

DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN HOSPITALS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR, AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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ABSTRACT

Background: Employee retention in healthcare organizations has become an important strategic concern because it is closely related to the continuity of service quality, patient safety, and the overall stability of organizational performance. High levels of turnover among healthcare workers can lead to increased recruitment and training costs, interruptions in service delivery, and a decline in organizational effectiveness. Consequently, identifying the factors that influence employee retention in hospital settings is essential. Objective: This study investigates the influence of transformational leadership on employee retention by incorporating the mediating roles of employee engagement, work-life balance, and organizational citizenship behavior among employees. Method: The research applied a quantitative method with a cross-sectional design. The study population included 621 hospital employees, from which 243 respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach. Result: The findings reveal that transformational leadership significantly affects employee engagement and work-life balance, but does not have a direct impact on employee retention. Employee engagement was found to significantly influence both organizational citizenship behavior and employee retention. Moreover, work-life balance and organizational citizenship behavior also demonstrated significant effects on employee retention. These results suggest that employee retention is largely shaped by psychological processes and organizational behaviors that emerge within the workplace environment. Conclusion: Therefore, enhancing leadership practices, strengthening employee engagement, and promoting a supportive work-life balance and positive organizational culture are essential strategies for improving employee retention in hospital organizations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee retention has emerged as an important issue in healthcare organizations because it is closely linked to the continuity of healthcare services, patient safety, and the stability of organizational operations. When healthcare institutions experience high employee turnover, the remaining staff often face increased workloads, which can disrupt service delivery and lead to additional organizational costs related to recruitment and training of new employees (Kim et al., 2020). The sustainability of an organization's workforce is influenced by a wide range of factors extending beyond compensation and financial benefits. Psychological attachment to the workplace, perceptions of leadership effectiveness, and employees' level of involvement in organizational activities are important elements that contribute to their decision to remain employed. Employees who feel valued and supported are generally more committed to their organizations and demonstrate stronger intentions to continue their careers within the same institution (Tian et al., 2020). In contrast, excessive work demands that interfere with personal and family life may increase the likelihood of withdrawal behaviors and turnover intentions. Gautam et al. (2024) noted that inadequate integration between work and personal life can negatively affect employees' willingness to stay. Consequently, employee retention should be examined through a multidimensional lens that incorporates both organizational and psychosocial determinants.

Employee retention has emerged as an important issue in healthcare organizations because it is closely linked to the continuity of healthcare services, patient safety, and the stability of organizational operations. When healthcare institutions experience high employee turnover, the remaining staff often face increased workloads, which can disrupt service delivery and lead to additional

organizational costs related to recruitment and training of new employees (Kim et al., 2020). In modern organizational environments, the ability of institutions to retain employees is influenced not only by financial incentives but also by psychological and organizational factors. Elements such as employee engagement and effective leadership play a crucial role in shaping employees' commitment and willingness to remain within the organization (Tian et al., 2020). Moreover, an imbalance between work responsibilities and personal life has been identified as a key determinant of turnover intention among healthcare workers. Gautam et al. (2024) emphasize that work-life imbalance can increase employees' intentions to leave their organizations, highlighting the importance of examining employee retention from a comprehensive and multidimensional perspective.

Given the strategic role of healthcare personnel in maintaining service quality and organizational effectiveness, efforts to strengthen employee retention are also relevant to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 3.c, which emphasizes the development and retention of the health workforce. Previous studies have demonstrated that leadership support, employee engagement, and favorable working conditions contribute to employees' willingness to remain in healthcare organizations (Kim et al., 2020; Tian et al., 2020; Gautam et al., 2024). Therefore, understanding the determinants of employee retention in hospital settings may provide valuable evidence for strengthening workforce sustainability and supporting broader health system development goals.

Globally, a Gallup report (2022) shows that low employee engagement is a major determinant of high turnover intentions in various sectors, including healthcare. In Europe, Antolí-Jover et al. (2024) reported

that work-life balance was significantly associated with the quality of life of healthcare workers during the health crisis, which subsequently influenced their level of organizational commitment. Research in Asia also shows that leadership support and the work environment contribute to nurses' retention intentions (Kim et al., 2020). This suggests that the challenge of healthcare workforce retention is a cross-national phenomenon that requires an organizational behavior-based approach.

In Indonesia, the issue of employee retention in hospitals has also attracted considerable attention. A growing body of literature indicates that employee engagement is a significant factor influencing workforce stability. Employees who feel psychologically connected to their work are generally more committed to their organizations and less likely to seek employment elsewhere. Consistent with this view, Andari et al. (2021) found that greater engagement is associated with stronger retention outcomes. Likewise, Fadilla and Yuniawan (2024) emphasized the combined contribution of work-life balance and engagement in supporting employees' willingness to remain in their organizations, especially among younger workers. In the hospital context, Jufrizen et al. (2025) reported that engagement is positively associated with organizational citizenship behavior, suggesting that engaged employees are more inclined to undertake discretionary actions that benefit the organization. Collectively, these studies highlight the strategic role of employee engagement in fostering both employee retention and constructive workplace behavior. Nevertheless, most existing national studies tend to investigate these variables independently, and only a limited number of studies have developed a comprehensive and integrative framework to explain employee retention in hospital settings.

At the regional level, similar conditions can be observed in the workforce dynamics at Siti Hajar Islamic Hospital in Sidoarjo. Findings from a preliminary assessment

conducted in February 2025 indicated noticeable fluctuations in employee turnover during the past three years, with relatively higher turnover occurring in 2022 and 2023. These variations suggest potential instability in employee retention, which may affect the continuity of healthcare services and the overall effectiveness of hospital operations. Consequently, this condition underscores the importance of empirically examining the factors that influence employee retention within the context of local healthcare institutions.

Transformational leaders influence employees by creating a sense of purpose, encouraging personal growth, and establishing supportive relationships in the workplace. Through these mechanisms, employees tend to become more motivated, actively engaged in their roles, and more committed to contributing to organizational success (Hasan et al., 2023). Research has demonstrated that employees who are highly engaged in their work are more likely to exhibit discretionary behaviors that extend beyond formal job requirements. These voluntary actions, commonly reflected in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), can enhance cooperation, improve organizational functioning, and support long-term organizational sustainability (Ompusunggu & Rifani, 2023). Furthermore, employees' ability to effectively manage the interface between occupational responsibilities and personal life has been identified as a crucial determinant of psychological health. When individuals experience a satisfactory balance between these domains, they tend to report greater well-being and a stronger willingness to continue their employment within the organization (Gautam et al., 2024). Nevertheless, empirical evidence regarding these relationships remains inconsistent, particularly concerning the direct relationship between transformational leadership and employee retention (Tian et al., 2020; Ali et al., 2024). These inconsistencies suggest the need to examine

a more comprehensive model that incorporates potential mediating variables.

Several previous studies have highlighted important aspects related to leadership and employee retention; however, certain limitations remain. Tian et al. (2020) provided evidence regarding the intermediary role of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in linking leadership with employee retention, their framework was limited to organizational behavioral factors. As a result, aspects related to employees' ability to balance occupational and personal responsibilities were not incorporated into the model. Hasan et al. (2023) primarily concentrated on employee performance outcomes rather than retention issues.

In another study, Fadilla and Yuniawan (2024) examined factors related to retention but did not simultaneously integrate transformational leadership and OCB within the same analytical model. Evidence reported by Jufrizen et al. (2025) highlighted the relevance of employee engagement and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in organizational settings. Nevertheless, the study stopped short of developing a structural model capable of explaining how these factors contribute to employee retention, as SEM-based analysis was not incorporated into the research design.

A notable gap in the literature concerns the absence of a holistic model capable of explaining the indirect influence of transformational leadership on employee retention. Although several determinants of retention have been examined independently, limited empirical attention has been given to the simultaneous mediating functions of employee engagement, work-life balance, and organizational citizenship behavior in the context of healthcare institutions.

Addressing this gap, the present study proposes a comprehensive structural model using the SEM-PLS approach that integrates these four key determinants of employee

retention within a single analytical framework. Using evidence obtained from private hospitals in Indonesia, the present study aims to clarify how multiple organizational and individual factors interact to influence employees' decisions to remain within healthcare organizations.

From a theoretical standpoint, this research extends the existing literature by developing a comprehensive model that links transformational leadership and work engagement in explaining employee retention. The study further explores multiple indirect pathways that connect leadership practices with retention outcomes while providing empirical insights from Indonesian private hospitals, a context that remains underrepresented in health management research.

The findings offer actionable recommendations for hospital decision-makers seeking to reduce workforce turnover and maintain organizational stability. Creating a supportive leadership environment, increasing employees' psychological attachment to their work, helping staff achieve balance between occupational and personal demands, and promoting voluntary behaviors that benefit the organization are likely to reinforce employees' intentions to remain within the institution. Furthermore, the proposed model may provide a useful reference for managerial decision-making aimed at reducing employee turnover and ensuring the sustainability of healthcare service delivery.

Building upon existing empirical evidence and addressing the limitations observed in previous research, this study develops an integrated framework to explore the extent to which transformational leadership contributes to employee retention through employee engagement, work-life balance, and organizational citizenship behavior in the context of Siti Hajar Islamic Hospital, Sidoarjo.

2. METHOD

An observational study with a quantitative and cross-sectional framework was conducted to analyze the connections between transformational leadership and employee retention, together with the roles of employee engagement, work-life balance, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The research setting was Siti Hajar Islamic Hospital, situated in Sidoarjo, Indonesia.

This study involved the entire hospital workforce as the population, comprising 621 employees from both medical and non-medical divisions. A total of 243 respondents were obtained following sample size estimation using the Slovin formula. The selection of participants was carried out through a purposive sampling technique to ensure that respondents met the predefined study requirements, in which participants met predetermined criteria. Only employees with a minimum tenure of one year were included, as they were considered to have sufficient familiarity with the organization and its working environment.

Five constructs were included in the analytical model of this study: transformational leadership, employee engagement, work-life balance, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and employee retention. The transformational leadership construct was represented by dimensions related to role modeling, inspirational influence, intellectual encouragement, and individualized support. Employee engagement was conceptualized through the elements of vigor, dedication, and absorption. To assess organizational

citizenship behavior, indicators reflecting altruistic behavior, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic participation were employed. In addition, work-life balance was measured by capturing both the conflicts and positive interactions between work and personal life, including mutual interference and enhancement across these two domains. Meanwhile, employee retention was measured using the indicators of career opportunities, intention to stay, and organizational commitment. Responses to all measurement items were recorded using a five-category agreement scale. The scoring system ranged from 1, indicating the lowest level of agreement, to 5, indicating the highest level of agreement with the respective statements.

Statistical analysis was undertaken using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with SmartPLS as the analytical platform. The evaluation process first focused on confirming the adequacy of the measurement properties of the constructs before examining the causal relationships specified in the research framework. Evidence of construct quality was assessed through indicator loading values, internal consistency measures, and convergent validity indicators. Following these assessments, the proposed relationships among variables were evaluated by interpreting the estimated paths and their significance levels derived from the bootstrapping method. This study also adhered to ethical research principles by ensuring that respondent participation was voluntary and maintaining the confidentiality of the data obtained.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model

Table 1. Assessment of Construct Validity and Reliability

Constructs /Items	Loading factor	α	CR	AVE
Transformational Leadership		0,863	0,906	0,709
The leadership is able to inspire me to provide the best service for patient safety and satisfaction.	0,816			
Leaders are role models in upholding professional ethics and health service standards.	0,834			
The leadership encouraged me to develop ideas and innovations to improve the quality of patient care.	0,849			
The leadership provides attention and support for my needs and professional development.	0,867			
Employee Engagement		0,731	0,847	0,650
I feel energized and remain enthusiastic in providing services to patients.	0,783			
I feel my work is meaningful and makes an important contribution to patient safety and quality of care.	0,777			
I am often so focused on providing service that I don't notice the time passing.	0,856			
Organizational Citizenship Behavior		0,825	0,877	0,590
I voluntarily assist fellow healthcare workers or other staff who are having difficulty treating patients, even if it is outside my primary responsibilities.	0,795			
I continue to carry out my duties according to standard operating procedures (SOP) in a disciplined manner even without direct supervision.	0,763			
I maintain a professional attitude and do not complain when facing work pressure or emergency conditions.	0,825			
I maintain polite communication and good coordination with colleagues to prevent errors in patient care.	0,742			
I actively participate in meetings, training, or quality improvement and patient safety programs.	0,709			
Work-Life Balance		0,895	0,927	0,761
Job demands and work schedules often interfere with my personal time and life.	0,817			
Personal problems or responsibilities sometimes affect my concentration and performance in providing service.	0,877			
The experience and skills I gained from working have had a positive impact on my personal life.	0,901			

The support from my family and personal life helps me to do a better job in providing service. 0,892

Employee Retention

I plan to stay working for a long time. 0,836

This hospital provides clear and fair opportunities for me to develop my career and improve my professional competence. 0,838

I have a strong commitment to continue contributing to improving the quality of service. 0,837

0,787 0,875 0,701

As shown in Table 1, all measurement indicators demonstrate loading factor values above 0.70, indicating that the indicators fulfill the requirement of convergent validity and are suitable for further analysis within the research model. To determine whether the constructs were sufficiently differentiated from one another, the Fornell–Larcker criterion was applied. The results demonstrated that each construct

shared more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model, as reflected by the higher square root AVE values. This pattern indicates an acceptable level of construct distinctiveness and reduces concerns regarding overlap among variables. Accordingly, the measurement model can be considered to have achieved satisfactory discriminant validity, as summarized in Table 2.

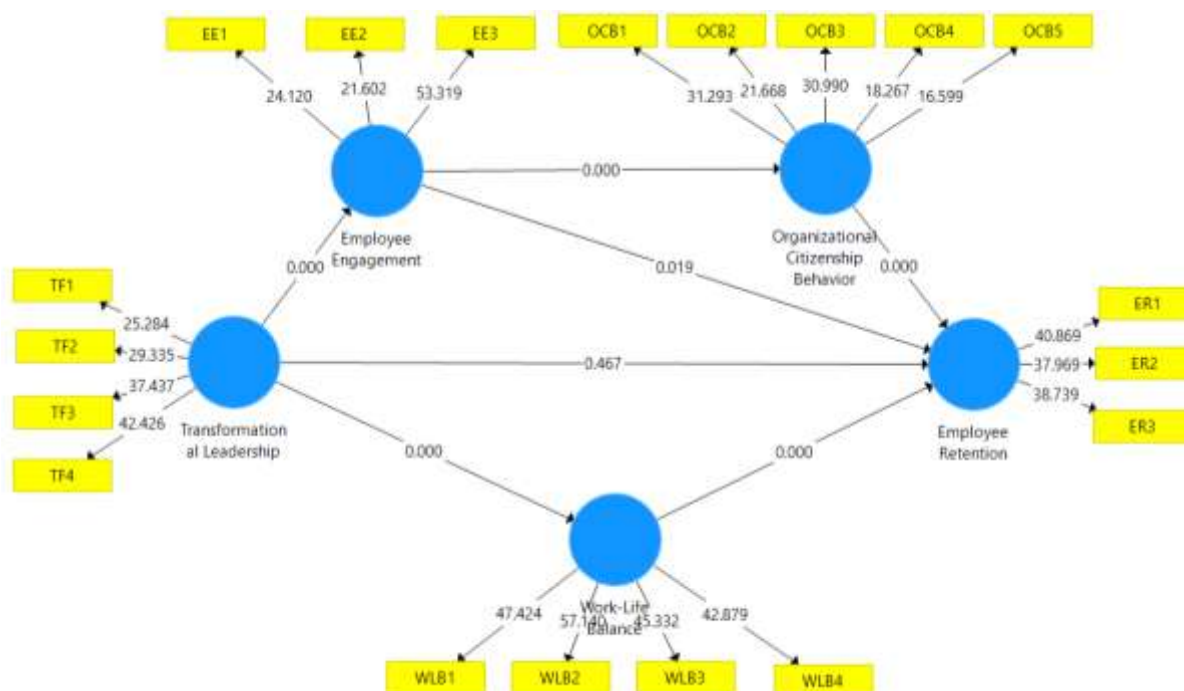
Table 2. Discriminant validity of variables (Fornell & Larcker criterion)

	EE	ER	OCB	TL	WLB
<i>Employee Engagement</i>	0,806				
<i>Employee Retention</i>	0,654	0,837			
<i>Organizational Citizenship Behavior</i>	0,710	0,767	0,768		
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>	0,565	0,389	0,500	0,842	
<i>Work-Life Balance</i>	0,544	0,720	0,613	0,296	0,872

Table 3. Hypothesis testing

Variable	Path coefficient	T Statistics	P values	Result
H ₁ : TL → EE	0,565	11,245	0,000	Accepted
H ₂ : TL → ER	-0,030	0,728	0,467	Rejected
H ₃ : TL → WLB	0,297	4,989	0,000	Accepted
H ₄ : EE → OCB	0,711	18,642	0,000	Accepted
H ₅ : EE → ER	0,151	2,370	0,019	Accepted
H ₆ : WLB → ER	0,374	6,621	0,000	Accepted
H ₇ : OCB → ER	0,446	6,524	0,000	Accepted

Notes: TL: Transformational Leadership, EE: Employee Engagement, OCB: Organizational Citizenship Behavior, WLB: Work-Life Balance, EE: Employee Retention



The hypothesis testing results summarized in Table 3 and Figure 2 show several significant relationships among the study variables. A strong positive relationship was observed between transformational leadership and employee engagement, providing empirical support for Hypothesis 1. The statistical results indicate that transformational leadership contributes significantly to enhancing employees' level of engagement within the organization ($\beta = 0.565$; $t = 11.245$; $p < 0.001$). Statistical testing revealed that Hypothesis 2 was not confirmed because the relationship between transformational leadership and employee retention failed to reach significance ($\beta = -0.030$; $t = 0.728$; $p = 0.467$). Conversely, evidence supporting Hypothesis 3 was obtained, as transformational leadership

exhibited a significant positive association with work-life balance among employees ($\beta = 0.297$; $t = 4.989$; $p < 0.001$). Additionally, Hypotheses 4 and 5 are supported, demonstrating that employee engagement significantly affects organizational citizenship behavior ($\beta = 0.711$; $t = 18.642$; p -value = 0.000) as well as employee retention ($\beta = 0.151$; $t = 2.370$; p -value = 0.019). Evidence from the structural model indicates that Hypothesis 6 is accepted, revealing a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and employee retention ($\beta = 0.374$; $t = 6.621$; $p < 0.001$). Similarly, the analysis supports Hypothesis 7, showing that higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior are associated with stronger employee retention outcomes ($\beta = 0.446$; $t = 6.524$; $p < 0.001$).

Discussion

Empirical evidence from this study suggests that transformational leadership contributes positively to employee

engagement. By fostering inspiration, providing strategic direction, and addressing employees' individual needs, leaders can encourage a deeper level of involvement and

commitment toward work-related activities. Within healthcare organizations, this leadership style encourages employees to view their responsibilities as meaningful contributions to healthcare services, which in turn increases their energy, dedication, and work focus. These findings are in line with the study conducted by Hasan et al. (2023), which demonstrated that a supportive organizational climate created by transformational leaders contributes to greater employee engagement. Furthermore, Priyanti et al. (2025) suggested that leaders who inspire and motivate employees can reinforce engagement by strengthening trust, enhancing intrinsic motivational processes, and promoting a stronger sense of connection with the organization. Xu et al. (2020) also emphasized that employee engagement plays an essential role in Sustainable Human Resource Management as it contributes to maintaining workforce stability over time. Consequently, transformational leadership can be regarded as a crucial determinant in fostering employee engagement in healthcare settings.

The analysis revealed no significant direct relationship between transformational leadership and employee retention. This suggests that workforce retention is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various organizational and individual determinants, such as employees' well-being, workplace conditions, and the quality of social connections developed within the organization. In practice, leadership tends to influence retention through indirect pathways related to organizational behavior. A similar pattern was documented by Tian et al. (2020), who demonstrated that organizational citizenship behavior serves as an intermediary pathway through which transformational leadership can affect retention outcomes. In addition, Ali et al. (2024) argued that retaining employees is rarely the result of leadership alone. Instead, leadership tends to shape employees' psychological states and workplace perceptions, which subsequently influence their willingness to continue working within

the organization. Consequently, these findings reinforce the perspective that transformational leadership primarily acts as a contextual factor that shapes employees' psychological experiences at work, which then indirectly influences retention outcomes.

The results further demonstrate that transformational leadership significantly affects employees' work-life balance. Leaders who provide emotional encouragement, flexibility in work arrangements, and attention to employees' personal circumstances can help employees manage the demands of both work and personal life more effectively. This aspect is particularly important in hospital environments, where employees often face high workloads and complicated schedules. Leadership support in such conditions plays a key role in maintaining employees' psychological health. These results correspond with the conclusions of Kaban and Wimko (2024), who found that improvements in work-life balance serve as one of the mechanisms through which transformational leadership reinforces employee commitment. Likewise, Syawal et al. (2023) noted that leaders who provide adequate support contribute to the creation of a healthier organizational climate that benefits employees' psychological welfare. Consequently, transformational leadership not only encourages work motivation but also supports employees in achieving a more balanced work-life experience.

A significant contribution of employee engagement to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) was identified in this study. When employees develop a strong psychological connection with their work, they become more willing to provide additional contributions that are not explicitly required as part of their formal roles. Within hospital organizations, this may be observed through employees' willingness to support colleagues, maintain constructive communication, and participate in activities designed to enhance healthcare service quality. These results correspond

with previous evidence reported by Ompusunggu and Rifani (2023), who identified employee engagement as a significant antecedent of organizational citizenship behavior. Similarly, Jufrizen et al. (2025) demonstrated that stronger work engagement encourages healthcare personnel to undertake discretionary actions that support organizational effectiveness beyond their prescribed duties. Consequently, employee engagement can be viewed as a key psychological driver that promotes voluntary behaviors supporting organizational effectiveness.

The findings suggest that employee engagement functions as an important mechanism for maintaining workforce continuity within organizations. Employees who feel connected, enthusiastic, and invested in their work are more likely to build a lasting relationship with their organization and demonstrate a stronger intention to stay. Similar conclusions were drawn by Andari et al. (2021), who found that engagement contributes positively to retention. In addition, Fadilla and Yuniawan (2024) argued that engagement is particularly relevant for retaining younger employees because it strengthens employees' sense of belonging and reinforces their commitment to the organization. Dewi and Maharani (2023) also reported that work environments that promote employee engagement contribute to stronger organizational commitment and greater workforce stability within healthcare organizations.

A significant relationship was identified between work-life balance and employee retention. This result suggests that employees who successfully integrate their work obligations with personal life demands are more likely to develop a long-term commitment to their organization. Achieving a balanced relationship between work and personal responsibilities can help reduce work-related stress, thereby increasing employees' job satisfaction and loyalty toward the organization. These findings correspond with previous research

indicating that work-life balance is a significant predictor of employee retention. Gautam et al. (2024) observed that difficulties in balancing work and personal responsibilities are associated with higher turnover intentions among healthcare professionals. Likewise, Antolí-Jover et al. (2024) reported positive links between work-life balance, quality of life, and organizational commitment. Supporting this perspective, Syal et al. (2024) and Muzuka et al. (2025) identified work-life balance as an important factor contributing to employees' willingness to remain within their organizations across diverse organizational environments.

The results further indicate that organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) significantly contributes to employee retention. Employees who display behaviors beyond their formal job duties tend to develop stronger emotional bonds with their organization. These voluntary actions demonstrate employees' loyalty, commitment, and willingness to provide additional contributions to organizational success. This finding supports Tian et al. (2020), who emphasized that OCB strengthens the link between leadership and employee retention. In addition, Lee et al. (2024) reported that OCB helps improve social interactions and relationships within the workplace, which subsequently enhances employee commitment. Furthermore, Soesianingsih et al. (2023) noted that the extra-role behaviors demonstrated by healthcare workers play an important role in improving the overall effectiveness of hospital organizations.

The overall evidence highlights that employees' decisions to remain in healthcare organizations are affected by a complex interplay of organizational and individual factors. Leadership behavior, the quality of the work environment, and employees' psychological well-being collectively contribute to sustaining workforce stability. Transformational leadership does not directly determine retention outcomes; instead, it contributes by shaping work

conditions that support higher levels of engagement, better work-life balance, and positive organizational behavior among employees. These results reinforce the perspective of organizational behavior theory, which suggests that workforce stability emerges from the integration of multiple organizational and psychological determinants (Sinha et al., 2024). Based on these findings, maintaining a stable workforce in hospital settings requires an

4. CONCLUSION

The findings highlight that transformational leadership can indirectly promote employees' psychological health by encouraging deeper involvement in work activities and helping employees maintain harmony between occupational demands and personal life commitments. Nevertheless, this leadership style does not directly determine employee retention. Instead, retention appears to be more closely associated with psychological mechanisms and organizational behaviors that develop within the workplace.

In addition, employee engagement significantly contributes to the development of organizational citizenship behavior and employee retention. Employees with strong engagement levels tend to exhibit constructive organizational behaviors and show greater commitment to staying with the organization. The findings suggest that achieving harmony between work and non-work domains is a crucial factor in promoting workforce stability. Employees who can navigate professional and personal responsibilities without substantial conflict are more likely to maintain a lasting attachment to their organization and demonstrate stronger retention tendencies. Moreover, organizational citizenship behavior strengthens retention since voluntary actions that benefit the organization reflect employees' strong attachment to their workplace.

integrated management approach that addresses both organizational and individual factors. Establishing supportive leadership practices, fostering stronger employee involvement, helping employees achieve balance between professional and personal responsibilities, and nurturing a workplace culture characterized by voluntary contributions beyond formal job requirements may collectively strengthen retention outcomes.

In general, employee retention in hospital organizations is shaped by the interaction of engagement, work-life balance, and positive organizational behavior. Consequently, efforts to enhance retention should involve strengthening leadership support, increasing employee engagement, and fostering a work environment that supports work-life balance and collaborative organizational culture.

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