

**THE EFFECT OF WORK ENVIRONMENT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON
EMPLOYEE RETENTION MEDIATED BY JOB SATISFACTION
(Study on Employees in the Scope of the Asisten Ekonomi dan Pembangunan Setda
Provinsi Jawa Tengah)**



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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of the work environment and work-life balance on employee retention. The effect of job satisfaction on employee retention. The population in this study was 135 employees within the Assistant for Economic and Development Affairs of the Central Java Provincial Secretariat. The data were processed using software SPSS version 25. Data analysis techniques include respondent description, variable description, validity test, reliability test, F test, R^2 test, and t-test. The results of the study stated that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, the work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee retention, work-life balance does not influence employee retention, job satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on employee retention, job satisfaction does not mediate the influence of the work environment on employee retention, and job satisfaction does not mediate the influence work-life balance on employee retention.

Keywords: Work Environment, Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Employee Retention

INTRODUCTION

The issue of employee turnover is becoming increasingly crucial in the modern workplace. The success of a government agency depends heavily on the quality of its human resources. One of the challenges faced by government agencies, particularly within the Asisten Ekonomi dan Pembangunan Setda Provinsi Jawa Tengah, is employee retention. Many civil servants (PNS) tend to stay long-term due to the permanent appointment system and pension guarantees, resulting in turnover relatively low. However, employees who leave are usually due to retirement or moving to other sectors that are considered more attractive. Ragupathi (2013) defines employee retention (employee retention) Employee retention is a technique used by management to ensure employees remain with an organization for a longer period. Employee retention can be defined as a measure of employee comfort and satisfaction with their work and the organization they work for. High employee turnover rates can negatively impact organizational productivity and the quality of public services. There are several factors that can influence employee retention, including the work environment, work-life balance and job satisfaction.

Sedarmayanti in Munardi *et al.* (2021) states that the work environment is the entirety of the tools and materials encountered, the surrounding environment in which a person works, their work methods, and their work arrangements both as individuals and as a group. Research by Bibi *et al.* (2016), Lahida *et al.* (2017), Ratu and Tielung (2018), Seran *et al.* (2018), Andari *et al.* (2021), Ishak and Pratama (2021), also Dorothy and Meilani (2023) stated that the work environment has a positive effect on employee retention.

Lumunon *et al.* (2019) defines work-life balance as an employee's ability to balance work and personal needs. Research by Suprpto *et al.* (2024), Syal *et al.* (2024) also Yudhani and Purwanti (2024) stated that work-life balance has a positive effect on employee retention. Meanwhile, research by Widiyanti and Mas'ud (2023) and Astuti *et al.* (2023) stated otherwise that work-life balance has no effect on employee retention.

Bradiyah in Widiyanto and Gaol (2024) stated that job satisfaction is the attitude or feelings of employees towards the pleasant or unpleasant aspects of their work according to each employee's assessment. Seran *et al.* (2018), Biason (2020), Hido *et al.* (2021), Fahad *et al.* (2021), Tambak *et al.* (2022), Astuti *et al.* (2023), Dorothy and Meilani (2023), and Yudhani and Purwanti (2024) stated that job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee retention.

Research by Idris *et al.* (2018), Parashakti *et al.* (2019), Alarcon *et al.* (2021), and Andriani *et al.* (2022) explained that the work environment has a positive influence on job satisfaction. Meanwhile, Nafe and Alizadeh (2022) also Idris *et al.* (2024) stated that the work environment does not influence job satisfaction.

Malik *et al.* (2014), Sari *et al.* (2021), Yusnita *et al.* (2022), Ningsih and Rijanti (2022), Utamalie *et al.* (2022), and Mubarok and Pareke (2024) stated that work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, in contrast to research by Lumunon *et al.* (2019) also Tirta and Enrika (2020) stated that work-life balance has no effect on job satisfaction.

Based on the phenomena and several previous studies and research gap which supports, then research was conducted on the influence of the work environment and work-

life balance on employee retention mediated by job satisfaction among employees in the Asisten Ekonomi dan Pembangunan Setda Provinsi Jawa Tengah.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Work Environment

Sedarmayanti in Munardi *et al.*(2021) states that the work environment is the totality of tools and materials encountered, the surrounding environment in which a person works, their work methods, and their work arrangements, both as individuals and as a group. The work environment dimension consists of 2 dimensions: the physical work environment and the non-physical work environment. The physical work environment dimension consists of 6 indicators: lighting, workspace circulation, room layout, decoration, noise, and facilities. Meanwhile, the non-physical work environment dimension consists of 2 indicators: relationships with superiors and relationships with fellow coworkers.

Work-Life Balance

Lumunon *et al.* (2019) defines work-life balance as an employee's ability to balance work and personal needs. So work-life balance in simple terms, it is a condition in which a worker can manage his time well or can balance work at work with personal needs and family life. Fisher (2009) states that work-life balance can be measured using 4 dimensions, namely Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), Personal Life Enhancement of Work (PLEW), Work Enhancement of Personal Life (WEPL). The WIPL dimension consists of 3 indicators: time for work, time for life and time for family. The PLIW dimension consists of 2 indicators: work discipline and work results. The PLEW dimension consists of 3 indicators: work atmosphere, relationships between superiors and coworkers also social life. The WEPL dimension consists of 3 indicators: improving the quality of personal life, applying knowledge and training gained to personal life also helping to resolve problems in personal or family life.

Job Satisfaction

Bradiyah in Widiatoro and Gaol (2024) defines job satisfaction as an employee's attitude or feelings towards the pleasant or unpleasant aspects of the job according to each worker's assessment. Robbins and Judge in Widiatoro and Gaol (2024) state that job satisfaction has 5 dimensions: the job itself, current salary, promotion opportunities, leaders and coworkers. The job dimension itself has 3 indicators: tasks, learning opportunities, and responsibilities. The current salary dimension consists of 2 indicators: the salary system and pay equity. The promotion opportunity dimension has an indicator: promotion opportunities. The leader indicator is leadership style. The coworker dimension has an indicator: support between coworkers.

Employee Retention

Ragupathi (2013) stated that employee retention is a technique used by management to ensure employees remain in an organization for a long period of time. Mathis and Jackson in Putra and Rahyuda (2016) stated that employee retention has 3 dimensions: organizational career opportunities, rewards, and employee relations. The career opportunity dimension is characterized by the organization providing equal career opportunities for every employee. The rewards dimension is characterized by the

organization consistently providing rewards for employee performance. The employee relations dimension is characterized by coworkers never acting in a discriminatory manner and showing mutual respect for one another.

Hypothesis Development

The Influence of Work Environment on Job Satisfaction

Research by Idris *et al.* (2018), Parashakti *et al.* (2019), Alarcon *et al.* (2021) and Andriani *et al.* (2022) stated that the work environment has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

H1: Work environment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

Influence Work-Life Balance to Job Satisfaction

Research by Malik *et al.* (2014), Sari *et al.* (2021), Yusnita *et al.* (2022), Ningsih and Rijanti (2022), Utamalie *et al.* (2022) also Mubarok and Pareke (2024) stated that work-life balance has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

H2 : Work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction

The Influence of Work Environment on Employee Retention

Research by Bibi *et al.* (2016), Lahida *et al.* (2017), Ratu and Tielung (2018), Seran *et al.* (2018), Andari *et al.* (2021), Ishak and Pratama (2021) also Dorothy and Meilani (2023) stated that the work environment has a positive effect on employee retention. Based on these research findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

H3: Work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee retention.

Influence Work-Life Balance on Employee Retention

Research by Suprpto *et al.* (2024), Syal *et al.* (2024) also Yudhani and Purwanti (2024) stated that work-life balance has a positive effect on employee retention. Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

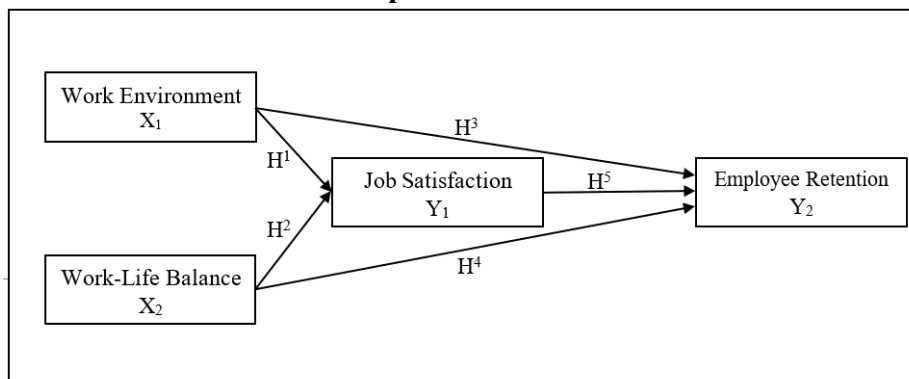
H4 : Work-life balance has a positive and significant impact on employee retention

The Influence of Job Satisfaction on Employee Retention

Research by Seran *et al.* (2018), Biason (2020), Hido *et al.* (2021), Fahad *et al.* (2021), Tambak *et al.* (2022), Astuti *et al.* (2023), Dorothy and Meilani (2023), also Yudhani and Purwanti (2024) stated that job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee retention. Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

H5: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee retention.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

This research is explanatory research. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of the work environment and work-life balance. The effect of job satisfaction on employee retention was mediated by the population of 135 respondents from the Asisten Ekonomi dan Pembangunan Sekretariat Daerah Provinsi Jawa Tengah. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires. Data tabulation used a 5-point Likert scale. Data were processed using the software SPSS 25 version. Analysis techniques include respondent description, variable description, validity test, reliability test, F test, R^2 test, and t-test and mediation test using path analysis (path analysis).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Description

Table 1
Respondent Description

Criteria	Majority	Amount	Percentage
Gender	Man	80	59,3
Age	41-50 years	38	28,1
Education	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	83	61,5
Working time	>15 years	52	38,5
Bureau	APBJ Bureau	69	51,1

Source: Data processed in 2025

Based on table 1, it can be shown that the majority of respondents were male (59.3%) with an age range of 41 to 50 years (28.1%), the majority had a bachelor's degree (61.5%), had a work period of >15 years (38.5%) and the majority of respondents came from the APBJ Bureau (51.1%).

Variable Description

The value mean was 3.84 in the work environment shows that respondents tend to agree with the 8 indicators. The value mean was 3.97 on work-life balance shows that respondents tend to agree with the 11 indicators. The value of mean was 4.09 on job satisfaction indicates that respondents tend to agree with the 8 indicators. Furthermore, the value of mean 4.08 on employee retention shows that respondents tend to agree with the 3 existing indicators.

Validity Test Results

Table 2
Validity Test Results

Variables	KMO	Component Matrix
Work environment	0,840	>0,4
Work-Life Balance	0,856	>0,4
Job Satisfaction	0,810	>0,4
Employee Retention	0,734	>0,4

Source: Data processed in 2025

Based on table 2, it can be shown that the KMO of the work environment, work-life balance, job satisfaction and employee retention are > 0.5, thus it can be concluded that the sample adequacy is met. The value component matrix of the 8 work environment indicators, 11 indicators work-life balance, 8 job satisfaction indicators and 3 employee retention indicators > 0.4, thus it can be concluded that all indicators are valid.

Reliability Test Results

Table 3
Reliability Test Results

Variables	Alpha Cronbach	Criteria
Work environment	0,815	>0,7
Work-Life Balance	0,862	>0,7
Job Satisfaction	0,814	>0,7
Employee Retention	0,864	>0,7

Source: Data processed in 2025

Based on Table 3, the values can be shown Alpha Cronbach of work environment, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and employee retention are > 0.7, thus it can be concluded that all variables are reliable.

Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4
Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	Independent Variables	Adjusted R ²	Anova		Standardized Coefficients		Information
			F	Sig	Beta	Sig	
Model I : Y = 0,263X1 + 0,261X2							
Model I: The influence of the work environment and work-life balance to job satisfaction	Work environment	0,138	11.719	0,000	0,263	0,001	Hypothesis 1 Accepted
	Work-life balance				0,261	0,002	Hypothesis 2 Accepted
Model II : Y = 0,166X1 + 0,139X2 + 0,204Y1							
Model II: Influence of the work environment, work-life balance and job satisfaction on employee retention	Work environment	0,109	6.455	0,000	0,166	0,05	Hypothesis 3 Accepted
	Work-life balance				0,139	0,104	Hypothesis 4 is rejected
	Job satisfaction				0,204	0,023	Hypothesis 5 is accepted

Source: Data processed in 2025

Based on Table 4, it can be shown:

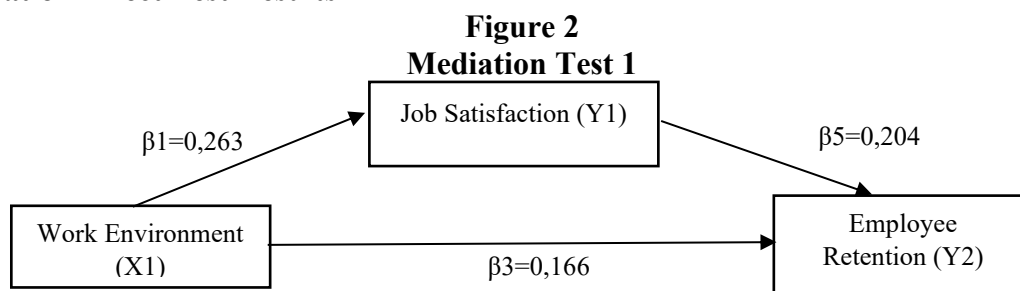
Test results on Model I:

- a. In the F test results, the value of sig $0.000 < 0.05$, meaning this model fitter worthy of further analysis.
- b. In the results of the coefficient of determination test, the value obtained was Adjusted R^2 of 0.138, which means that the work environment variables and work-life balance are able to explain 13.8% of the satisfaction variable, while the remaining 86.2% is explained by other variables outside the research model.
- c. H1: Work environment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.
The value of sig is $0.001 < 0.05$ and a beta value of 0.263 is positive, meaning the work environment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Thus, H1 is accepted.
H2: Work-Life Balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction
The value of sig is $0.002 < 0.05$ and the beta value of 0.261 is positive, meaning work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Thus, H2 is accepted.

Test results on Model II:

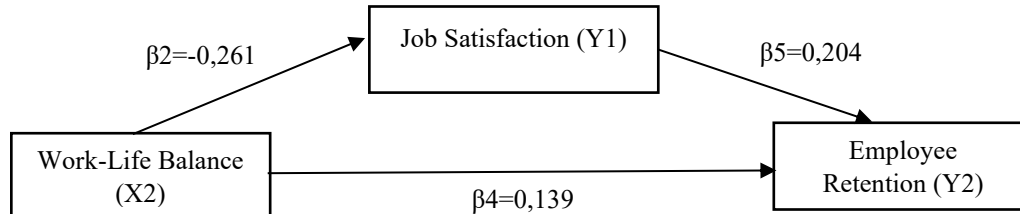
- a. In the F test results, the values of sig $0.000 < 0.05$, meaning the model is fit for further analysis.
- b. In the results of the coefficient of determination test, the value obtained was Adjusted R^2 of 0.109, which means that the work environment variable, work-life balance and job satisfaction is able to explain 10.9% of the employee retention variable, while the remaining 89.1% is explained by other variables outside the research.
- c. H3: Work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee retention.
The value of sig is $0.05 = 0.05$ and the beta value of 0.166 is positive, meaning the work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee retention. Thus, H3 is accepted.
H4: Work-life balance has a positive and significant impact on employee retention.
The value of sig is $0.104 > 0.05$, meaning work-life balance does not affect employee retention. Thus, H4 is rejected.
H5: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee retention.
The value of sig is $0.023 < 0.05$ and a beta value of 0.204 is positive, meaning that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee retention. Thus, H5 is accepted.

Mediation Effect Test Results



The value of $\beta_1 \times \beta_5 = 0.263 \times 0.204 = 0.054$ and the value of $\beta_3 = 0.166$. Because $\beta_1 \times \beta_5$ is smaller than β_3 or the value of $0.054 < 0.166$, it means that job satisfaction does not mediate the influence of the work environment on employee retention.

Figure 3
Mediation Test 2



The value of $\beta_2 \times \beta_5 = 0.261 \times 0.204 = 0.053$ and the value of $\beta_4 = 0.139$. Because $\beta_2 \times \beta_5$ is smaller than β_4 or the value of $0.053 < 0.139$, it means that job satisfaction does not mediate the influence of work-life balance on employee retention.

The work environment has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction.

Based on table 1, the majority of respondent is male (59.3%) with an age range of 41-50 years old (28.1%), 61.5% have a bachelor's degree (S1), and 38.5% have more than 15 years of service. In some cultural or organizational contexts, men are more adaptable to certain work pressures or structures. A work environment that supports open communication can increase job satisfaction, especially if all employees feel valued and listened to. Those aged 41-50 are generally in an established career stage and seek stability and recognition in their work. If the work environment provides a sense of security, development opportunities, and recognition for experience, job satisfaction tends to be high. The majority of respondents with a bachelor's degree tend to expect a work environment that is professional, communicative, and provides opportunities for self-development. If the organization can meet these needs, for example through training, involvement in decision-making, or recognition of ideas, the work environment becomes a positive factor for job satisfaction. Long-tenured employees indicate a supportive and low-stress work environment. Employees tend to be satisfied if they feel stable, valued, and have good relationships with their colleagues and superiors.

The data shows that the work environment with 8 indicators has an average value (mean) of 3.84, indicating that respondents agreed that the existing work environment was quite good and supportive. This conducive work environment encompasses aspects such as work atmosphere, management support, employee relations, and adequate work facilities, all of which contribute positively to job satisfaction. This aligns with research conducted by Idris *et al.*(2018), Parashakti *et al.* (2019), Alarcon *et al.* (2021) and Andriani *et al.*(2022) which states that the work environment has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction.

Work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction

Men of productive age often have dual responsibilities as breadwinners and family members. If organizations provide flexible hours, a balanced workload, and clear work boundaries, then work-life balance achieved, which ultimately increases job satisfaction. The majority of respondents with a bachelor's degree tend to be aware of the importance of career-life balance. Employees have the expectation that work not only provides income but also space for a personal life. When organizations provide supportive work policies or

cultures work-life balance (for example: work hybrid, flexible working hours, or the facility to apply for family leave), then job satisfaction increases significantly.

Work-life balance with 11 indicators obtaining an average value of 3.97, indicating that the majority of employees feel that the organization has provided policies and conditions that help employees balance work and personal life. Work-life balance good work environment plays a vital role in reducing stress and increasing employee well-being, which impacts productivity and loyalty. This aligns with research conducted by Malik *et al* (2014), Sari *et al.* (2021), Yusnita *et al.*(2022), Ningsih and Rijanti (2022), Utamalie *et al.* (2022), also Mubarok and Pareke (2024) who stated that work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

The work environment has a positive and significant influence on employee retention.

The majority of respondents (38.5%) had a tenure of more than 15 years, indicating a high retention rate. This is only possible if the physical and non-physical work environment is supportive. A healthy work environment that creates a sense of comfort, emotional attachment, and employee loyalty is closely related to employee retention. A work environment that provides opportunities for development, training, and recognition plays a significant role in retaining highly educated employees within the organization. This aligns with research by Bibi *et al.* (2016), Lahida *et al.* (2017), Ratu and Tielung (2018), Seran *et al.* (2018), Andari *et al.* (2021), Ishak and Pratama (2021), also Dorothy and Meilani (2023) stated that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee retention.

Work-life balance has no effect on employee retention

The majority of employees aged 41–50 generally focus more on economic stability and job security than time flexibility. Employees may accept heavy workloads or long hours as long as their basic needs are met, work-life balance was not a major factor in the decision to survive. Employees choose to stay, which shows that there are other factors that are stronger in driving retention, such as: salary and benefits, strategic position or position, and organizational trust, this shows that even though work-life balance. While it may not be optimal, employees remain for other reasons. This is in line with research by Widiandi and Mas'ud (2023) also Astuti *et al.* (2023) which states that work-life balance has no effect on employee retention.

Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee retention

A total of 38.5% of employees have stayed for more than 15 years, indicating a high retention rate. This long-term retention rate will not occur without adequate job satisfaction. Dissatisfied employees tend to resign, move to other agencies, and not stay long-term. Therefore, high length of service is evidence that job satisfaction drives employee retention. The majority of respondents have a bachelor's degree, which has a greater opportunity to find work outside, but in reality, many employees stay for more than 15 years, indicating that employees are satisfied with what their current organization offers, both in terms of work environment, relationships with colleagues/supervisors, rewards and recognition, or stability and career path.

Job satisfaction, which has eight indicators, achieved the highest average score of 4.09, indicating that most employees are satisfied with their jobs. The majority of respondents aged 41-50 would not stay if they did not feel appreciated, safe, and comfortable in the workplace. This suggests that satisfaction with both emotional and

environmental working conditions motivates employees to stay. This aligns with research by Seran *et al.* (2018), Biason (2020), Hido *et al.* (2021), Fahad *et al.* (2021), Tambak *et al.* (2022), Astuti *et al.* (2023), Dorothy and Meilani (2023), also Yudhani and Purwanti (2024), who stated that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee retention.

Job satisfaction does not mediate the influence of the work environment on employee retention.

Job satisfaction is more personal and subjective, such as satisfaction with salary, career development opportunities, recognition, and rewards. However, data shows that not all employees who remain are completely satisfied. Some may remain due to job stability, age, family needs, or limited outside opportunities. Therefore, high retention does not necessarily reflect that all employees are satisfied. Employees may remain because the work environment is conducive to retention, even if it does not make them completely satisfied with their jobs. Job satisfaction is not the primary intermediary in the relationship between work environment and employee retention, as employees may remain due to the work atmosphere and comfort, even if they are not necessarily satisfied with other aspects of their jobs (such as compensation, promotions, or recognition).

Job satisfaction does not mediate the effect of work-life balance on employee retention.

As many as 38.5% of respondents had worked for more than 15 years. This suggests that employee retention in the organization is quite high. This high retention rate does not automatically reflect a high level of employee retention, work-life balance good or influential. Most likely, employees stay for other reasons such as job stability, financial security or loyalty to the organization. This means that employees may stay even though work-life balance bad or not noticed by the organization.

If work-life balance does not have a real effect on retention, then it is unlikely to have an indirect effect through job satisfaction. For example, if employees feel tired, have a high workload, or work hours are inflexible (a poor indicator of work-life balance), but stay for other reasons, even though employees are dissatisfied with their jobs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, meaning that the better the work environment, the higher the level of employee job satisfaction. Work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, meaning that the more balanced an employee's work-life and personal life are, the more satisfied they are with their work. The work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee retention, meaning that a good work environment not only increases satisfaction but also makes employees stay longer in the organization. Work-life balance does not affect employee retention, meaning that even though work-life balance increasing job satisfaction has not been proven to directly make employees stay in the organization, because other factors are more dominant in the decision to stay or leave a job. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee retention, meaning that the more satisfied employees are with their jobs, the greater the likelihood of them remaining in the organization. Job satisfaction does not mediate the influence of the work environment on employee retention, meaning that

without job satisfaction, a good work environment is strong enough to make employees stay in the organization. Job satisfaction does not mediate the influence work-life balance on employee retention means that job satisfaction is not strong enough to make employees want to stay even though work–life balance is fulfilled.

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