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### The Influence of Motivation and Quality of Work Life on Intention to Stay with Job Satisfaction as an Intervening Variable among Employees at Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore, examine, and analyze the influence of motivation and quality of work life on the intention to stay, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating variable. The research employs a quantitative approach, utilizing data analysis techniques through SmartPLS software based on Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS). The study population consists of all employees at Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta, characterized by heterogeneity. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula, resulting in a total of 109 respondents. The findings reveal that motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, as does quality of work life. Furthermore, motivation directly and significantly influences the intention to stay, while quality of work life does not have a significant effect on that variable. Subsequent results indicate that job satisfaction positively and significantly affects the intention to stay and acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between motivation and intention to stay, as well as between quality of work life and intention to stay. These findings highlight the critical role of job satisfaction as a key factor in employee retention.

**Keyword:** Intention to Stay, Motivation, Quality of Work Life, Job Satisfaction

#### INTRODUCTION

Human resources are the cornerstone of organizational success and are inevitably confronted with various work-related challenges. They serve not only as planners and executors but also as the driving force behind the achievement of organizational

objectives (Purwati et al., 2020). Human resource management, therefore, must prioritize employee well-being and foster a supportive work environment to boost job satisfaction and enhance productivity (Asriani et al., 2023). In this context, employees play a vital role; without them, organizational operations cannot proceed optimally. Thus, recruiting and retaining high-quality employees is crucial for the company's development (Azzuhairi, 2022). Once a competent workforce is in place, it becomes essential for organizations to ensure employees' willingness to stay an issue that increasingly draws managerial attention in competitive markets (Agus & Selvaraj, 2020). The intention to stay, defined as an employee's desire or commitment to remain with an organization, is a strategic concern in human resource planning. A high intention to stay is often seen as a form of long-term investment and organizational stability (Listyani & Suryawirawan, 2023). One of the primary contributors to this intention is work motivation, which plays a significant role in influencing employee enthusiasm and performance. Motivated employees tend to contribute more proactively to organizational goals, even with minimal supervision (Pramana, 2022). Factors such as organizational clarity, recognition, and career development opportunities at PERUMDA Air Minum Kota Sangatta have been identified as significant contributors to employee motivation (Indrawan, 2020).

In addition to motivation, the Quality of Work Life (QWL) has become a key factor influencing employee retention. QWL denotes how well employees perceive their level of satisfaction, engagement, and dedication in the workplace. It encompasses aspects such as the balance between personal and professional life, occupational safety, prospects for career development, and mental health (Pramana et al., 2022). An enhanced QWL typically results in higher job satisfaction and a deeper organizational commitment. At PERUMDA Air Minum Kota Sangatta, efforts to improve both physical and psychological support systems, along with encouraging flexible working conditions, have gained prominence in retaining staff (Nugraha & Suhariadi, 2021; Asriani, 2023). Moreover, job satisfaction acts as an essential link that affects an employee's willingness to remain with the organization. Employees who are content with their roles tend to exhibit more optimistic behavior, stronger allegiance, and elevated commitment to their employer (Jaya & Widiastini, 2021). Factors like equitable pay, acknowledgment of achievements, and maintaining work-life harmony all play a part in enhancing job satisfaction. At PERUMDA Air Minum Kota Sangatta, cultivating employee satisfaction is crucial not just for boosting individual effectiveness, but also for maintaining consistent service delivery and preserving public confidence (Nugraha & Suhariadi, 2021).

PERUMDA Air Minum Kota Sangatta, a publicly owned regional company established under local government regulations, is responsible for providing clean water in East Kutai Regency. As of December 31, 2023, the company served 45,847 customers, up by 4,348 from the previous year. While this growth reflects increasing public demand, it also presents operational challenges such as resource limitations and infrastructure capacity (BPS Kabupaten Kutai Timur, 2023). Ensuring employee retention through improved motivation, QWL, and job satisfaction becomes critical to meet rising expectations (Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Air, 2022). The organization has experienced a relatively low rate of employee attrition between 2020 and 2023, suggesting a generally high level of employee commitment to remain with the company, although a slight uptick in turnover was observed in 2023. A number of prior studies have examined the roles of motivation, Quality of Work Life (QWL), job satisfaction, and the intention to stay;

however, their outcomes have yielded mixed results. For example, Azzuhairi (2022) concluded that both motivation and job satisfaction had a favorable influence on employees' intention to remain. In contrast, Listyani & Suryawirawan (2023) found no statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and the intention to stay. Meanwhile, Sukistianingsih (2023) identified a meaningful and positive link between job satisfaction and retention intention, and Asriani (2023) emphasized the substantial effect of QWL on enhancing job satisfaction. These varying results highlight a gap in the existing literature, particularly concerning the intermediary role of job satisfaction in connecting motivation and QWL with employees' intention to stay.

Accordingly, this research aims to investigate the effect of motivation and Quality of Work Life (QWL) on employees' intention to remain, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating factor, within the context of PERUMDA Air Minum Kota Sangatta. The study endeavors to determine which variables exert the most substantial influence on employee retention and to explore the role of job satisfaction in bridging the relationships between motivation, QWL, and the intention to stay. The central research questions addressed in this study are: how does motivation affect employees' intention to stay; how does Quality of Work Life impact their intention to remain; and to what extent does job satisfaction mediate the influence of both motivation and QWL on the intention to stay among personnel at PERUMDA Air Minum Kota Sangatta?.

## METHOD

This study uses a quantitative research approach with a causal design, aiming to examine the influence of motivation and quality of work life on intention to stay, with job satisfaction as the intervening variable. According to Sugiyono (2017), causal research is used to identify cause-and-effect relationships between variables. The study focuses on employees of Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta, based on the assumption that these individuals have sufficient work experience to provide relevant and valid responses. The research was conducted during the first quarter of 2024 to capture current and representative data within the organizational environment. The research variables consist of motivation (X1), quality of work life (X2), job satisfaction (Z) as the intervening variable, and intention to stay (Y) as the dependent variable. Each variable is measured using indicators derived from previous studies. Motivation includes aspects such as aggressiveness, creativity, discipline, and working relationships (Nurkhotimah & Parmin, 2021). Quality of work life is assessed through employee participation, job security, and communication. Job satisfaction includes salary, co-worker relations, and supervisor relations (Hendri, 2019), while intention to stay reflects employees' willingness to remain in the organization, indicated by plans to stay, not seeking new jobs, and a love for the current job (Kemie & Purba, 2019; Achmad et al., 2023).

**Table 1. Operational Definitions and Variables**

No	Variable	Definition	Indicators	Scale
1	Motivation (X1)	Motivation in the workplace refers to the drive that encourages individuals to work harder and succeed, including emotional components influencing task initiation.	a. Aggressive attitude b. Creativity in performing tasks c. Improved work quality over time d. Compliance with working hours e. Ability to complete tasks independently f. High initiative boosting performance	Likert

			g. Loyalty and honesty	
			h. Good relationship with superiors	
			i. Achievement of personal and organizational goals	
			j. Accurate and timely information output	
2	Quality of Work Life (X2)	Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a business development approach involving employees in decision-making and promoting a democratic, humanized workplace for performance.	a. Employee participation b. Job security c. Safe working environment d. Organizational pride e. Career development f. Available facilities g. Conflict resolution h. Communication	Likert
3	Job Satisfaction (Z)	Job satisfaction reflects the positive or negative attitudes employees hold toward their jobs.	a. The job itself b. Salary or compensation c. Promotion opportunities d. Relationship with coworkers e. Relationship with supervisors	Likert
4	Intention to Stay (Y)	Intention to stay refers to an employee's willingness and commitment to remain in an organization for an extended period.	a. Plan to stay as long as possible b. Not looking for another job c. Love for the current job	Likert

Source: Processed Data, 2024

The data used in this study is primary data collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The target population comprises 297 staff members of Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta. A total of 109 participants were selected as the sample using a simple random sampling method and Slovin’s formula with a 10% margin of error. Data gathering was carried out by directly distributing structured, closed-ended questionnaires to the participants, aligned with the indicators of each research construct. The data were analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique, facilitated by the SmartPLS application. The analysis involved evaluating the measurement model (to assess validity and reliability) as well as the structural model (to examine relationships among latent constructs). Validity was measured through factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability. The model’s explanatory power was determined using R-square ( $R^2$ ) and Q-square ( $Q^2$ ) statistics. Hypotheses were tested using t-values and p-values, with significance thresholds set at  $t > 1.96$  and  $p < 0.05$ . This analytical approach was deemed appropriate due to its effectiveness in handling complex models and relatively limited sample sizes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Respondent Characteristics

The distribution of respondents in this study is categorized by gender, age, marital status, and length of service. A total of 109 employees from Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta participated in the study. As shown in Table 7, the majority of respondents were male (56.8%), while female respondents accounted for 43.1%. In terms of age, most respondents were between 26 and 35 years old (48.6%), followed by those aged 36–45

years (26.6%), under 25 years (15.5%), and above 45 years (9.1%). Regarding marital status, most respondents were married (64.2%), while the remaining 35.7% were unmarried. For the length of employment, the majority of respondents had worked for more than 3 years (60.5%), followed by those with 1–3 years of service (22.9%), and less than 1 year (16.5%).

### **Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)**

The assessment of the outer (measurement) model in this research encompasses three primary evaluations: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability. As outlined by Hair et al. (2018), analyzing a measurement model requires examining its convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. Convergent validity is assessed through factor loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Tok (2019), factor loadings are deemed acceptable when they exceed 0.6, while AVE values must surpass 0.5 to indicate adequate convergent validity. In this study, all indicators under the constructs of Motivation, Quality of Work Life, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Stay demonstrated factor loadings greater than 0.5 and AVE values exceeding 0.5, suggesting that all indicators are valid and the constructs exhibit strong convergent validity. In addition, discriminant validity was examined using cross-loadings, where each indicator showed higher loadings on its designated construct than on other constructs. This confirms that each construct is clearly distinct and measures the concept it is intended to represent.

After confirming validity, the next step involves assessing the reliability of the constructs using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. These indicators demonstrate the internal consistency of the items in measuring each construct. Composite reliability values exceeding 0.6 and Cronbach's alpha values above 0.6 are considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2014; Elicia & Widjaja, 2021). All constructs in this study—Motivation, Quality of Work Life, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Stay—exhibit composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values well above the recommended thresholds. Therefore, all constructs in the study are deemed reliable, indicating that the items consistently and accurately measure their respective latent variables.

### **Measurement Model Evaluation (Inner Model)**

The assessment of the structural model in this research was performed using the SmartPLS software, with a focus on the R-square value or the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). The  $R^2$  value indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variables that can be accounted for by the independent variables, with values between 0 and 1. A value closer to 1 suggests that the independent variables account for almost all of the variance in the dependent variable, whereas a lower value indicates a less significant contribution of the independent variables. In this study, the R-square values for the variables "Intention to Stay" and "Job Satisfaction" were found to be 0.767 and 0.671, respectively. This implies that "Job Satisfaction" is explained by "Motivation" and "Quality of Work Life" at 67.1%, with the remaining 32.9% attributed to other factors outside the model. Similarly, "Motivation" and "Quality of Work Life," along with "Job Satisfaction," collectively explain 76.6% of "Intention to Stay," with 23.3% influenced by external factors.

Furthermore, to evaluate the impact of the independent variables, Cohen's effect size ( $f^2$ ) was applied. This approach measures the effect of an independent variable on

the model by comparing the  $R^2$  values both with and without that variable. An  $f^2$  value of 0.02 is considered to represent a small effect, 0.15 indicates a moderate effect, and 0.35 or higher suggests a large effect. The findings revealed that the effect sizes for the variables in this study are within the moderate effect range. Hypothesis testing was performed using path coefficients, which were analyzed through bootstrapping with SmartPLS. The results showed that path coefficients with a t-value greater than 1.66 and a p-value less than 0.05 were statistically significant, confirming a meaningful relationship between the variables.

### Hypothesis Testing: The Influence of Motivation, Quality of Work Life, and Job Satisfaction on Intention to Stay

Based on the hypothesis testing results, several findings support significant relationships among the variables being studied. Below is a summary of the hypothesis testing results, including all the tested variables:

**Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Results**

Hypothesis	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Value	Remark
Motivation -> Job Satisfaction	0.607	7.199	0.000	Supported
Quality of Work Life -> Job Satisfaction	0.308	3.723	0.000	Supported
Motivation -> Intention to Stay	0.361	2.451	0.015	Supported
Quality of Work Life -> Intention to Stay	0.078	1.372	0.171	Not Supported
Job Satisfaction -> Intention to Stay	0.361	2.451	0.015	Supported
Motivation -> Intention to Stay through Job Satisfaction	0.310	2.526	0.012	Supported
Quality of Work Life -> Intention to Stay through Job Satisfaction	0.158	3.003	0.003	Supported

Source: Processed Data, 2024

The initial hypothesis proposes that Motivation exerts a favorable and substantial influence on Job Satisfaction, evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.607, a t-statistic of 7.199, and a p-value of 0.000 (p-value < 0.05, t-value > 1.96). These figures affirm the acceptance of the first hypothesis, underscoring the critical contribution of Motivation in boosting Job Satisfaction. Similarly, the Quality of Work Life exhibits a beneficial and noteworthy effect on Job Satisfaction, reflected in a path coefficient of 0.308, a t-statistic of 3.723, and a p-value of 0.000 (p-value < 0.05, t-value > 1.96). This reinforces the hypothesis, illustrating that both Motivation and Quality of Work Life play essential roles in enhancing Job Satisfaction.

The second hypothesis evaluates the influence of Motivation and Quality of Work Life on the Intention to Stay. Motivation shows a positive and statistically significant impact on Intention to Stay, with a path coefficient of 0.361, a t-statistic of 2.451, and a p-value of 0.015 (p-value < 0.05, t-value > 1.96). These results indicate that Motivation plays a meaningful role in shaping employees' Intention to Stay. On the other hand, Quality of Work Life does not exhibit a significant effect on Intention to Stay, as demonstrated by a path coefficient of 0.078, a t-value of 1.372, and a p-value of 0.171 (p-value > 0.05, t-value < 1.96). Thus, the second hypothesis receives partial support, with only Motivation showing a statistically significant influence on Intention to Stay.



The third hypothesis explores the impact of Job Satisfaction on the Intention to Remain. The findings indicate a significant and positive influence, with a path coefficient of 0.361, a t-statistic of 2.451, and a p-value of 0.015 (p-value < 0.05, t-statistic > 1.96). This outcome validates the third hypothesis, suggesting that Job Satisfaction is a key determinant in shaping employees' willingness to continue working. The fourth hypothesis investigates the mediating role of Job Satisfaction in the relationship between Motivation and Quality of Work Life and the Intention to Remain. The analysis reveals that both Motivation and Quality of Work Life exert a positive and statistically significant indirect influence on the Intention to Remain via Job Satisfaction. Specifically, Motivation yields a path coefficient of 0.310, a t-statistic of 2.526, and a p-value of 0.012 (p-value < 0.05, t-statistic > 1.96), while Quality of Work Life produces a path coefficient of 0.158, a t-statistic of 3.003, and a p-value of 0.003 (p-value < 0.05, t-statistic > 1.96). These outcomes corroborate that both factors indirectly contribute to the Intention to Remain, with Job Satisfaction serving as a mediating variable..

## ***Discussion***

### **Description of Motivation, Quality of Work Life, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Stay**

The analysis of motivation shows that respondents rated the highest for loyalty and honesty, with an average score of 4.27 for the statement "I always try to be honest in all aspects of my work." However, the lowest score was for the alignment of personal and organizational goals, with a score of 3.87 for the statement "I feel my personal goals are aligned with the organization's goals." This suggests that employees at Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta are committed to being honest in their work, but feel less aligned with the company's goals, which could affect their intention to stay. For Quality of Work Life, respondents rated the highest for pride in the institution, with an average score of 3.98 for "I am proud to be part of this company." However, the lowest score was for the safety of the work environment, with an average score of 3.36 for "I feel the work environment in this company is safe and free from risks." This indicates that while employees are proud of their organization, they feel less secure in their work environment, which the company should address to improve employee satisfaction and retention.

In terms of Job Satisfaction, the highest ratings were for relationships with colleagues, with an average score of 4.26 for statements like "I enjoy working with colleagues who create a harmonious work environment." The lowest score was for promotion opportunities, with an average score of 3.83 for "There are opportunities for promotion provided by the company." This suggests that employees are satisfied with their colleagues but feel there are limited opportunities for career advancement, which could negatively affect their intention to stay. Regarding Intention to Stay, the highest score was for the commitment to contribute long-term, with an average score of 4.18 for "I am committed to contributing to this company in the long term." The lowest score was for the interest in exploring new job opportunities, with an average score of 3.89 for "I am not interested in exploring job offers outside of this company." These results indicate that while employees are committed to staying long-term, they are less interested in exploring external job opportunities, reflecting a generally positive but cautious attitude towards their current employment.

### **Motivation and Quality of Work Life Significantly Affect Job Satisfaction at Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta**

The research revealed that Motivation exerts a notably positive influence on Job Satisfaction, demonstrated by a path coefficient of 0.607, a t-statistic of 7.199 (exceeding 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000 (below 0.05). This indicates that enhanced motivation contributes to increased job satisfaction, supporting the findings of Nurkhotimah & Pariaman (2021) and Al Hakim et al. (2019), who observed that individuals with strong motivation display greater dedication and contentment in their roles. Motivated workers are driven to deliver optimal performance, which in turn fosters improved job satisfaction and overall efficiency. Likewise, Quality of Work Life has a meaningful effect on Job Satisfaction, with a path coefficient of 0.308, a t-statistic of 3.723 (above 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000 (under 0.05). This aligns with the study conducted by Hamidi et al. (2019), which found that a supportive workplace characterized by elements such as occupational safety, balance between professional and personal life, and opportunities for career advancement enhances job satisfaction. Employees experiencing a high quality work life are generally more content and committed, which promotes a more enthusiastic and productive organizational climate.

### **Motivation and Quality of Work Life Significantly Affect Intention to Stay at Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta**

The findings reveal that motivation exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on employees' intention to remain with the organization, as demonstrated by an original sample score of 0.361, a t-statistic of 2.451, and a p-value of 0.0145. This suggests that an increase in motivation enhances the likelihood of employees choosing to stay within the company. These results are consistent with research conducted by Azzuhairi et al. (2022), which determined that work-related motivation plays a crucial role in shaping employees' retention intentions. When staff members are encouraged through mechanisms such as incentives, acknowledgment, or professional growth opportunities, their organizational commitment is likely to strengthen. In addition, motivation serves as a protective factor against job burnout—a common contributor to employee turnover (Mutiarra, 2022). Conversely, the Quality of Work Life (QWL) appears to have no meaningful impact on employees' intention to stay, indicated by an original sample coefficient of 0.078, a t-value of 1.372, and a p-value of 0.171. This outcome is in line with the findings of Purba & Darmasetiawan (2023), who noted that while QWL may be perceived as high, it does not necessarily ensure long-term employee retention, and in some instances, might even lead individuals to pursue more favorable opportunities elsewhere.

### **Job Satisfaction Significantly Affects Intention to Stay at Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta**

Job satisfaction demonstrates a meaningful and statistically significant effect on employees' intention to remain, as evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.361, a t-statistic of 2.451, and a p-value of 0.015. Employees who experience satisfaction in their roles are generally more inclined to continue their tenure within the organization, a finding supported by the research of Azzuhairi et al. (2022) and Santoso & Yuliantika (2022). Additionally, Heren & Ong (2023) highlighted that job engagement enhances the relationship between satisfaction and the intention to stay, suggesting that employees



who are both content and actively involved in their work exhibit a stronger commitment to their workplace. In contrast, dissatisfaction in the workplace is frequently associated with voluntary turnover, as indicated by Lambert et al. (2017), who observed that discontented or disengaged employees are more likely to resign. Nonetheless, some research presents differing conclusions—Listyani & Suryawirawan (2023) reported that job satisfaction does not consistently have a notable impact on employees' decision to stay. Despite these varying perspectives, the broader body of evidence indicates that job satisfaction plays a critical role in fostering employee retention and lowering attrition rates.

### **Motivation and Quality of Work Life Significantly Affect Intention to Stay through Job Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable at Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta**

Motivation demonstrates a positive, significant, and indirect influence on the intention to remain within an organization through the mediating role of job satisfaction, as indicated by a path coefficient of 0.310, a t-statistic of 2.526, and a p-value of 0.012. This result aligns with the findings of Azzuhairi et al. (2022), who reported that strong work motivation enhances job satisfaction, which subsequently reinforces employees' willingness to stay. Factors such as acknowledgment, career advancement opportunities, and performance-based rewards contribute significantly to job satisfaction, fostering a stronger organizational bond and decreasing the likelihood of employee turnover. Likewise, Iqbal et al. (2022) observed that job satisfaction serves as a notable moderator in the link between motivation and retention intentions employees who are both highly motivated and satisfied with their jobs are more inclined to remain in their current roles. In a similar vein, Quality of Work Life (QWL) also exhibits a positive, significant, and indirect impact on employees' intention to stay, mediated by job satisfaction, with a path coefficient of 0.158, a t-statistic of 3.003, and a p-value of 0.003. Research by Jaya et al. (2023) highlighted that improvements in QWL significantly elevate job satisfaction levels while simultaneously decreasing the intention to leave. Employees who perceive their work environment as supportive, inclusive, and appreciative tend to show greater organizational commitment. Conversely, inadequate QWL frequently leads to decreased satisfaction and an increased likelihood of turnover. Moreover, Dewi et al. (2020) argued that while QWL is important, it is not sufficient on its own to ensure employee retention job satisfaction remains a pivotal intermediary. Even when employees experience favorable working conditions and a healthy work-life balance, their organizational attachment may still be weak if essential elements of satisfaction, such as fair compensation or acknowledgment, are lacking. Consequently, job satisfaction plays a critical role in amplifying the beneficial effects of QWL on employees' intention to remain within the organization.

### **CONCLUSION**

This research underscores the pivotal influence of employee motivation and the overall quality of work life in shaping job satisfaction and the intention to remain employed at Perumda Air Minum Kota Sangatta. The results indicate that personnel demonstrate a high degree of organizational loyalty and dedication, despite the presence of a misalignment between individual aspirations and institutional objectives, which may influence motivational levels. Although employees express a strong sense of pride in being affiliated with the organization, issues related to occupational safety continue to

raise concerns. Constructive interpersonal dynamics positively affect job satisfaction; however, the lack of clear pathways for career progression may present challenges to retaining staff. Furthermore, motivation is shown to exert a notable and favorable impact on job satisfaction, and it directly affects employees' decisions to remain with the organization. Conversely, quality of work life does not exhibit a significant direct effect on retention intentions, though it does enhance job satisfaction indirectly.

Additionally, the analysis demonstrates that job satisfaction serves as a vital intervening variable, mediating the relationships between both motivation and quality of work life with employees' intention to stay. This finding emphasizes the necessity of cultivating a work environment that not only supports employee satisfaction but also promotes professional growth and development. The study effectively meets its research aims and offers valuable recommendations for optimizing human resource strategies within public sector organizations. To strengthen organizational commitment and employee satisfaction, it is imperative to foster motivational support systems, improve workplace health and safety standards, and implement transparent career advancement frameworks.

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