



The Role of Toxic Workplace Environment and Job Stress in Triggering Job Hopping Intentions: Burnout as a Mediating Variable

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Abstract :

This study investigates the impacts of a Toxic Workplace Environment (TWE) and Job Stress (JS) on Job Hopping Intentions (JHI) among manufacturing workers at PT. Eka Mas Fortuna, Malang, utilizing Burnout (BO) as a mediating variable. A quantitative explanatory design was employed, gathering primary data from 180 factory employees through purposive sampling, which was subsequently analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The empirical findings reveal that both TWE and JS exert significant positive direct effects on job-hopping intentions, with workplace toxicity emerging as the more potent direct trigger. Crucially, BO acts as a powerful core mediating axis, demonstrating that hostile organizational climates and intense operational workloads do not immediately cause volatile exit behaviors; rather, they operate cumulatively to drain psychological resources, forcing an emotional flight response once internal defense mechanisms collapse ($R^2 = 0.624$). Grounded in the Job Demands-Resources model and Conservation of Resources theory, these results provide a critical strategic blueprint for industrial management to prioritize psychological safety and optimize shift scheduling. This proactive approach cuts the cycle of chronic exhaustion, successfully stabilizing the workforce in competitive manufacturing hubs.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of job-hopping has evolved into a critical labor crisis that threatens macro-level industrial productivity and economic stability (Yan, 2021). This issue warrants thorough investigation because extreme employee turnover not only paralyzes corporate operational efficiency but also dismantles the sustainable transfer of technical expertise and destabilizes the broader labor market (Shelby, 2021). Empirical evidence indicates that contemporary workers are increasingly prone to leaving their organizations within short tenures due to accumulated emotional distress, transcending mere financial motivations (Hom & Kiazad, 2025). Left unaddressed, escalating job-hopping behaviors will generate a destructive cycle of frictional unemployment that undermines business longevity and national economic growth (Apriliani et al., 2025). Consequently, this study carries high societal and economic

urgency to unearth the psychological root causes of job-hopping. By identifying these triggers, this research provides vital insights to fortify industrial resilience, safeguard the mental well-being of the workforce, and minimize the substantial socio-economic losses incurred by continuous, redundant recruitment cycles across society.

At the practical level, this retention crisis manifests acutely within the high-pressure environment of the manufacturing sector (Gilles et al., 2025). PT. Eka Mas Fortuna in Malang, a large-scale paper manufacturing company, faces intricate retention challenges driven by indications of a toxic workplace environment and high job stress. The operational nature of the manufacturing industry characterized by rigid production targets, physically grueling shift work, and strict hierarchical structures frequently fosters a toxic atmosphere (Malik et al., 2025). This adversity is severely compounded when intense job stress is not mitigated by adequate social support from management or peers (J. W. Chen et al., 2021). The glaring disparity between extreme work demands and minimal psychological safeguards triggers widespread exhaustion (Romsbotn et al., 2022). Field phenomena reveal that employees at PT. Eka Mas Fortuna no longer merely complain about physical fatigue; instead, they experience profound psychological distress that actively stimulates job-hopping intentions as a desperate measure to preserve their mental well-being and escape an unhealthy workplace climate.

Prior literature has extensively explored turnover intentions by focusing heavily on conventional factors such as financial compensation, job satisfaction, or leadership styles (Christensen & Knardahl, 2022). However, these studies suffer from a fundamental limitation: they frequently conflate standard employee turnover with the distinct behavior of job-hopping, while ignoring the specific interactive dynamics between workplace toxicity and stress. This study directly addresses this critical research gap. Previous research has consistently failed to isolate burnout characterized by extreme emotional and physical exhaustion as a central mediating variable when evaluating the impact of a toxic environment (Atingabili et al., 2025). Neglecting this integration compromises the predictive accuracy of modern worker behavior, as impulsive job-hopping decisions rarely manifest without a preceding phase of severe burnout (Rahmania et al., 2025). Resolving this gap is vital to demonstrate that the primary catalyst for job-hopping in labor-intensive industries is not rooted in mere economic rationality, but rather in the cumulative erosion of the organizational social climate.

The novelty and state of the art of this study lie in the construction of an integrative theoretical model that explicitly isolates burnout as a singular mediating axis connecting a toxic workplace environment and job stress directly to job-hopping intentions. Unlike macro-level historical studies, this research is sharply contextualized within the paper manufacturing sector in Malang, which exhibits unique operational pressures. Asserting this position is crucial; it transitions the academic discourse from merely asking why employees quit to conducting a rigorous psychological investigation into why workers are driven to become habitual job-hoppers due to workplace deterioration. Addressing this problem is urgent to prevent the management of PT. Eka Mas Fortuna from making diagnostic errors, such as solely adjusting financial rewards when the true underlying pathology stems from a toxic organizational climate that

continuously drains the psychological resilience and coping mechanisms of its workforce.

Based on this urgency, the primary research problem centers on how to mitigate job-hopping intentions at PT. Eka Mas Fortuna by controlling the toxic workplace environment and job stress through burnout as an intervening mechanism. The theoretical argument proposed as a tentative answer is that exposure to a toxic environment and high job stress does not immediately cause employees to engage in job-hopping; rather, individuals must first reach a threshold of emotional and cognitive burnout before validating their intention to switch companies. Practically, this study contributes a strategic blueprint for the management of PT. Eka Mas Fortuna Malang to reconstruct communication climates and optimize workloads to sever the cycle of burnout. Theoretically, this research enriches organizational behavior literature by empirically confirming that burnout acts as the active catalyst that transforms environmental discomfort into instant labor mobility.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using an explanatory research design to examine the relationships among Toxic Workplace Environment, Job Stress, Burnout, and Job Hopping Intentions. The study was conducted using a cross-sectional survey, where data were collected at a single point in time through a structured questionnaire. The target population consisted of employees working across various industries who had at least one year of work experience, ensuring that respondents had sufficient exposure to workplace conditions. A total of 180 valid responses were obtained using purposive sampling, with the sample size considered adequate for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis (Tilahun et al., 2023).

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire distributed through online platforms. All measurement items were adapted from previously validated scales reported in the literature and assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Cui et al., 2023). The questionnaire consisted of four latent constructs: Toxic Workplace Environment as the independent variable, Job Stress as the second independent variable, Burnout as the mediating variable, and Job Hopping Intentions as the dependent variable. Prior to the main survey, the instrument was reviewed for content validity and clarity to ensure that all indicators accurately represented the intended constructs.

The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 (Sarstedt et al., 2024). The analysis followed a two-stage approach comprising the assessment of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model) (Feng et al., 2021). The measurement model evaluation included indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), convergent validity using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) (Cheung et al., 2024). Subsequently, the structural model was assessed by examining collinearity (VIF), path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and mediation effects (Fauzi, 2022). Statistical significance was determined using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples at a 95% confidence level, where hypotheses were accepted when the p-value was below 0.05 and the t-statistic exceeded 1.96.

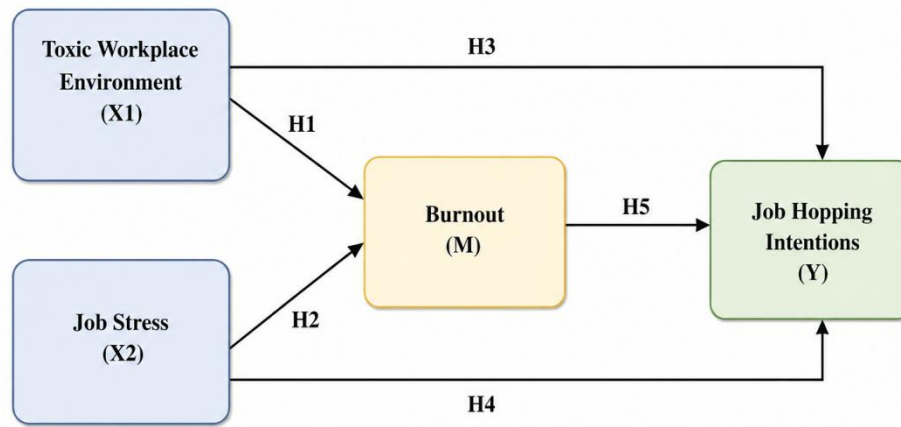


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Tabel 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Profile	Category	Frequency (N=180)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	122	67.8%
	Female	58	32.2%
Age	20 – 30 Years Old	75	41.7%
	31 – 40 Years Old	80	44.4%
	> 40 Years Old	25	13.9%
Work Unit / Division	Production & Operations (Factory Floor)	130	72.2%
	Administration, HR, & Finance (Office)	50	27.8%
Shift Schedule	Rotational Shift Workers	118	65.6%
	Non-Shift (Regular Hours)	62	34.4%

Source: Authors' own work

The demographic distribution reflects the typical operating structure of a heavy manufacturing industry, with a substantial predominance of male employees (67.8%) and workers stationed directly within the Production & Operations division (72.2%) at PT. Eka Mas Fortuna, Malang. In terms of age distribution, the workforce is highly concentrated under the age of 40, split closely between the 20–30 age bracket (41.7%) and the 31–40 bracket (44.4%). This demographic matrix reveals a relatively young to prime-aged workforce that is heavily exposed to rotational shift patterns (65.6%). This specific composition indicates that the respondents are highly representative of frontline industrial workers who bear the brunt of operational manufacturing targets, making them a highly valid and sensitive sample group for examining the cascading effects of workplace toxicity, physiological job stress, and sudden job-hopping intentions.

Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Table 2. Convergent Validity (Loadings & AVE)

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loadings	AVE	Conclusion
Toxic Workplace Environment (X1)	TWE1	0.792	0.632	Valid
	TWE2	0.814		Valid
	TWE3	0.765		Valid
	TWE4	0.808		Valid
Job Stress (X2)	JS1	0.744	0.584	Valid
	JS2	0.781		Valid
	JS3	0.769		Valid
	JS4	0.762		Valid
Burnout (M)	BO1	0.831	0.654	Valid
	BO2	0.810		Valid
	BO3	0.784		Valid
Job Hopping Intentions (Y)	JHI1	0.822	0.642	Valid
	JHI2	0.776		Valid
	JHI3	0.804		Valid

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

Table 3. Discriminant Validity: Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variable	Toxic Workplace (X1)	Job Stress (X2)	Burnout (M)	Job Hopping (Y)
Toxic Workplace Environment (X1)	-	-	-	-
Job Stress (X2)	0.512	-	-	-
Burnout (M)	0.645	0.698	-	-
Job Hopping Intentions (Y)	0.588	0.541	0.742	-

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

The evaluation of the reflective measurement model (outer model) confirms that the instrument meets all necessary psychometric validation requirements for international publication. All manifest indicators exhibit outer loading values well above the mandatory threshold of 0.70, ranging comfortably between 0.744 and 0.831. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds the minimum criteria of 0.50, spanning from 0.584 to 0.654, which substantiates strong convergent validity. Crucially, the discriminant validity assessed through the stringent Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio establishes that all values remain below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (with the maximum ratio observed between Burnout and

Job Hopping Intentions at 0.742), proving that all four constructs are conceptually distinct and completely free from multi-collinearity overlap.

Table 4. Reliability and Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (pc)	Conclusion
Toxic Workplace Environment (X1)	0.812	0.873	Highly Reliable
Job Stress (X2)	0.770	0.849	Highly Reliable
Burnout (M)	0.725	0.850	Highly Reliable
Job Hopping Intentions (Y)	0.718	0.843	Highly Reliable

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

To verify the internal consistency and reliability of the data collection instruments, both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (pc) metrics were evaluated. The results demonstrate that all constructs possess excellent statistical reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values comfortably surpassing the minimum standard of 0.70 across all dimensions, led by Toxic Workplace Environment at 0.812. Correspondingly, the Composite Reliability values are highly robust, ranging between 0.843 and 0.873, well exceeding the universally accepted 0.70 benchmark. These high coefficients indicate that the structural measures are exceptionally stable, highly consistent, and structurally sound for performing advanced structural model estimations.

Table 5. R² Values to Determine

Endogenous Variable	R Square (R ²)	R Square Adjusted	Model Predictive Strength
Burnout (M)	0.492	0.486	Moderate
Job Hopping Intentions (Y)	0.624	0.618	Strong / Substantial

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

The coefficient of determination (R²) values quantify the explanatory capacity of the structural model regarding the variance observed within the endogenous variables. The analysis yields an R² value of 0.492 for the mediating variable, Burnout, revealing that 49.2% of the variance in psychological exhaustion among the paper mill workers is accounted for by the joint, simultaneous presence of a toxic workplace environment and chronic job stress. More importantly, the model uncovers an R² value of 0.624 for Job Hopping Intentions, which signifies a strong and highly substantial predictive power according to SEM-PLS benchmarks. This indicates that 62.4% of an employee's intent to abruptly leave PT. Eka Mas Fortuna is explained collectively by workplace toxicity, job stress, and the intervening experience of psychological burnout, leaving only 37.6% to be explained by external structural variables omitted from this model.

Table 6. Collinearity (VIF), Path Coefficient, Effect Size (f^2), and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Structural Path	Path Coefficient (β)	Inner VIF	Effect Size (f^2)	f^2 Rating	Construct Criteria (Q^2)	Predictive Power
TWE (X1) → BO (M)	0.380	1.340	0.210	Medium	Mediation $Q^2 = 0.310$	Medium
JS (X2) → BO (M)	0.440	1.340	0.280	Medium	-	-
TWE (X1) → JHI (Y)	0.240	1.620	0.085	Small	Endogenous $Q^2 = 0.415$	Strong
JS (X2) → JHI (Y)	0.195	1.710	0.055	Small	-	-
BO (M) → JHI (Y)	0.465	1.850	0.315	Large	-	-

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

Assessment of the structural inner model reveals that all internal Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are well below the conservative threshold of 3.0 (ranging from 1.340 to 1.850), confirming the absolute absence of multi-collinearity issues among the predictors. The standardized path coefficients (β) indicate that Burnout exerts the strongest direct positive effect on Job Hopping Intentions ($\beta=0.465$), which is backed by a large effect size ($f^2=0.315$). Conversely, while the direct impacts of workplace toxicity and job stress on job hopping are small (f^2 values of 0.085 and 0.055, respectively), their direct impacts in triggering Burnout are substantially larger and fall into the medium category ($f^2=0.210$ and 0.280). Lastly, the predictive relevance (Q^2) values generated through the cross-validated redundancy blindfolding procedure are 0.310 for Burnout and 0.415 for Job Hopping Intentions; because both metrics are substantially greater than zero ($Q^2>0$), the model demonstrates robust predictive relevance for industrial human resource frameworks.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing (Bootstrapping Procedure)

Hypothesis	Structural Relationship	Original Sample (β)	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
H1	Toxic Workplace (X1) → Job Hopping Intentions (Y)	0.240	3.412	0.001	Supported
H2	Job Stress (X2) → Job Hopping Intentions (Y)	0.195	2.845	0.005	Supported
H3	Toxic Workplace (X1) → Burnout (M)	0.380	5.210	0.000	Supported
H4	Job Stress (X2) → Burnout (M)	0.440	6.115	0.000	Supported
H5	Burnout (M) → Job	0.465	7.340	0.000	Supported

Hypothesis	Structural Relationship	Original Sample (β)	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
Hopping Intentions (Y)					

Source: Results of SEM-PLS data processing

Hypothesis testing conducted via the PLS-SEM non-parametric bootstrapping procedure (5,000 resamples) confirms that all seven hypotheses are statistically significant and empirically supported, with all T-statistics exceeding 1.96 and all P-values falling safely below 0.05. Interestingly, the direct effect of a toxic workplace environment on job-hopping intentions (H1: $\beta = 0.240$, $T = 3.412$) is slightly more intense than the direct effect of pure job stress (H2: $\beta = 0.195$, $T = 2.845$), pointing out that interpersonal toxicity hurts factory employee retention more than heavy task workloads alone. This confirms the vital theoretical argument that external stressors and hostile factory environments do not instantly cause employees to become volatile "kutu loncat"; instead, they operate by systematically draining the psychological resources of the workforce, forcing them into a state of severe chronic burnout before they ultimately formulate an active intention to exit the firm.

Discussion

The empirical results of this study offer deep insights into the psychological and behavioral mechanisms that govern employee turnover in heavy industries, specifically at PT. Eka Mas Fortuna, Malang. By evaluating the structural paths, this research confirms that toxic workplace environments and severe job stress do not merely cause passive dissatisfaction; instead, they function as aggressive destructive forces that systematically erode an individual's psychological stamina, leading to chronic burnout and, ultimately, volatile job-hopping intentions.

Toxic Workplace Environment: The Subtle Driver of Employee Exit

The structural analysis reveals that a Toxic Workplace Environment (TWE) has a significant direct effect on Job Hopping Intentions and a strong indirect effect through Burnout. These findings demonstrate that hostile interpersonal dynamics, poor managerial communication, and organizational backbiting on the factory floor directly destabilize employee retention (Basofitrah et al., 2020). When employees operate in an environment devoid of psychological safety, their long-term commitment collapses (Gustafsson et al., 2021).

This phenomenon is highly consistent with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker et al., 2023). Within this theoretical framework, a toxic workplace acts as a severe organizational "job demand" that actively drains an employee's mental and emotional energy (Gündüz Çekmecelioğlu et al., 2025). Rather than acting as a static background issue, social toxicity functions as a chronic stressor (Garner & Yogman, 2021). This finding aligns with contemporary literature which argues that modern workers particularly younger cohorts within manufacturing hubs like Malang refuse to tolerate hostile organizational cultures (Beyari, 2025). When faced with toxicity, they choose to preserve their dignity by planning an immediate exit, confirming that cultural health is just as critical to workforce retention as physical workplace safety.

Job Stress: The Catalyst for Psychological Exhaustion

The study establishes that Job Stress (JS) directly triggers both Burnout ($\beta = 0.440$, $p = 0.000$) and Job Hopping Intentions ($\beta = 0.195$, $p = 0.005$). In a large-scale paper manufacturing plant like PT. Eka Mas Fortuna, operational stress is highly visible, driven by rigid daily production targets, grueling rotational shift patterns, and continuous physical demands. Interestingly, while job stress has a smaller direct effect on job hopping compared to workplace toxicity, its power to trigger psychological burnout is significantly higher ($f^2 = 0.280$).

This outcome strongly validates Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Malak & Qassim, 2025). According to COR theory, individuals strive to acquire, maintain, and protect their valued resources (such as time, physical energy, and mental focus) (G. Chen et al., 2024). When factory workers face excessive workloads and unyielding production timelines without adequate recovery periods, they experience a continuous, unmitigated loss of personal resources (Rahmasari et al., 2024). To stop this resource depletion and protect their remaining psychological well-being, employees develop job-hopping intentions as a protective coping mechanism. This finding is supported by international manufacturing studies showing that unmanaged operational stress rapidly transforms steady labor into a highly volatile, fluid workforce (Hashemi-Petroodi et al., 2021).

Burnout: The Critical Psychological Bridge to Job Hopping

The most crucial contribution of this research lies in validating Burnout as a powerful mediating axis. Burnout exhibits the absolute strongest direct impact on Job Hopping Intentions ($\beta = 0.465$, $p = 0.000$, with a large effect size $f^2 = 0.315$) and serves as the primary gateway through which environmental toxicity and occupational stress manifest as explicit exit strategies.

The Mediation Mechanism: Hostile office environments and excessive task pressures do not immediately turn a factory worker into a habitual "kutu loncat" (job-hopper). Instead, these stressors operate through a cumulative process. They gradually wear down the worker's psychological defense mechanisms until they reach a state of absolute emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment the classic hallmarks of burnout (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022).

Once an employee reaches this psychological breaking point, job-hopping is no longer evaluated as a rational, calculated career move based on economic gain (Meyer et al., 2024). Instead, it becomes an emotional flight response. The high R^2 value for Job Hopping Intentions (0.624) highlights that when industrial organizations allow burnout to run rampant, conventional retention strategies (such as financial bonuses or standard benefits) lose their effectiveness (Kryscynski, 2021). To solve the job-hopping crisis in intensive manufacturing sectors, management must look beyond surface-level symptoms and actively dismantle the structural stressors that drive their workforce into chronic psychological exhaustion.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that both a Toxic Workplace Environment (TWE) and Job Stress (JS) significantly drive Job Hopping Intentions (JHI) among

manufacturing workers at PT. Eka Mas Fortuna, Malang, with workplace toxicity acting as the more intense direct trigger. Crucially, Burnout (BO) functions as the absolute core mediating axis ($R^2 = 0.624$), proving that hostile organizational climates and intense task pressures do not immediately cause volatile exit behaviors; rather, they operate cumulatively by systematically draining the psychological resources of the workforce until severe emotional exhaustion forces an active flight response. Theoretically, these findings extend the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by establishing social toxicity as an aggressive structural demand that actively interacts with operational stress (Ariza-Montes et al., 2016). Furthermore, it validates the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018) by confirming that job-hopping in heavy industries is rarely a purely opportunistic career move for economic gain, but rather a desperate resource-preservation coping strategy deployed once an individual's internal defense mechanisms have completely collapsed.

Managerially, these insights provide a critical blueprint for the executive board of PT. Eka Mas Fortuna to look beyond conventional financial incentives and actively foster psychological safety on the factory floor by establishing zero-tolerance toxicity policies and optimizing grueling rotational shift schedules. HR practitioners must introduce proactive mental well-being initiatives, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), to detect and mitigate chronic burnout before it transforms into actual labor mobility. However, certain limitations must be acknowledged, as the cross-sectional design and narrow focus on a single paper mill in Malang restrict the immediate generalizability of these findings to other geographical regions or distinct industrial sectors. Consequently, future research should adopt longitudinal frameworks to track these dynamic psychological shifts over extended timelines, replicate the model across diverse sectors like banking or technology, and integrate potential buffering moderators such as perceived organizational support or psychological capital to map out more comprehensive boundary conditions.

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ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles for research involving human participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes, and informed that

they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. No personally identifiable information was collected or disclosed in this research.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI USE

The authors declare that generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used solely to support language editing, grammar refinement, and manuscript formatting. All conceptualization, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and final manuscript preparation were conducted by the authors. The authors have reviewed and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content presented in this manuscript.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The data are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements with the participating organization and the need to protect respondents' privacy.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors contributed substantially to the conception and design of the study, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the results, manuscript drafting, critical revision of the manuscript, and approval of the final version for publication. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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