, outlined confidentiality safeguards, and highlighted that participation was voluntary. In addition, the Institute for Research and Community Service at Mulawarman University reviewed and approved the procedures, ensuring alignment with the ethical principles of the Helsinki Declaration. Participants were made aware of the study’s goals, reassured about the protection of their data, and reminded of their right to choose whether or not to take part.

4. Result

The measurement model evaluation presented in Table 2 confirms that all constructs in the study demonstrate acceptable levels of reliability and validity. Each indicator has an outer loading value above 0.70, indicating strong individual reliability. The composite reliability (CR) values for all latent variables exceed the threshold of 0.70, confirming internal consistency reliability. Similarly, the average variance extracted (AVE) values are above 0.50 for all constructs, indicating adequate convergent validity. These results suggest that the measurement items accurately reflect their respective constructs and meet the minimum criteria for inclusion in the structural model [113].

Table 2.
Result of Reliability and Validity.

Variables	Outer Loadings		Composite Reliability	AVE
Workload (BK)	BK1	0.866	0.907	0.662
	BK2	0.829		
	BK3	0.853		
	BK4	0.806		
	BK5	0.705		
Distributive Justice (KD)	KD1	0.852	0.871	0.693
	KD2	0.806		
	KD3	0.837		
Perceived Organizational (POS)	POS1	0.845	0.925	0.672
	POS2	0.869		
	POS3	0.812		
	POS4	0.891		
Employee Retention (RET)	RET1	0.900	0.915	0.730
	RET2	0.897		
	RET3	0.911		
Employee Performance (KK)	KK1	0.811	0.903	0.609
	KK2	0.812		
	KK3	0.850		
	KK4	0.825		
	KK5	0.831		
Psychological Well-Being (KP)	KP1	0.736	0.929	0.814
	KP2	0.864		
	KP3	0.826		
	KP4	0.743		
	KP5	0.741		
	KP 6	0.761		

The inner model evaluation using R-square and adjusted R-square values, as shown in Table 3, indicates that the model has good explanatory power. Employee Retention (RET) has an R^2 value of 0.794, and Employee Performance (KK) has an R^2 of 0.752, suggesting that the exogenous variables explain approximately 79.4% and 75.2% of the variance in these two dependent variables, respectively. These values fall within the strong category and suggest that the model fits well in predicting retention and performance. On the other hand, the R^2 value for Psychological Well-Being (KP) is only 0.008, showing that the model does not significantly explain the variance in this variable and that other factors outside the model may play a larger role in influencing psychological well-being.

Table 3.
R-square & R Square Adjusted.

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employee Retention (RET)	0.794	0.792
Employee Performance (KK)	0.752	0.750
Psychological Well-Being (KP)	0.008	0.001

The hypothesis testing results in Table 4 show mixed outcomes. The relationship between workload (BK) and both employee retention (RET) and employee performance (KK) is not statistically significant. This implies that perceived workload, although relevant in operational contexts, does not have a direct effect on whether employees choose to stay or perform well. This could suggest that workload has become a normalized condition within the Industrial Plantation Forest sector and is not the primary determinant of employee outcomes in this setting.

Table 4.
Results of Effect Hypothesis Testing.

Relationships Between Variables	Original Sample	P-Values	Description	
BK → RET	0.020	0.454	Positive & Not Significant	Reject
BK → KK	-0.019	0.520	Negative & Not Significant	Reject
KD → RET	0.862	0.000	Positive & Significant	Support
KD → KK	0.045	0.109	Positive & Not Significant	Reject
POS → RET	0.084	0.000	Positive & Significant	Support
POS → KK	0.852	0.000	Positive & Significant	Support
RET → KP	0.089	0.319	Positive & Not Significant	Reject
RET → KP	0.001	0.994	Positive & Not Significant	Reject

Distributive justice (KD) shows a significant positive effect on employee retention ($\beta = 0.862$; $p = 0.000$), indicating that perceptions of fairness in resource and reward distribution are strongly associated with employees' willingness to remain in the organization. However, the influence of distributive justice on performance is not significant, suggesting that while fair treatment encourages loyalty, it does not necessarily translate into improved work output. This may highlight the need for organizations to combine fairness with other motivational strategies to enhance performance.

Perceived organizational support (POS) significantly affects both employee retention ($\beta = 0.084$; $p = 0.000$) and performance ($\beta = 0.852$; $p = 0.000$), reinforcing the importance of support systems in enhancing workforce stability and productivity. Employees who feel valued and supported by their organizations are more likely to stay and perform well. Finally, the path between employee retention (RET) and psychological well-being (KP) is not statistically significant, indicating that simply staying in the organization does not automatically lead to improved psychological outcomes. In sum, the structural model findings support most of the proposed relationships, especially the roles of perceived support and fairness, while highlighting areas where workload and retention may have limited direct influence.

5. Discussion

The finding that workload does not significantly affect either employee retention or performance challenges much of the existing literature, which suggests that excessive job demands can reduce satisfaction and increase turnover. While Aninda et al. [4] highlight the adverse psychological impacts of heavy workloads, such as stress and decreased commitment, this study suggests that within the industrial plantation sector, such workload intensity may already be normalized. The lack of significance could be attributed to the unique context in which these workers operate: they may perceive high workload as an inherent part of the job and not as a factor that influences their decision to stay or their ability to perform. Thus, workload may not function as a decisive variable in this particular setting, even though it remains theoretically important.

On the other hand, distributive justice emerges as a strong predictor of employee retention. The result aligns with previous findings by Colquitt et al. [7], who emphasized that employees are more likely to remain in organizations where rewards are distributed fairly. This suggests that fairness in compensation and recognition plays a vital role in maintaining loyalty among workers, even in labor-intensive sectors. However, its nonsignificant effect on performance is noteworthy. It indicates that while fair treatment fosters retention, it does not necessarily boost productivity, supporting the idea that intrinsic motivators, work design, and operational support may be more critical for enhancing performance outcomes in fieldwork environments like industrial plantations.

Perceived organizational support (POS) proves to be a key driver for both employee retention and performance, reinforcing its dual function in organizational behavior. These findings support earlier work by Zhang et al. [15], confirming that employees who perceive their organization as caring and supportive are more likely to remain committed and work more effectively. The strength of POS in predicting performance ($\beta = 0.852$) suggests that emotional and psychological support provided by the organization translates into tangible improvements in work outcomes. Furthermore, this relationship underscores the importance of a supportive work culture in sectors where physical tasks dominate, as it can buffer against stressors and enhance motivation.

Interestingly, the study finds no significant relationship between employee retention and psychological well-being. This result suggests that merely staying in the organization does not guarantee improvements in mental health or happiness at work. Although previous studies (e.g., [116]) indicate that job stability contributes to psychological well-being, the data imply that well-being requires more than tenure; it necessitates meaningful work experiences, autonomy, and a supportive environment. Therefore, organizations should not only focus on retaining employees but also ensure that the conditions in which they operate foster personal growth and satisfaction. This calls for a more comprehensive approach to workforce management, integrating both retention strategies and well-being interventions.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the effects of workload, distributive justice, and perceived organizational support on employee retention and performance within the Industrial Plantation Forest Workforce in East Kalimantan. Utilizing a quantitative approach and applying Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to a sample of 291 contract workers across four plantation districts, the findings reveal that distributive justice and perceived organizational support significantly influence employee retention, while only perceived organizational support has a substantial impact on

employee performance. Conversely, workload showed no significant effect on either outcome, and retention was not found to significantly affect psychological well-being. These results highlight the importance of fairness and organizational support in managing human capital in labor-intensive sectors.

The findings suggest that policy interventions should prioritize enhancing perceptions of fairness in reward distribution and strengthening organizational support systems to retain and motivate plantation workers. Management should implement transparent compensation structures and offer supportive environments that acknowledge employee contributions. However, this study is limited by its cross-sectional design and focus on one regional sector, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal data and include broader organizational contexts or qualitative methods to deepen understanding of psychological well-being and other mediating variables affecting workforce sustainability.

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