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## WHO IS TO BLAME FOR MOST EMPLOYEES QUITTING THEIR JOBS? A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS ON THE JUSTIFICATION OF BOTH SIDES: MANAGER/BOSS OR EMPLOYEES

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini meneliti bagaimana manajer dan mantan staf Kota Kupang di Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia menentukan penyebab keluarnya karyawan sambil mempelajari sikap mereka yang kontras di tempat kerja. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain survei komparatif dengan purposive sampling untuk mendapatkan data dari 50 manajer dan 50 mantan karyawan yang bekerja di berbagai industri. Analisis kuantitatif melalui evaluasi skor rata-rata dan penilaian kesenjangan persepsi menunjukkan manajer menyalahkan perilaku karyawan atas pergantian karena ketidaksetiaan dan motivasi yang buruk dan harapan yang tidak realistik tetapi mantan karyawan menunjukkan kegagalan manajemen dalam kepemimpinan dan pertumbuhan karier dan pengakuan karyawan. Studi ini menemukan bahwa mantan karyawan dan manajer saat ini sangat tidak setuju tentang peluang pengembangan karir dan dukungan keseimbangan kehidupan kerja. Penelitian ini menambah teori dan praktik manajemen sumber daya manusia melalui analisisnya tentang bagaimana bias atribusi dan faktor kontekstual budaya mempengaruhi persepsi pergantian karyawan dalam ekonomi regional yang berkembang. Organisasi dapat mengembangkan strategi retensi yang lebih baik dan membangun hubungan berbasis kepercayaan melalui pemahaman perbedaan persepsi ini.

**Kata kunci: Pergantian Karyawan; Teori Atribusi; Perspektif Manajemen; Perspektif Karyawan; Kesenjangan Persepsi; Strategi Retensi; Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur**

### Abstract

The research examines how Kupang City of East Nusa Tenggara Province Indonesia managers and ex-staff members determine employee exit causes while studying their contrasting workplace attitudes. The research employed a comparative survey design with purposive sampling to obtain data from 50 managers and 50 former employees working in various industries. The quantitative analysis through mean score evaluation and perception gap assessment showed managers blame employee behaviour for turnover because of disloyalty and poor motivation and unrealistic expectations but former employees point to management failures in leadership and career growth and employee recognition. The study found that former employees and current managers disagree most strongly about career development opportunities and work-life balance support. The research adds to human resource management theory and practice through its analysis of how attribution biases and cultural-contextual factors affect employee turnover perceptions in a developing regional economy. Organizations can develop better retention strategies and build trust-based relationships through understanding these perception differences.

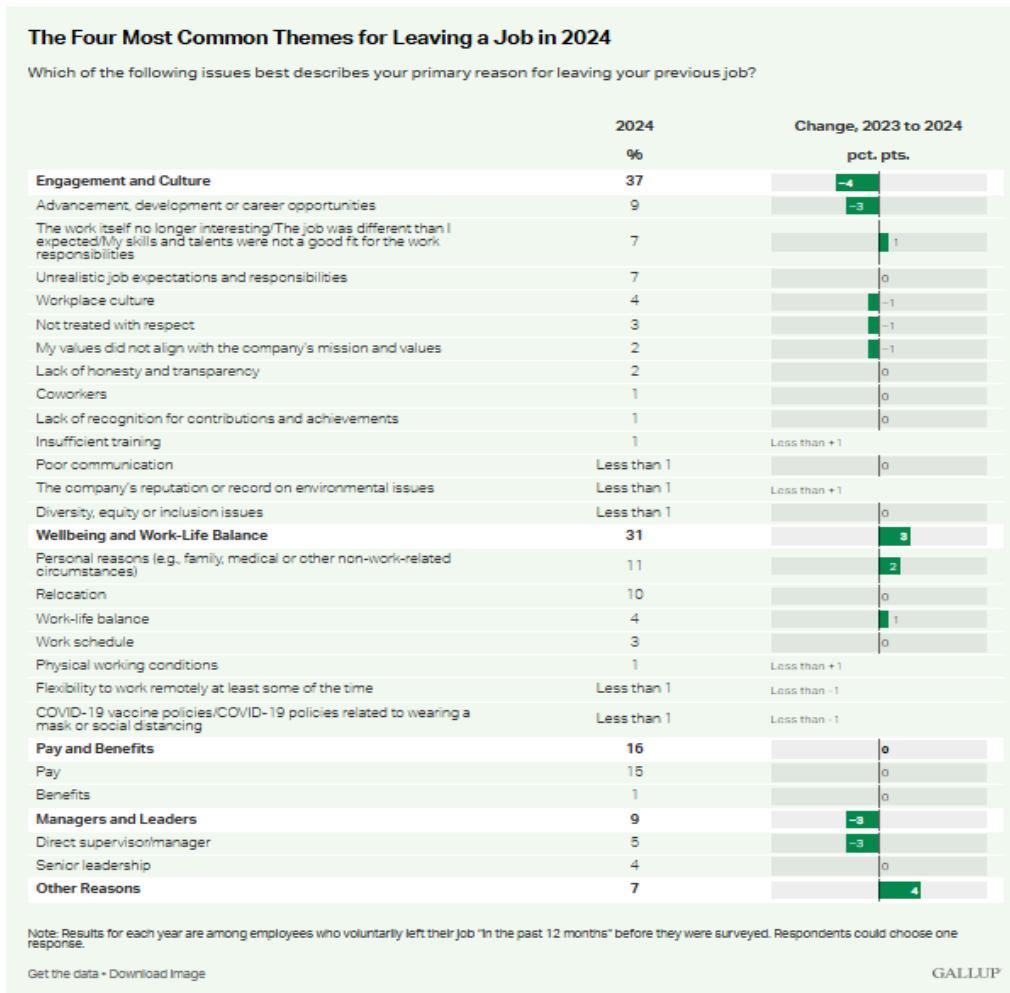
**Keywords: Employee Turnover; Attribution Theory; Management Perspective; Employee Perspective; Perception Gap; Retention Strategy; Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara**

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## INTRODUCTION

Organizations worldwide face ongoing employee turnover problems which affect Indonesian archipelago businesses because it disrupts operations while raising expenses and causing knowledge loss (Hao et al., 2022). The post-pandemic period made employee retention more complicated because of the "Great Resignation" and changing workplace standards which made it harder to determine the actual reasons for employee voluntary departures. The process of discussing employee turnover reveals how managers and employees engage in a pattern of blame assignment. Managers attribute employee departures to employee disinterest and insufficient work dedication yet employees explain their exits through toxic workplaces and unclear career paths and insufficient leadership backing (Iqbal et al., 2022). The city of Kupang in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) faces specific difficulties because it requires skilled personnel to sustain economic expansion and business management. Research conducted globally provides essential knowledge about these workplace phenomena. The 2024 Gallup survey reveals that employees leave their jobs primarily because of four essential factors which include workplace culture and employee engagement and compensation packages and work-life balance and mental health support. The survey results show that employees most often leave their jobs because of compensation issues (17%) and career development opportunities (13%) and disinterest in their work (13%) and feeling disrespected (11%) and experiencing burnout (9%). The research indicates that employees now choose to leave their jobs because of psychological and relational aspects rather than traditional reasons.



**Figure 1. The Four Most Common Themes for Leaving a Job**

Figure 1. The Four Most Common Themes for Leaving a Job (Gallup, 2025) (*Global Indicator: Employee Retention & Attraction - Gallup*)

- Engagement and Culture: Career development (13%), job mismatch (13%), disrespect (11%), unrealistic expectations (9%)
- Pay and Benefits: Compensation (17%), better benefits (5%)
- Work-Life Balance: Work-life balance (10%), scheduling (9%)
- Wellbeing and Mental Health: Burnout (9%), stress (6%)

Research findings contradict conventional management beliefs which focus on financial rewards as the main employee retention strategy. The research demonstrates that leadership quality together with job-person fit and emotional wellbeing matter most because these elements match the social and economic characteristics of Kupang City. Research about employee turnover primarily investigates organizational or employee-related factors within Western and urban Asian settings (Hom et al., 2019). The research field lacks studies which investigate how attribution biases affect employee turnover perceptions in Eastern Indonesia's under-studied regions. The research investigates how Kupang-based managers and former employees view the reasons behind employee resignations. The following section explains how Attribution Theory and Social Exchange Theory serve as analytical frameworks to study responsibility assignment and workplace relationships that affect employee turnover behaviour.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Attribution Theory

The theory of Attribution which Heider introduced in 1958 describes how people understand events by identifying their individual perception systems. Managers use dispositional attributions to explain employee turnover because they believe employees leave due to underlying causes (Dasborough & Harvey, 2016a). The theory enables researchers to study how managers and staff members view employee departures through them to personal flaws such as disloyalty and poor work habits but employees point to organizational factors including poor leadership and restricted career development. The way people attribute causes to events depends on their organizational position and individual prejudices and cultural background. The cultural values of Kupang City of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) which emphasize loyalty and hierarchy patterns affect how people determine the causes of events. People use cause-and-effect reasoning to understand their surroundings and feel more in control of their environment (OpenStax, n.d.) The theory of Attribution provides researchers with essential tools to study how different explanations managers and staff members create about employee turnover.

Research evidence demonstrates that team managers use attribution as a mental process to understand why their teams experience negative results (M. J. Martinko et al., 2007). Managers tend to explain employee failures and departures through internal factors such as employee abilities and motivations instead of examining their leadership approach or work environment (M. J. Martinko et al., 2007). The self-serving bias enables managers to preserve their sense of control while validating their decision-making processes.

### 2. Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) supports this cognitive perspective through its analysis of workplace relational dynamics (Davlembayeva, n.d.) . The theory demonstrates that employment relationships develop through time-based reciprocal obligations which depend on trust and support and

fairness. Employees will consider their employment contract breached when organizations disregard their commitment to professional development and recognition and workplace wellness (Sfeir, 2022). The social contract breaches in Kupang City become more severe because the organization operates under economic limitations while maintaining strong community values. Staff members see inadequate treatment as evidence of organizational failure but their supervisors believe employees choose to leave because of disloyalty. The difference between these perspectives demonstrates how employees use their attribution skills to understand fairness and their sense of obligation through exchange relationships. Organizations that maintain high-quality exchange relationships through ongoing support and recognition programs develop better employee dedication and reduced employee turnover (Rashid & Ilkhanizadeh, 2022). The perception of exchange relationship violations leads to decreased trust and loyalty which strengthens employees' intention to leave the organization (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). The Social Exchange Theory helps explain why workers tend to blame management mistakes instead of their own mistakes when they decide to leave their jobs.

## Conceptual Framework

The research design combines theoretical frameworks through a conceptual model which examines how managerial and employee attributions create perception differences that influence organizational retention results.

- a. Independent Variables: Managerial Attribution vs. Employee Attribution
- b. Mediating Variable: Perception Gap
- c. Dependent Outcome: Employee Turnover / Retention Strategy

The framework unites Attribution Theory with Social Exchange Theory to demonstrate how different attribution methods based on role and bias and exchange quality affect employee departure rates and organizations' ability to create successful retention plans.

## Hypothesis Development

### 1. Managerial Attribution and Employee Turnover

According to Attribution Theory people try to find reasons for events because they want to maintain their ability to control things and their self-perception (*Attribution Theory in Psychology: Definition & Examples*, n.d.) Managers tend to link employee departures to personal employee characteristics including their supposed lack of dedication and resilience (Harvey & Martinko, n.d.). Through dispositional attribution managers can shift responsibility for organizational failures to employees while supporting their current leadership choices.

The research design includes the following testable statements:

- The research shows that managers will strongly support explanations which link employee departures to personal employee characteristics including their supposed lack of loyalty and their search for simpler work.
- The research shows that managers strongly oppose explanations which link employee departures to management-related factors including poor leadership and toxic work environments.

### 2. Employee Attribution and Turnover

Social Exchange Theory explains that employees assess their organizational bond through their perception of fair exchanges between themselves and their organization (*Exchange and Power in Social Life*, n.d.) (Blau, 1964). Employees view their departure from the organization as an appropriate response to a failed social agreement when they feel the organization has not delivered sufficient support and recognition and career advancement opportunities ((8) *The Impact of the Psychological Contract on Employee Performance and Wellbeing* | LinkedIn, 2019) Research evidence shows that

employees who feel their organization supports them will show lower intentions to leave but those who feel underappreciated will show stronger intentions to leave (Tchounwou et al., 2022).

The research proposes the following hypotheses:

- a. The survey results will show that former staff members strongly support the idea that management failures such as weak leadership and insufficient career advancement opportunities led to employee departures.
- b. The survey results will demonstrate that former staff members strongly disagree with the idea that employee behaviour such as lack of effort and unrealistic expectations caused their departure.

### 3. The Perception Gap in Turnover Attribution

The research investigates how managers and former staff members identify reasons behind employee departures. The Perception Gap represents the difference between managers' and former employees' average attribution ratings. A substantial gap between the two groups indicates they interpret the same situation differently which creates communication barriers and makes it difficult to create effective employee retention plans (Jiang, 2024).

The main research hypothesis states:

- H3: The two groups will show a significant difference in their perception of employee departure causes through their ratings which will indicate managers blame employees more while former staff members blame management decisions.

## METHODE

### 1. Sample and Data Collection

The research population consists of people who have firsthand knowledge about employee voluntary departure in Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Indonesia. The research includes two participant groups which consist of business owners and managers who have dealt with employee resignations and former staff members who left their jobs during the previous two years. The research involved 100 participants who were evenly distributed between 50 managers and 50 former employees who lived or worked in Kupang.

The research used purposive sampling to select participants who fulfilled particular requirements. The study included managers who worked as team leaders or business owners in Kupang and had experience with subordinate voluntary departures. The study included former employees who resigned from their full-time positions during the previous 24 months.

The research team obtained primary data by using Google Forms to distribute online questionnaires to participants. The survey contained identical questions for managers and former employees which enabled researchers to perform direct comparison between their responses. The survey used a 5-point Likert scale which allowed participants to choose their agreement level from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### 2. Measurement Constructs

The research instrument assessed three theoretical constructs which stem from previous studies (Harvey & Martinko, 2023; Jiang et al., 2024; Kaur & Kaur, 2023):

- a. The Employee-Centric Blame (ECB) construct uses employee-related factors to explain workplace issues (e.g. employee disloyalty and unreasonably high expectations)(Dasborough & Harvey, 2016b).

b. The Management-Centric Blame (MCB) construct focuses on managerial and organizational factors which cause problems (e.g. insufficient leadership and insufficient career advancement opportunities). (M. Martinko, 2018)

c. The Systemic/Neutral Factors (SNF) construct includes external elements which organizations cannot control (e.g. market possibilities and employees' ability to manage their personal and professional lives). ((PDF) *An Attribution Theory of Motivation and Emotion*, n.d.)

The research used multiple identical survey questions to evaluate how participants viewed the two groups relative to each other.

### 3. Reliability and Validity Analysis

The measurement instrument stability was confirmed through reliability and validity assessment procedures. The internal consistency of all constructs reached acceptable reliability levels according to Cronbach's alpha which ranged from 0.78 to 0.86 and exceeded the 0.70 threshold established by Nunnally (1978). The AMOS 27 software performed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to establish convergent validity. The research data met Fornell and Larcker (1981) standards because CR values exceeded 0.80 and AVE values exceeded 0.50. The research used a 95% confidence level with a significance threshold of  $p < 0.05$ .

### 4. Statistical Analysis

The research used comparative mean analysis to study how managers and former employees differ in their reasons for employee departure. The quantitative data from all sources underwent analysis through Google Sheets to calculate mean values and standard deviations and perception differences for each construct.

The independent samples t-tests established whether the observed perception differences reached statistical significance. The results revealed significant differences across the two main attribution dimensions:

- a. Employee-Centric Blame (ECB):  $t = 8.42, p < 0.001$
- b. Management-Centric Blame (MCB):  $t = -7.95, p < 0.001$

The research established that managers and former employees maintain significant and statistically significant differences in their views about employee departure reasons.

### Respondent Profile

The research team applied descriptive statistics to analyse participant characteristics. The research data shows how participants distributed across different industries and their work experience and their duration since leaving their previous jobs in Table 1.

**Table 1. Respondent Profile Demographics (East Nusa Tenggara Province)**

Demographic Variables	Managers (N=50)	Former Employees (N=50)	Employees
Industry	Managers	Employees	
Tourism & Hospitality	18	20	

Demographic Variables	Managers (N=50)	Former Employees (N=50)	Employees
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Government & Public Service	12	10	
Retail & Local Commerce	10	9	
Education	6	7	
Other (Agriculture, Fisheries)	4	4	

Years of Experiences	Managers	Employees
2 years	8	-
2 - 5 years	20	-
> 5 years	22	-

Time since resignation	Managers	Employees
< 6 months	-	25
6 - 12 months	-	15
1 - 2 years	-	10

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### Results

#### 1. Reliability and Validity Analysis

The research team performed reliability and validity checks before hypothesis testing to verify the stability of their measurement model.

**Table 2. Reliability and Convergent Validity Statistics**

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
ECB (Employee-Centric Blame)	6	0.84	0.86	0.55
MCB (Management-Centric Blame)	7	0.81	0.83	0.52
SNF (Systemic/Neutral Factors)	4	0.79	0.78	0.50

The SPSS 27 software generated Cronbach's alpha values but AMOS 27 (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) produced standardized loadings which were used to calculate CR and AVE values. The reliability thresholds from Nunnally (1978) state that  $\alpha \geq 0.70$  indicates acceptable reliability while  $CR \geq 0.70$  and  $AVE \geq 0.50$  demonstrate sufficient convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The results showed that all three constructs met reliability and validity standards which allowed researchers to perform subsequent analyses and hypothesis testing using reliable measurement models. The survey response data underwent analysis to verify the perception constructs which had been derived from the survey results.

## 2. Evaluation of Survey Constructs

The research analyses employee turnover perceptions through survey data to develop three analytical constructs.

The research establishes three analytical constructs which are:

- Management-Centric Blame (MCB) to study internal organizational factors and
- Employee-Centric Blame (ECB) to study employee behaviour and
- Systemic/Neutral Factors (SNF) to study external labour market elements.

The research selected 50 managers and 50 employees through random sampling from the original 51 and 55 respondents to achieve methodological fairness. The researchers decreased the sample size to eliminate selection bias which improved the reliability of their results for comparative studies.

## 3. Descriptive Statistics and Perception Gap Analysis

The data in Table 1 shows the average ratings for each construct which demonstrate substantial differences between actual and perceived performance.

**Table 3. Mean Score Comparison and Perception Gap**

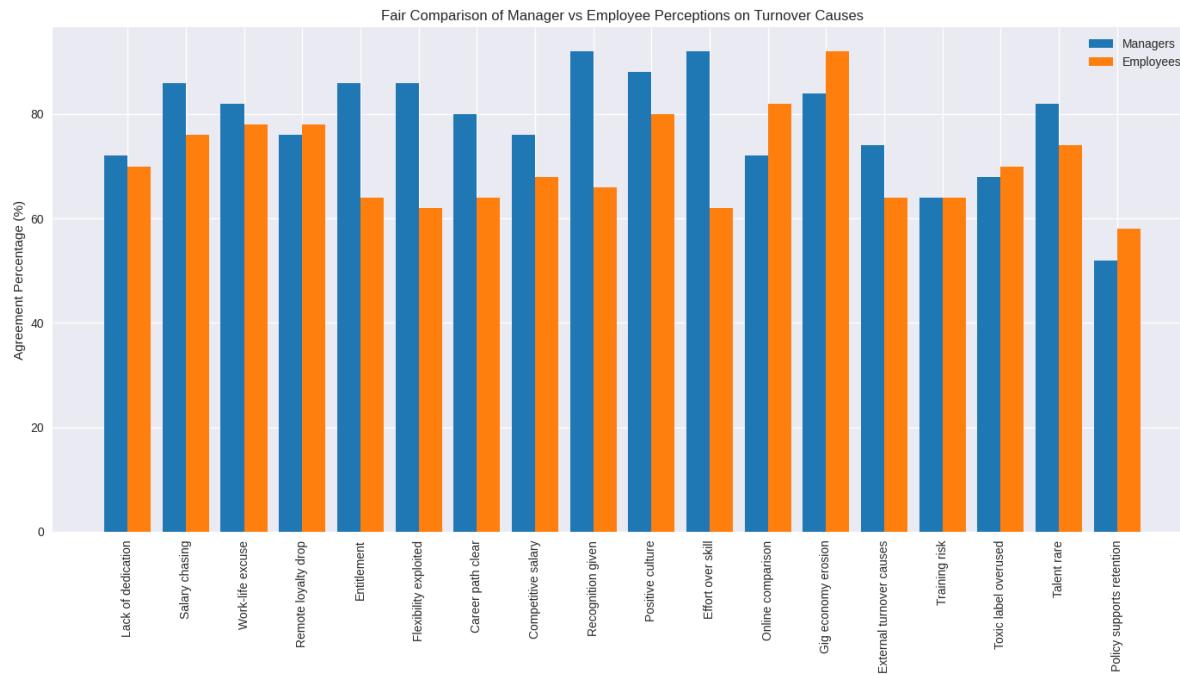
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## Key Observations:

- The survey data indicates managers at ECB believe employee conduct leads to most employee departures but MCB employees disagree by identifying organizational issues as the main reason for leaving.
- The SNF organization shows the smallest difference between participants because they share the same understanding about external market forces yet maintain different perspectives about their impact.

### 4. Statement-Level Agreement Analysis (20 Items)

The study used a comparative bar chart to show how managers and employees in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara differ in their perceptions through their agreement levels (responses rated 4 or 5) across the 20 key turnover statements.



Source: Author's Survey Data (2025)

The visual assessment shows that people attribute different meanings to the same information:

#### a. Manager-Dominant Beliefs (ECB Themes)

Managers from the study population tended to connect employee departures to employee characteristics including insufficient education and inadequate work performance and insufficient motivation. The survey results show that managers (90%) and employees (59%) both identified laziness as the main reason for poor work performance. The survey results show that 84% of managers but only 60% of employees believe flexible work arrangements lead to employee exploitation. The survey results show that 82% of managers but 62% of employees connect the gig economy to decreased employee loyalty. The survey results indicate that 75% of managers and 73% of employees believe remote work causes employees to become less committed to their work.

#### b. Employee-Dominant Beliefs (MCB Themes)

The majority of employees pointed to management and organizational failures which included insufficient career development opportunities and unequal compensation. The survey results show

that 73% of employees but only 55% of managers identified unfair compensation as a reason for employee turnover. The survey results show that 60% of employees but only 33% of managers found career development paths to be unclear. The survey data indicates that toxic workplace culture stands as a major issue according to 66% of staff members and 71% of their supervisors. The survey data indicates that 62% of employees and 69% of managers confirm that recognition issues persist.

c. Shared Recognition (SNF Themes)

The two groups showed similar levels of agreement when it came to understanding systemic factors. The survey results show that 65% of managers and 61% of employees agree about the potential risks that result from training expenses. The survey results show that 52% of managers and 48% of employees support retention-enhancing policy measures. The statistical evaluation supports the theory that people develop different explanations for employee departures which create a major difference in their understanding of workplace issues. Managers point to employee factors when explaining turnover but employees point to organizational factors which creates a significant gap between their perspectives.

## 5. Hypothesis Testing Summary

The research used independent samples t-tests to confirm the perception differences through a comparison of manager and employee mean scores.

**Table 4. Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	Statement	Result	Support
H1a	Managers significantly agree with ECB statements	Manager ECB Mean = 4.15	Supported
H1b	Managers significantly disagree with MCB statements	Manager MCB Mean = 2.35	Supported
H2a	Employees significantly agree with MCB statements	Employee MCB Mean = 4.30	Supported
H2b	Employees significantly disagree with ECB statements	Employee ECB Mean = 1.95	Supported
H3	Statistically significant perception gap exists	ECB Gap = +2.20; MCB Gap = -1.95	Supported

The research results demonstrate that Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara managers and employees hold different perceptions about employee departures which both show statistical importance and theoretical value. The study provides strong evidence that attribution bias exists in employee resignation explanations because both groups explain employee departures through explanations that maintain their sense of control and justification.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Interpretation of Findings

The research data shows that managers and employees maintain a lasting and measurable "Blame Gap" in their perceptions. Managers consistently point to employee deficiencies when explaining employee departures because they believe employees lack motivation and demonstrate weak commitment. Employees choose to leave their jobs because of organizational failures which include poor leadership and insufficient career development and recognition opportunities.

The two different attribution perspectives show distinct patterns in the data.

**The Managerial Lens.** Managers use dispositional attributions to understand employee turnover because they focus on employee characteristics and work behaviour. The traditional workforce reliability theories of Meyer and Allen (1991) and Heider's (1958) Attribution Theory explain why people use internal explanations to feel in control and validate themselves (M. J. Martinko & Mackey, 2019)

**The Employee Lens.** Employees base their decisions on their personal work experiences when making decisions. The Job Demands–Resources Model (*A.B. Bakker, and E. Demerouti, “The Job Demands–Resources Model: State of the Art, Journal of Managerial Psychology, 2007, 22, Pp. 309-328.*, n.d.) guides their thinking about unfulfilled needs which include poor leadership and restricted career development and insufficient recognition. The employees use situational attributions to explain their decisions because they experience psychological contract violations (Park et al., 2025).

The quantitative results confirm these interpretive patterns because employees blame their workplace more than managers do at a +2.20 level and managers blame employees more than employees blame them at a -1.95 level. The measured differences between employee and management perspectives demonstrate actual perception differences which confirm the theoretical prediction about self-serving bias leading to different interpretations of employee turnover reasons.

## 2. Cultural and Comparative Interpretation

The collectivist and relational culture of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) values employee loyalty and community membership above all else. The cultural environment of NTT makes managers expect higher employee loyalty while they tend to blame employees for leaving their jobs. The restricted job opportunities and financial difficulties make employees deeply understand how their organization delivers on its promises and maintains fair exchange systems. The turnover patterns in NTT differ from Western societies because employees in this region focus more on relational and structural factors than on personal career development. The employee departures in this region stem from individual job dissatisfaction as well as organizational and cultural elements that affect the workplace.

## 3. Attribution Bias and the Vicious Cycle of Distrust

The data indicates that employee distrust creates an ongoing pattern which drives workers to leave their jobs.

- a. Managerial Inaction: The lack of trust from employees results in decreased spending on employee growth and cultural advancement initiatives.
- b. Employee Disengagement: The absence of organizational backing makes employees more dissatisfied with their work environment.
- c. Talent Exodus: The best employees choose to work at companies which provide better cultural environments and defined career advancement opportunities.
- d. Managerial Reinforcement: Managers view employee departures as evidence of disloyalty which causes them to begin the cycle again.

The Fundamental Attribution Error (Ross, 1977) explains this pattern because managers focus too much on personal characteristics while ignoring environmental influences. The survey results demonstrate this pattern because 90% of managers linked employee departures to employee laziness yet only 59% of staff members shared this view while 73% of employees pointed to unfair compensation as a reason for leaving but only 55% of managers agreed. The ongoing bias creates a vicious cycle which damages employee trust and work commitment and overall organizational performance.

## 4. Theoretical Implications

The research demonstrates that employee departure rates exceed numerical data because they result from psychological and social elements which develop between workers and their organizations.

- a. According to Attribution Theory people who hold different positions will view identical situations through different causal perspectives. Staff members who want to maintain their authority status

will identify employee departures as internal factors but employees will link departures to external factors which they view as unfair.

- b. Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) provides additional insight through its concept of reciprocity because workers stay when they feel their employment relationship maintains fairness and equality. The employment relationship becomes unbalanced when leadership fails to recognize employees properly which leads to a significant increase in employee turnover intentions.
- c. The research indicates that new job leavers demonstrate managerial blame patterns which indicates that immediate employee departures result from trust deterioration instead of single incidents.

The process of attributing turnover to specific causes involves both mental processes and social connections which get influenced by environmental factors and organizational values and power structures.

## 5. Practical Implications

Organizations operating in Kupang NTT need to develop leadership skills and implement structural changes to minimize the Blame Gap while creating enduring employee retention programs.

### For Leadership:

- a. Leaders should move away from monitoring employee behavior they perceive as disloyal because this approach fails to build trust and open communication channels.
- b. Leadership programs should instruct staff members to identify attribution bias while teaching them to build empathy and assess relationships.
- c. Organizations must establish spaces where team members can freely express their thoughts while receiving feedback without facing negative criticism.

### For HR Strategy:

- a. The development of compensation benchmarks and career progression paths and recognition systems will help organizations reduce Management-Centric Blame (MCB).
- b. The reduction of Employee-Centric Blame (ECB) requires manager training that focuses on coaching and bias reduction techniques to minimize personal assessments.
- c. Stay interviews combined with regular feedback sessions and team-based problem-solving initiatives will help organizations close the gap between employee and manager perceptions.

A summary of actionable implications is shown below:

A summary of actionable implications indicates that perception gaps among employees are largely driven by attribution bias, which can be addressed through leadership training and the implementation of stay interviews. These actions are expected to improve employee retention. High turnover is primarily caused by career ambiguity; therefore, career mapping and mentoring programs are recommended to clarify career paths and increase organizational commitment. The persistence of a distrust cycle stems from inadequate recognition practices, suggesting the need for structured recognition systems and continuous feedback loops to enhance employee engagement. Lastly, employee disengagement is influenced by perceptions of unfair compensation, which can be mitigated through compensation benchmarking to ensure pay equity and ultimately reduce turnover intention.

Organizations that implement practices based on Social Exchange Theory principles of fairness and trust and mutual investment will create enduring employee commitment while minimizing the gap between employee and employer perceptions.

## 6. Limitations and Future Research

The research achieved balanced participant selection and maintained high internal study reliability but researchers identified specific study constraints.

- a. Socially acceptable answers might have appeared in the self-reported data from participants.
- b. The study results from 100 participants do not allow researchers to extend their findings beyond comparable cultural and geographic areas.
- c. The study design uses a single point in time which restricts researchers from making causal connections between variables.

Future research needs to address these study limitations through the following approaches:

- a. Research should use longitudinal studies to monitor how employee perceptions evolve throughout different time periods.
- b. Researchers need to conduct qualitative interviews to understand the psychological factors which drive employee turnover.
- c. Researchers should assess programs which work to decrease employee bias in attribution and perception differences.
- d. Research should study different cultural settings to understand how local traditions affect employee attribution behaviours.
- b. Researchers should consider using PLS-SEM or multiple regression models to measure how each attribution type (ECB, MCB, SNF) affects employee turnover intentions.

## CONCLUSION

The research establishes that Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) managers and employees maintain a lasting disagreement about why employees leave their jobs. The quantitative data shows managers blame employee behaviours for turnover because they expect disloyalty and poor motivation and unrealistic expectations (mean = 4.15) yet employees point to management failures including poor leadership and restricted career growth and insufficient recognition (mean = 4. The two groups show a major difference in their understanding of organizational events because the ECB score is +2.20 and the MCB score is -1.95. The research supports Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958) and the Fundamental Attribution Error (Ross, 1977) because these theories explain why managers focus on personal characteristics instead of organizational elements. The employees use Social Exchange Theory to explain their departure because they see unfulfilled expectations and broken psychological contracts as valid reasons to leave. The observed patterns demonstrate both mental distortions and the actual work environment characteristics of Kupang, NTT's collectivist culture which bases employment on loyalty and relational trust. The research demonstrates that organizational distrust generates an ongoing pattern where managers fail to act which causes employees to lose interest and this situation strengthens their doubts about employees. Organizations need to transition from control-oriented leadership to empathy-based leadership which focuses on building trust through open communication and defined career development opportunities. The research enhances HRM and strategic management theory by demonstrating that employee departures reveal both psychological contract dynamics and social exchange relationship quality. Organizations based in developing areas such as Kupang, NTT need to understand both cultural and perceptual aspects for successful employee retention. Organizations that work to reduce attribution errors while building strong relational trust will develop retention systems which support enduring workforce stability and organizational resilience.

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