



Antecedents and Consequences of Emotional Exhaustion' Call Center Employees

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of obsessive passion, distributive injustice on turnover intention mediated by emotional exhaustion. Data were collected from 120 call center employees in South Jakarta. The data collection technique was non-probability sampling with purposive sampling method. While for testing the hypothesis used an analytical tool in the form of Structural Equation Model (SEM). The results of hypothesis testing in this study indicated that obsessive passion has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion, distributive injustice has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion, obsessive passion has a positive effect on turnover intention, distributive injustice has a positive effect on turnover intention, emotional exhaustion has a positive effect on turnover intention, obsessive passion has a positive effect on turnover intention mediated by emotional exhaustion and distributive injustice has a positive effect on turnover intention mediated by emotional exhaustion. The managerial implication is managers must increase harmonious passion by upgrading work motivation and positive performance and reduce obsessive passion, in the salary distribution system, promotion and workload must be treated fairly so that employees do not experience distributive injustice, employees need to implement healthy sports programs and also gathering events so that employees' feeling, employees' minds and energy can return to work refreshed thereby reducing perceived emotional exhaustion, then creating a harmonious work atmosphere, reducing employee work pressure, and a fair pay system is expected to reduce the level of turnover intentions in the company.

Keywords: Obsessive Passion, Distributive Injustice, Emotional Exhaustion, Turnover Intention

1. INTRODUCTION

People have adapted technology to their daily use in the new normal era and Industrial Revolution 4.0. There are drastic changes in technology implementation in the service industry, starting from modifying the overall business landscape and workforce structure. Technology has opened the door to automation and efficiency in serving customers. On the basis of this development, the fact that companies still need a role from the call center as the frontline in distributing company information to customers. Before the new normal era and industrial revolution 4.0, call centers were used to collect as much information as possible about customers and collect all incoming request. Improvement and the ability to manage the necessity of maintaining the relationship with customers inevitably requires dealing with the ability of call centers to address the issues of recognizing opportunities and retaining customers (Telexindo, 2020). Call center employees have a crucial role in providing company information to customers, responding to complaints, and maintaining positive relationships with consumers. At this time, the need for call center positions is increasingly being shifted by technology. This leads to an increase in turnover intention. The condition of turnover intention in call center positions is influenced by several variables, namely obsessive passion, distributive injustice, and emotional exhaustion. This is also influenced by several aspects, namely the increasing number of competitors and interaction on social media, which has resulted in call center services still needing to be eliminated (Jasnita, 2021).

Call centers are often pressured to provide superior service and face high-performance standards. This pressure can trigger obsessive passion. Increasing job demands and work standards can cause employees to feel bored with their work and trigger turnover intention in employees (Lee & Cho, 2021). Additionally, when call centers interact with customers, ranging from responding to customer complaints to instant problem-solving but ignoring the resources distribution could directly impact employee motivation and engagement. On this point, it can be said that this condition causes distributive injustice, which can cause employee unrest and encourage them to resign from the company (Alyahya et al., 2022). On the other hand, it is seen that a lot of research has been conducted particularly in the field of obsessive passion and distributive injustice which could lead employees to experience emotional exhaustion (Shapoval, 2019). It is therefore, emotional Exhaustion can also mediate and strengthen the relationship between obsessive passion, distributive injustice which can cause employees to resign or turnover intention. However, the research brings in the different perspective apart from each other and hence a lack of implicit agreement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Background

2.1.1 Obsessive Passion

Obsessive passion is an employee who cannot adapt his work to other aspects of life, so the employee loses control over activities and feels interpersonal or intrapersonal pressure in carrying out his work (Nurjahnah, 2018). Obsessive passion can occur due to the process of internalizing an activity that is controlled by oneself into an individual's identity. The condition comes from pressure from oneself or outside (Emilisa, 2022). Increasing work demands can cause employees to feel bored with their work and have maximum energy in completing job demands, allowing employees to have passion in the form of obsession with their work (Bouffard, 2017). Employees with obsessive passion will experience a lack of control over their

roles in their activities and feel internal pressure to be involved in work (Burke et al., 2015). Employees with obsessive passion are dedicated, focused, and committed and find it difficult to put themselves out into their work. Because of this process, high job demands can produce fatigue and health exhaustion related to the drive for work (Lestari & Zamralita, 2018).

According to Prasetya (2015), there are five dimensions of passion as follows: (a). Meaningful connection: employees feel a close relationship between themselves and their work, where people cannot work optimally when their work identity conflicts with theirs; (b). Internal drives: strong encouragement from within employees so they can work in urgent times and have the urge to do many things; (c). work absorption: it is a cognitive condition where a person is so immersed in their work that they do not realize they are "working." Employees work with complete focus and energy, so they pay less attention to things outside of work; (d). Joy: employees who feel cheerful and happy will be more enthusiastic about working. Employees do their work without seeing it as an obligation but rather enjoy the process of working and (e). Subjective vitality: it is a condition where employees have enthusiasm, which becomes a source of energy within themselves, giving rise to enthusiasm and a source of sufficient energy to perform activities and improve abilities.

2.1.2 Distributive Injustice

Distributive injustice is experienced by employees who believe that they do not receive fair treatment in the distribution of work; they tend to experience high levels of stress and feel dissatisfied with their work from the company where they work (Anang Kistyanto, 2016). Distributive injustice is something that employees experience when they compare their efforts to the wages they receive from their work (Piccoli & de Witte, 2015). When employees believe they have exerted a high effort but have received little reward, this perceived inappropriate reciprocity will result in Emotional Exhaustion, where the measuring tool for distributive injustice is related to explicit work conditions and results. The research results of Piccoli & de Witte (2015) also confirmed this difference; in particular, distributive injustice emerged as the most essential factor in explaining the impact of work discomfort on Emotional Exhaustion.

According to Aslan & Ucar (2015), employees always match their capital, such as educational background, work experience, and work performance, and then their income, such as wages and promotions, with employees with the same position. Employees make comparisons, and this is based on their respective standards of fairness. Perceptions of distributive injustice can arise from distributive justice. Perceptions of justice differ from individual to individual. Therefore, different perceptions can result in positive or harmful behavior. Positive perceptions of organizational justice increase organizational commitment and work productivity. On the other hand, negative perceptions of organizational justice harm the organization and increase employee turnover.

2.1.3 Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is a form of stress related to work that refers to a condition where employees feel burdened by work and thus experience fatigue (Parayitam et al., 2020). Emotional exhaustion is fatigue in employees, which is related to personal feelings characterized by feelings of helplessness and depression (Septyaningsih & Palupiningdyah, 2017). Emotional exhaustion is physical fatigue, and its symptoms include lack of energy, lack of sleep, and problems in the family. When an employee is emotionally exhausted, he is no longer in a professional position (Khan, Yusoff et al., 2014). Significant antecedent conditions of emotional exhaustion in various work settings include workload, performance urgency, and work pressure (Baeriswyl et al., 2016). Due to significant emotional exhaustion such as heavy workload, lack of supportive relationships, personal commitment, inadequate employee size,

professional growth, and understanding of burnout, more than half of the workforce suffers from high levels of Emotional Exhaustion (Khan, Rasli et al., 2014).

2.1.4 Turnover Intention

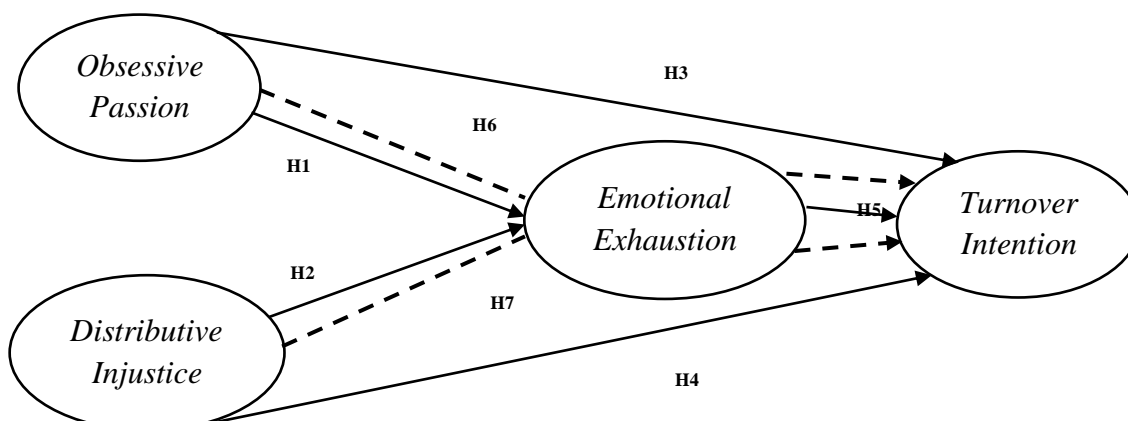
Turnover intention is when workers have a conscious plan to look for another job as an option in a different organization, and turnover is something that workers do to leave their place of work (Abdillah, 2012). Turnover Intention is also defined as the desire for workers to leave the company without coercion immediately. The condition is driven by the desire to earn more wages, continue education, have opportunities from other companies, and deal with personal matters such as family problems (Syahronica et al., 2015). When a company enters the workforce recruitment process, the long-term risk is that the company must be prepared when the workforce desires to leave the company (Hakim et al., 2018). Turnover Intention is also an employee's desire to leave the company. Turnover Intention must be handled as a phenomenon and human behavior critical to organizational life, both personally and socially. The employee's intention to leave will significantly impact both the company and the individual (Ingsih et al., 2022).

2.2. Conceptual Framework

Various descriptions show that every company has factors that influence employee performance, from the mental aspect to the physical aspect that employees feel and can be a factor that every company needs to pay attention to regarding the role of employees in the company. In other words, this results in fiercer competition and ever-changing working conditions; a company's ability to change course and provide new evolution is critical to success.

Based on the description above, it is known that in ensuring the company's success in achieving the desired goals, obsessive passion and distributive injustice are present in employees where *employee interest* in the workplace can be defined as a form of solid inclination toward work, namely really liking, appreciating, and investing a considerable amount of time and energy in the company. Until employees think about comparing their efforts to the rewards they get from their work. It means time pressure at work and the role demands of an employee who feels that the results or reciprocity they receive are appropriate. In the following situation, there is a sense of loss of employees' resources caused by these factors. Increasing obsessive passion, distributive injustice, and emotional exhaustion can reduce their sense of well-being at work, thus hurting their work-related mindset for turnover intention.

From the description above, emotional exhaustion is mediating between the influence of obsessive passion and distributive injustice on turnover intention. The conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 2.1 as follows:



2.3 Hypotheses Development

Obsessive passion tends to conflict with various aspects of life and results from the persistence of excessive activity. This condition shows how increasing work demands will make employees obsessed with passion and excessive persistence in a job, making them dependent on their work (Chen et al., 2019). Employees with obsessive passion are likelier to be busy with work and cannot relinquish their tasks, ultimately making them vulnerable to tiredness (Y. H. Lee & Cho, 2021). According to Zito et al. (2022), this also explains a positive relationship between obsessive passion and emotional exhaustion. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

H1: Obsessive passion has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion.

Distributive injustice is a lack of inappropriate reciprocity in the relationship between employees and the company. When employees reciprocally evaluate their conditions, they consider whether each has met their expectations. In this case, the comparison between company and employee can relate to any outcome, process, event, or interaction in the workplace. This lack of inappropriate reciprocity explains part of the relationship between distributive injustice, which can influence emotional exhaustion in employees. For example, employees feel a lack of control and stress in psychological needs (Laila & Khan, 2020). Piccoli and de Witte (2015) explain that there is a positive influence between distributive injustice and emotional exhaustion. Shapoval (2019) also proves that Distributive Injustice positively influences emotional exhaustion. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

H2: Distributive injustice has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion.

Employees with obsessive passion tend to think they work in an environment controlled by external drives. Due to external push factors, employees may feel pressure to work. This condition can trigger turnover intention in employees. So, it can be predicted that obsessive passion is positively related to turnover intention (Y. H. Lee & Cho, 2021), leading employees to produce more conflict and fatigue at work. According to Gong et al. (2020), there is a positive influence between obsessive passion and turnover intention. According to Agustina et al. (2022), there is a positive influence between obsessive passion and turnover intention. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

H3: Obsessive passion has a positive effect on turnover intention.

Distributive injustice causes employees to show low work performance and decrease their cooperation with co-workers. Increasing the amount of workload without proper compensation can increase the possibility of social loafing. Distributive Injustice causes employee unrest and work stress, which can also encourage employees to think about Turnover Intention from their work (Alyahya et al., 2022). Aliedan et al. (2022) explain that there is a positive influence between distributive injustice and turnover intention. Kee & Chung (2021) also prove that there is a positive influence between distributive injustice and turnover intention. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

H4: Distributive injustice has a positive effect on turnover intention.

Employees who experience high levels of emotional exhaustion are characterized by their weakened performance and lack of responsiveness to work demands, thus encouraging higher levels of emotional exhaustion, resulting in decreased work performance. With this, employees who experience emotional exhaustion can generate thoughts for turnover intention from the company. Employees tend to have turnover intentions to stop the drain on cognitive resources

when they experience emotional exhaustion (S. B. Lee & Suh, 2020). According to Cole et al. (2010), there is a positive influence between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Y. H. Lee & Cho (2021) explained that there is a positive influence between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

H5: Emotional exhaustion has a positive effect on turnover intention.

Turnover Intention is where employees intend to move from one job to another. If there is an intention to move or leave work, the work will not be done well (Waskito & Putri, 2021). One of the causes is job demands, which positively influence obsessive passion, so the higher the job demands, the higher the presence of obsessive passion in employees (Trépanier et al., 2014). Obsessive passion is characterized by really liking activities they like and considering them essential so employees will spend their time and energy, which triggers emotional exhaustion. According to Y. H. Lee & Cho (2021), emotional exhaustion mediates between obsessive passion and turnover intention. Where obsessive passion influences turnover intention indirectly through Emotional Exhaustion, based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

H6: Obsessive passion positively affects turnover intention, which is mediated by emotional exhaustion.

Turnover intention is said to be a form of an employee's desire to leave the company consistently; this may occur voluntarily by the employee or the company, which can make human resource management costs high. Usually, this decision is the final decision after the employee measures what the employee has got after working all this time. Because various circumstances may have an impact on employees. One of them is distributive injustice at work, such as lower salaries for employees, promotions, and rewards, which will reduce employees' achievements, can prevent workers from achieving their professional goals and make them often feel emotionally exhausted (Alyahya et al., 2022; Piccoli & De Witte, 2015). Tayfur et al. (2013) explained that emotional exhaustion mediates between distributive injustice and turnover intention. According to Cole et al. (2010), emotional exhaustion mediates between distributive injustice and turnover intention. Distributive injustice influences turnover intention indirectly through emotional exhaustion. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

H7: Distributive injustice positively affects turnover intention, which is mediated by emotional exhaustion.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This type of research uses hypothesis testing. In this study, data collection was cross-sectional because the data taken resulted from a single deployment at a specified time. The unit of analysis studied was the call center's employees.

3.2 Variable and Measurement

The variable used in this study are obsessive passion and emotional exhaustion, where the statement items are developed by Y. H. Lee & Cho, (2021), distributive passion and turnover intention adapted from Alyahya *et al.*, (2022).

3.3 Population and Sample

The population in this study were call center's employees. The determination of the sample was carried out using a non-probability method, namely purposive sampling with 120 samples filled

out the questionnaires. According to Hair et. al (2018) maximum samples size is number of statement multiplied by ten.

3.4 Research Instrument Testing

From the results of the research instrument testing, all constructs are valid because have a factor loading of more than 0.5. All variables are also reliable because they have a Cronbach alpha of more than 0.6

3.5 Analysis Method

The analysis using descriptive statistics in the form of mean and for hypothesis testing using the Structural Equation Model with AMOS software.

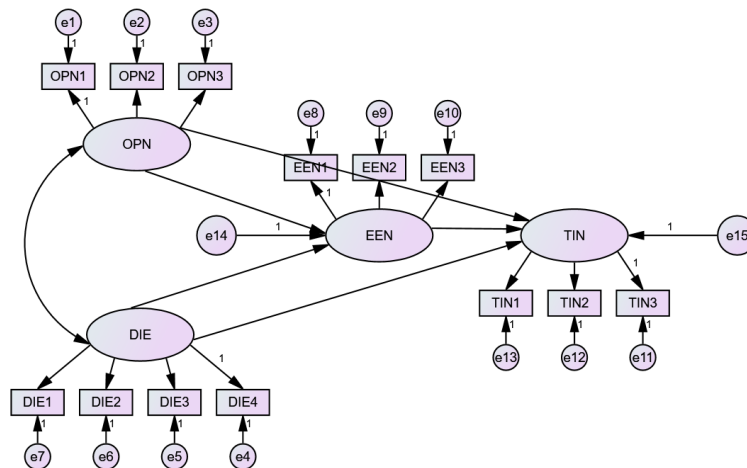


Figure 1: Structural Equation Model

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Most of the respondents were male (52.5%), many of them were 18-25 years old (56.7%) with a length of work 1-3 years (83.3%) and the last education was Diploma Degree (50%).

4.2 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic Obsessive Passion

No	Indicator	Mean
1	I have an obsessive feeling about my work	3.76
2	If I could, I would just work	3.85
3	I have a feeling, that my work controls me	3.77
Total mean		3.79

Source : Data processed (2023)

From the table 1 above, it can be concluded that total mean for the obsessive passion variable is 3.79. This result shows that call center employees feel entirely bound by their work and are forced to do it, so there is pressure on employees to carry out their work.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistic Distributive Injustice

No	Indicator	Mean
1	The results do not reflect the efforts I have put into my work	3.62
2	The results obtained do not match the work I have completed	3.54
3	The results do not reflect anything I have contributed to the company	3.58
4	The results obtained cannot be justified, considering my performance accordingly	3.56
Total mean		3.57

Source : Data processed (2023)

It can be concluded that the total mean of the distributive injustice variable is 3.57. This shows that employees feel mistreated regarding the rewards and workload they receive because it is not under what they have invested in the company.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistic Emotional Exhaustion

No	Indicator	Mean
1	I feel emotionally drained from my work	3.87
2	I feel tired when I wake up in the morning	4.06
3	Working with lots of people is tiring for me	3.93
Total mean		3.95

Source : Data processed (2023)

From Table 3 above, it can be concluded that the total mean for the emotional exhaustion variable is 3.95. It means that call center employees feel exhausted because they have to show emotions that their employees do not feel.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistic Turnover Intention

No	Indicator	Mean
1	I often thought about leaving my job	3.64
2	There is no need for any other factors, so I leave this job	3.60
3	I will probably look for another job soon	3.75
Total mean		3.66

Source : Data processed (2023)

Total mean of turnover intention variable is 3.66. It shows that call center employees reasonably feel like leaving their jobs.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing Result and Discussion

Table 4: Hypotheses Testing Result

Hyphoteses	Estimation (β)	ρ value	Decision
Obsessive Passion \rightarrow Emotional Exhaustion	0.403	0.000	Supported
Distributive Injustice \rightarrow Emotional Exhaustion	0.178	0.009	Supported
Obsessive Passion \rightarrow Emotional Exhaustion	0.464	0.000	Supported
Distributive Injustice \rightarrow Turnover Intention	0.338	0.012	Supported
Emotional Exhaustion \rightarrow Turnover Intention	0.594	0.000	Supported
Obsessive Passion \rightarrow Emotional Exhaustion \rightarrow Turnover Intention	0.240	0.007	Supported

Distributive Injustice → Emotional Exhaustion → Turnover Intention	0.106	0.009	Supported
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Source : Data processed (2023)

Table 4 shows a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$ with an estimated value (β) of 0.403, so it can be concluded that obsessive passion positively affects emotional exhaustion. It illustrates that call center employees feel bound by their work and are forced to do it, so there is pressure on the employee to carry out the work, feeling stressed and tired. The workload felt by call center employees is heavy, especially for those working the third shift, from midnight to morning. The results of this research are supported by previous research conducted by Y. H. Lee & Cho (2021); Zito et al. (2022); Amarnani et al. (2020). This condition can also be linked to the obsessive passion variable, where employees have obsessive feelings about their work. Furthermore, the emotional exhaustion variable, namely, employees feel tired when they wake up. It means that call center employees feel an obsessive passion for their work, which causes the employees' energy to feel drained to face the next day, so employees feel they have reached a high level of fatigue. As explained in the theory in Prasetya's research (2015), one of the dimensions of passion is work absorption, where a person is immensely engrossed in their work, such as call center employees who have to immediately complete work due to disturbances in the field at uncertain times when carrying out their work.

The results of testing the second hypothesis show a significance value of $0.009 < 0.05$ with an estimated value (β) of 0.178, so it can be concluded that Distributive Injustice positively affects emotional exhaustion. It illustrates that call center employees feel they are mistreated regarding rewards and workload, which, of course, will have a negative impact on the employees' emotional exhaustion. One of the employee's job duties is to resolve all customer complaints. It is felt that the rewards received are not appropriate. This condition can increase negative feelings, and employees have to manipulate true feelings when receiving rewards that do not match what is invested in the company. The results of this research are supported by previous research conducted by Piccoli & de Witte (2015); Laila & Khan (2020), Shapoval (2019). The result can also be related to the variable in distributive injustice, namely if the results obtained do not reflect the employee's efforts in their work, and the item in emotional exhaustion, where the employee feels his energy drained emotionally. This means that call center employees feel that they are not paid commensurately for the work they complete, so they only feel excessively tired and no longer have the motivation to work.

Testing the third hypothesis produces a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$ with an estimated value (β) of 0.464, so it can be concluded that obsessive passion positively affects turnover intention. Employees feel bound by their work and forced to do it because there is pressure on them to carry out the work, which can increase turnover intention. With the increase in customer complaints received by call center employees, employees have more job demands than before. Employees being tied to their work causes conflict at work and decreases work performance, so employees tend to think about leaving the company. The results of this research are supported by previous research conducted by (Y. H. Lee & Cho, 2021), Gong et al. (2020), and Agustina et al. (2022). If associated with the variable obsessive passion, the employee feels that work controls the employee's self, and the item on turnover intention is where the employee may immediately look for another job. It means that employees feel that work targeted by applicable regulations causes them to feel very tied to achieving targets and feel controlled by the job; this impacts employees who will choose to look for another job.

The fourth result shows a significance value of $0.012 < 0.05$ with an estimated value (β) of 0.338, meaning that distributive injustice positively affects turnover intention. Call center

employees feel that they are mistreated; they feel that the compensation, rewards, and workload given to employees are not commensurate with what they expect; this can, of course, increase turnover intention. Call center employees always serve customers every day, so this shows the large number of work demands that must be completed. This triggers employees to turnover intention from the company for inappropriate workloads. The results of this research are supported by previous research conducted by Alyahya et al. (2022), Aliedan et al. (2022), Kee & Chung (2021). This can also be related to the statement on the distributive injustice variable, namely that the results obtained do not reflect the efforts made at work, and on the turnover intention variable, namely that employees will probably immediately look for another job. This means that employees feel that the compensation given is not commensurate with what they invested; they will be less motivated and look for another job to provide better compensation. The theory in Houkes et al.'s (2003) research explains that workload is the work obligations resulting from a person's work.

The significance value for testing the fifth hypothesis is $0.000 < 0.05$ with an estimated value (β) of 0.594, so it can be concluded that Emotional Exhaustion positively affects Turnover Intention. Call center employees feel excessive fatigue caused by increasing work demands and working too hard, which has an impact on Turnover Intention. Call center employees who have direct contact with customers, such as receiving telephone calls and various complaints, tend to drain the employees' emotional exhaustion. This condition will cause discomfort, so employees intend to leave the job. The results of this research are supported by previous research conducted by Y. H. Lee & Cho (2021), S. B. Lee & Suh (2020), and Cole et al. (2010). It can also be related to the statement on the Emotional Exhaustion variable, namely, working with lots of people is really tiring, and the Turnover Intention variable, namely that employees will probably immediately look for another job, which means the drain of positive energy, so employees will tend to think that in a short time, they might look for another job.

The table of hypothesis testing results above shows a significance value of $0.007 < 0.05$ with an estimated value (β) of 0.240, so it can be concluded that obsessive passion has a positive effect on turnover intention, which is mediated by emotional exhaustion. Employees feel bound by their work, so there is pressure on them to carry out their work, so they will experience emotional exhaustion, which makes them feel excessively tired and stressed about their work. The impact is that employees intend to leave their jobs. This research is supported by previous research conducted by Y. H. Lee & Cho (2021), Y. H. Lee & Chelladurai (2016), and then from the results of Donahue et al. (2012). This result can also be linked to the theory in research by Waskito and Putri (2021), where employees intend to resign from the company, characterized by increased absenteeism, reduced performance, and compliance with the rules and regulations carried out by employees, such as employees who are often not present at meetings.

The results of the latest hypothesis testing show a significance value of $0.009 < 0.05$ with an estimated value (β) of 0.106, so it can be concluded that distributive injustice positively affects turnover intention, which is mediated by emotional exhaustion. It illustrates that employees' emotional exhaustion is a mediating variable on the influence of distributive injustice on call center employee turnover intention. When given rewards, appreciation, and workload, employees feel treated unfairly and dissatisfied with their work; employees will experience emotional exhaustion, which makes them feel excessively tired and stressed. This results in the employee intending to leave the job. This research is supported by previous research conducted by Alyahya Piccoli (2022) and Tayfur et al. (2013). Furthermore, Ghosh et al. (2013) research shows organizational factors such as position and remuneration, where employees who have completed tasks do not receive appropriate rewards.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Increased job demands for employees. These triggers call center employees to have a high attachment to their work, where employees cannot regulate their work activities and personal activities; employees also feel the existence of distributive injustice when carrying out their work, where employees feel unfair regarding the provision of compensation, rewards, and workload so that Employees experiencing emotional exhaustion tend to feel often excessively tired, stressed and worried about continuity in work and may think about wanting a turnover intention from the company. All hypotheses tested were supported.

5.2 Recommendations

It is hoped that future researchers will not only research companies operating in the telecommunications sector but can apply it to companies in other fields. In future research, we hope to increase the number of other variables outside the variables used in this research. Such as perceived external prestige and deviant workplace behavior (Emilisa et al., 2018).

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