

EMPLOYEE MUTATION AND TURNOVER INTENTION IN 3T REGIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AT BPJS KETENAGAKERJAAN

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of turnover intention in BPJS Ketenagakerjaan employees who have mutated to disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost (3T) areas through a qualitative case study approach. Using the Sustainable Human Resource Management (Sustainable HRM) framework, this study aims to uncover in depth why and how the mutation policy affects employees' intention to leave the organization in the context of assignments in remote areas. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with two informants at different positional levels: Senior Officer at KCP Buol Kali (Central Sulawesi) and Junior Manager at KACAB Papua Mimika (Papua). The thematic analysis yielded four main themes: (1) disparity in mutation experience based on position level, (2) perceived organizational support gap that differs between levels, (3) dynamics of turnover intention influenced by career and family factors, and (4) expectations for humanitarian-based mutation policy reform. The findings show that turnover intention in the 3T area is contextual and is significantly influenced by the level of position, working period, and quality of management support received. This study emphasizes the urgency of mutation policy reform based on Sustainable HRM principles in BPJS Ketenagakerjaan as a form of organizational responsibility for the sustainability of human resources in the outermost regions of Indonesia.

Keywords: Employee transfer, turnover intention, 3T regions, BPJS Ketenagakerjaan, Sustainable HRM

INTRODUCTION

The sustainability of human resources (HR) in disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost (3T) areas is a strategic issue that has not received adequate attention in Indonesia's human resource management literature. Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2020 identifies 62 districts with significant deficits in economic development, infrastructure, and human resource capacity conditions that directly affect the work experience of employees assigned to the region. Indonesia, as an archipelagic country with more than 17,000 islands, faces the challenge of uneven distribution of human resources, especially in public service institutions that are mandated to reach all regions without exception. BPJS Ketenagakerjaan, a public legal entity established under Law No. 24 of 2011, operates 26 work units in the 3T area spread from Papua, Maluku, Sulawesi, Kalimantan border, to NTT and remote islands. As an institution mandated to provide employment social protection to all Indonesian workers, BPJS Employment faces a typical structural tension: employees responsible for providing services in the most remote areas are the most exposed to organizational pressures due to assignments in those regions. Internal data shows that there are 143 organic employees currently serving in 25 work units in the 3T region, with a composition of 68.5% executives, 28.0% leaders, and 3.5% managers.

The mechanism of employee mutation, both central mutation and branch mutation, is used as the main instrument for the distribution of human resources to these 3T units. Although operationally necessary, mutations to remote areas raise serious concerns for workforce sustainability. Previous quantitative research has proven that mutations have a significant effect on job satisfaction and turnover intention (Rahmawati & Adiwati, 2021; Hapida et al., 2024; Dirja & Razak, 2020). However, statistical figures cannot explain the underlying psychological and social mechanisms: what do employees really feel when they are mutated to remote areas? What factors most affect their intention to leave? How is organizational support or lack of support experienced concretely by employees in the field? Cooke et al. (2022) explicitly call for in-depth qualitative research to identify new phenomena related to HRM in the context of remote work and socio-economic inequality a strong methodological justification for the approach chosen in this study. This study uses a case study design with BPJS Ketenagakerjaan as a single case examined through the perspective of two employees with different job levels. The novelty of this research lies in three things: (1) the integration of the 3T geographical context with the discourse of Sustainable HRM in an empirical qualitative study that has never been done before; (2) the exploration of position-level moderation in mutation experience and turnover intention; and (3) the use of employee lived experience as the main data source to fill the gap left by the quantitative approach. The research questions asked are: How do employee mutations shape turnover intention in BPJS Ketenagakerjaan employees in the 3T area, and how do differences in job levels affect these dynamics?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

Profile of BPJS Ketenagakerjaan

BPJS Ketenagakerjaan (Employment Social Security Organizing Agency) is a public legal entity that implements four employment social security programs: Work Accident Insurance (JKK), Death Insurance (JKM), Old Age Insurance (JHT), and Pension Insurance (JP), as well as Job Loss Insurance (JKP) added through the Job Creation Law in 2020. This institution replaces PT Jamsostek (Persero) and began full operations since January 1, 2014. In carrying out its mandate to reach all Indonesian workers regardless of geographical location, BPJS Employment opened work units in 25 3T regions spread from Papua (KACAB Papua Jayapura, KACAB Papua Mimika, KCP Merauke, KCP Raja Ampat, KCP Biak, KCP Nabire, KCP Fakfak, KCP Manokwari), Maluku and North Maluku (KACAB Maluku, KACAB Ternate, KCP Tual, KCP Manokwari), North Halmahera, South Halmahera KCP, Masohi KCP), Kalimantan border (Kapuas Hulu KCP, Nunukan KCP, West Kutai KCP, North Barito KCP), to NTT (Belu Atambua KCP), Sulawesi (Morowali KACAB, Tojo Una-Una KCP, Buol KCP), and remote islands (Selayar Islands KCP, Natuna KCP, Nias KCP). As a public legal entity, BPJS Ketenagakerjaan uses the employee mutation mechanism as the main instrument for human resource distribution. Assignments to 3T areas are generally periodic, but in practice they are not always accompanied by an adequate support mechanism. Rahmawati and Adiwati (2021) noted that the mutation system in BPJS Ketenagakerjaan distinguishes between central mutations (between regional offices) and branch mutations (between work units within one region), and found that mutations initiated by organizations, especially to remote locations, are consistently correlated with decreased job satisfaction. This context makes BPJS Ketenagakerjaan a strategic and relevant research object in the study of Sustainable HRM in the Indonesian public sector.

Sustainable Human Resource Management

Sustainable HRM is defined as an approach to HR management that integrates long-term organizational sustainability, employee well-being, and social responsibility into HR strategies and practices (Hulu et al., 2025). Kramar (2014, in Järlström et al., 2023) defines Sustainable HRM as a pattern of HR strategies and practices that enable the achievement of financial, social, and ecological goals while reproducing the long-term HR base minimizing negative impacts on

individuals, communities, and the environment. Harefa (2026) extends this concept to the Indonesian context, finding that Sustainable HRM practices in Indonesian organizations including work flexibility, psychological support, wellness programs, and competency development contribute significantly to improving workforce retention, productivity, and organizational reputation. Lu et al. (2023) in a multilevel and multi-source study in the Chinese context proved that Sustainable HRM practices positively affect employee resilience ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$) and in turn increase work engagement, two factors that are very important for employees working in challenging geographical conditions. Järnlström, Saru and Pekkarinen (2023) through a longitudinal comparative case study in three Finnish companies (2017-2022) found that effective Sustainable HRM practices include: collaborative HR development, open communication, organizational design that facilitates employee participation, and performance evaluations that focus on strengths, not weaknesses. From this perspective, a policy of mutation to 3T that does not consider the well-being and professional continuity of employees is the antithesis of Sustainable HRM.

Cooke et al. (2022) in the International Journal of Human Resource Management affirm that a human-centered approach to HRM is the key to building a sustainable society, and explicitly calls for in-depth qualitative research to identify new HRM phenomena in the context of remote work, socio-economic inequality, and exclusion exactly as happened to BPJS Ketenagakerjaan employees in 3T areas.

Employee Mutation

Employee mutation is the lateral transfer of an employee to a different position, work unit, or geographical location without a change in hierarchy level (Hasibuan, 2017). Hasibuan (2017) identified four main goals of mutation: (1) increasing employee productivity; (2) creating a balance between labor and position needs; (3) expanding employee insight and experience; and (4) reducing boredom or work burnout. However, in the context of the 3T area, the first three goals often collide with the reality of the field that is far from adequate.

Rahmawati and Adiwati (2021) in a direct study on BPJS Ketenagakerjaan found that the frequency of mutations, the clarity of the reasons for mutations, and organizational support during mutations are key indicators that determine their impact on job satisfaction. Hapida, Hasbiah, and Dipoatmodjo (2024) confirmed the significant influence of position mutations on the job satisfaction of PT PLN employees in the Sulawesi region in a geographical context that is very comparable to the 3T environment with a t-count value of 5.423 which far exceeds the t-table. Dirja and Razak (2020) in a study at the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia found that mutations had a positive and significant effect on work performance ($\beta = 0.42$), but with an important note that this positive effect was only realized when mutations were accompanied by adequate preparation and real organizational support.

Within the framework of psychological contract theory (Rousseau, 1989), forced mutations without transparent communication and adequate support create the perception of breach of contract conditions in which the employee's implicit expectations are not met which directly triggers a decrease in commitment and an increase in intention to leave. Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) through a meta-analysis of 172 studies found that individual-environment misfit is a strong predictor of turnover intention, with an effect that is even stronger when the mismatch occurs geographically as well as mutations to remote areas that do not match the preferences and domestic conditions of employees.

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is defined as an employee's conscious and deliberate desire to leave the organization (Mobley, 1978). Mobley (1978) proposed a turnover process model that links job dissatisfaction with a series of cognitive evaluations including thoughts to quit, alternative searches, alternative evaluations, and intentions to leave before leading to an actual decision to leave the

organization. This model is particularly relevant for understanding the stages that 3T employees experience, where the accumulation of layered pressures drives progress through these stages more quickly. Adismana et al. (2025) and Handaru et al. (2021) confirm that organizational commitment negatively and significantly affects the intention to move employees with high affective commitments tend to be much less likely to quit despite facing difficult working conditions. Permatasari and Sugiarto (2024) in a study using SEM-PLS showed that work-life balance and organizational commitment together mediated the relationship between work stressors and turnover intention, with job satisfaction as a mediator, resulting in a significant indirect effect ($p < 0.05$). Soraya and Ardiyanti (2024) in a study on the Indonesian architecture sector found that social support is a critical protective factor (buffer) that moderates the relationship between work pressure and exit intention, a finding that is very relevant considering the lack of professional social networks experienced by employees in remote areas.

Masita (2021) through a qualitative case study on employees of the Cendikia Bunayya Foundation identified five dominant factors that affect turnover intention: job satisfaction, external job opportunities, work environment, organizational commitment, and leadership, these five factors are all simultaneously affected by assignment conditions in the 3T area. Safirah and Widigdo (2025) in the latest systematic literature review found that for the younger generation of employees, career development is the most important factor that determines intention to leave, followed by work-life balance and workload three factors, all of which are seriously disrupted in the context of 3T assignments.

3T Areas as an Organizational Context

The 3T (Disadvantaged, Frontier, Outermost) regions in Indonesia are defined based on Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2020 as areas that have significant deficits in six dimensions: community economy, human resources, facilities and infrastructure, regional financial capabilities, accessibility, and regional characteristics. These conditions create layered pressures for assigned employees: higher living costs due to long distribution chains, expensive and irregular transportation access, limited health services, inadequate educational facilities for employees' children, and very limited professional social networks.

Gani, Priharta and Purnamasari (2022) in a study on mining companies in Kalimantan in a context that has geographical similarities to 3T areas found that compensation had a positive and significant effect on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.05$), indicating that insufficient compensation relative to the burden of living in remote locations is a strong driver of exit intention. Human resource development research in 3T areas, including the Mahakam Hulu (2018) and Bengkayang (2019) studies, has consistently shown that talent attraction and retention are the main obstacles to development in remote areas, a problem that is not exclusive to the public sector but is also relevant for quasi-government institutions such as BPJS Ketenagakerjaan.

Synthesis of Previous Research and Research Gaps

A systematic mapping of the previous 10 studies (Table 1) revealed three research gaps that are clear and urgent to be filled. First, all studies that examined employee mutations within BPJS Ketenagakerjaan and similar SOEs used a quantitative approach, so that they were unable to capture the subjective experiences, personal narratives, and psychological mechanisms underlying the relationship between turnover intention mutations. Second, there has not been a single study that specifically examines the context of the 3T region in the framework of Sustainable HRM, even though this region is the one that most needs sustainable HR policies. Third, the moderation of position levels in the experience of mutation and the intensity of turnover intention has never been explored empirically. This study fills the three gaps simultaneously through a qualitative case study approach.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Research (2020-2026)

No.	Researcher & Year	Focus	Method	Relevance
1	Rahmawati & Adiwati (2021)	Job mutation on the job satisfaction of BPJS Karimun Jawa employees	Quantitative	Direct research of BPJS Ketenagakerjaan; mutation has a negative effect on job satisfaction
2	Hapida et al. (2024)	Position mutation on job satisfaction of PT PLN Sulawesi	Quantitative	SOEs in Sulawesi comparable to 3T; significant mutation affects satisfaction (t=5.423)
3	Dirja & Razak (2020)	Mutation and promotion of the work performance of employees of the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia	Quantitative	Mutations in government agencies are significant in performance if accompanied by adequate preparation
4	Adismana et al. (2025); Handaru et al. (2021)	Organizational commitment and turnover intention of Indonesian employees	Quantitative	High affective commitment lowers exit intent; retention foundation in 3T
5	Permatasari & Sugiarto (2024)	WLB and commitment to turnover intention; job satisfaction as a mediator	Quantitative SEM-PLS	WLB and commitment to mediate turnover; WLB was severely impacted in 3Q
6	Soraya & Ardiyanti (2024)	Mitigating turnover: resilience, social support, job satisfaction Indonesia	Quantitative CB-SEM	Social support as a critical buffer in remote work environments
7	Hulu, Halawa & Waruwu (2025)	Sustainable HRM: concepts, practices, implementation in modern organizations	Systematic Literature Review	Key theoretical foundations; Sustainable HRM practices significantly improve retention
8	Järllström dkk. (2023)	Sustainable HRM practices: a comparative case study of three Finnish companies (2017-2022)	Kualitatif longitudinal	Interview methodology reference for Sustainable HRM; Transparent Communication Key to Retention
9	Lu et al. (2023)	Sustainable HRM practices, employee resilience, and employee outcomes	Kuantitatif multilevel	Sustainable HRM increases resilience ($\beta=0.34$) and employee work engagement
10	Cooke dkk. (2022)	Building sustainable societies through human-centred HRM	Conceptual	Calling for qualitative research for HRM in the context of remote work and inequality

Source: Compiled from various studies (2020-2026)

Analytical Framework and Research Propositions

This study uses three analytical lenses in an integrated manner. First, Sustainable HRM (Hulu et al., 2025; Lu et al., 2023; Harefa, 2026) as a normative standard for assessing the quality of existing mutation policies. Second, psychological contract theory (Rousseau, 1989) to understand how the expectation gap in the reality of 3T assignments creates a feeling of organizational betrayal that triggers the erosion of commitment. Third, Mobley's (1978) intention turnover model as a process map that explains how dissatisfaction gradually transforms into an intention and eventual decision to exit. Since this study uses a qualitative method, a formal hypothesis is not established. In their place, the following two analytical propositions guide data collection and interpretation:

P1: Employee mutation to the 3T area without adequate organizational support creates layered pressures that gradually form turnover intentions through the erosion of psychological contracts and a decline in work-life balance.

P2: Position level moderates the intensity of mutation experience and turnover intention of executive-level employees experience greater pressure with minimal support, resulting in a qualitatively different turnover profile compared to the managerial level.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2018) with BPJS Ketenagakerjaan as a single case study which is examined from two different perspectives. The single case study was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the phenomenon of turnover intention holistically in a specific organizational and geographical context, namely quasi-government public service institutions operating in remote areas of Indonesia. The epistemological paradigm used is interpretivism, where reality is understood as a social construct shaped by subjective experiences and the meanings that informants attach to their situations (Yin, 2018). This approach was chosen in line with the call of Cooke et al. (2022) that lived experience in remote work contexts can only be understood in depth through an interpretive lens.

Selection of Informants

The selection of informants used purposive sampling techniques with strict criteria: (1) organic employees of BPJS Ketenagakerjaan who are currently actively serving in work units located in the 3T area; (2) have undergone a minimum of 12 months of assignment to ensure that the informant has sufficient in-depth experience; (3) have experienced at least one mutation process to the 3T area; and (4) represent different levels of position to allow for comparison of perspectives. Two informants were selected from geographically different work units to ensure contextual variation: I1 from KCP Buol Kali on the northern coast of Central Sulawesi (reachable only by road of dozens of hours from Palu City) and I2 from KACAB Papua Mimika (known for its distinctive security and geographical challenges). The number of two informants was determined based on the principle of information sufficiency in qualitative case studies (Järlström et al., 2023), where depth of insight takes precedence over breadth of sample.

Table 2. Informant Profile

Code	Name & Position	Work Unit	3T Region	Age / Tenure	Mutation History
I1	Hendra Aditya Senior Officer (Class 4) Operational Control Administrator	KCP Buol Kali	Sulawesi Tengah	32 y/±10 y	3x mutation; the last from Kacab Juanda to KCP Buol

I2	I Dewa Gede BudaKACAB Utama Junior ManagerMimika (Class 3) Head of Operational Control	PapuaPapua	35 y / ±11 y	2x mutation to 3T; context of promotion of the position
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Source: Primary data, in-depth interview April 23, 2026

Data Collection Techniques

Data was collected through an in-depth semi-structured interview conducted online using the Zoom platform on April 23, 2026, considering the location of informants spread across remote areas. The duration of the interview ranged from 6075 minutes per informant. The interview guide was compiled based on three thematic domains: (1) experiences and feelings when receiving, undergoing, and reflecting on the mutation to the 3T area; (2) perception of organizational support, policy clarity, and procedural fairness; and (3) the dynamics of intention to stay or leave the organization. All interview sessions were recorded with the consent of the informant contained in the informed consent sheet, then transcribed verbatim for analysis purposes. As supporting data, secondary data was also used in the form of personnel data containing information on positions, work units, and assignment history.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis uses a six-step thematic analysis approach of Braun and Clarke (2006): (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts; (2) inductive initial coding generation from the data; (3) search for themes from groups of code that have similar meanings; (4) theme review of data extracts and the entire dataset; (5) precise definition and naming of themes; and (6) preparation of reports that integrate findings with literature. The validity of the data (trustworthiness) is ensured through four strategies: (1) member checking of the interpretation summary is sent to the informant for confirmation; (2) triangulation between informants comparing narratives I1 and I2 to find patterns and contradictions; (3) peer debriefing of the results of the analysis is discussed with fellow researchers from the same study program; and (4) trail audits of the entire analysis process are systematically documented to ensure methodological transparency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Disparity in Mutation Experience Based on Job Level

The first theme that emerged from the analysis was the difference in the highly contrasting mutation experience between the two informants, which directly reflected the difference in position level and access to information and preparation. I1 (Hendra, Senior Officer, KCP Buol) received a mutation decree at the end of 2024 through a notification from a colleague rather than a direct leader when his domestic conditions were very complex: he was studying for a Master's degree at ITS Surabaya while his wife was undergoing the PPDS (Specialist Doctor Education) program. The absence of official notification and comprehensive pre-assignment briefing reflects the failure of the communication and preparation dimension in the two-element mutation policy that Jarlström et al. (2023) identified as the foundation of Sustainable HRM.

"It is indeed difficult because the distance is very far from the previous office and there is no prior notice. But what can be said, the decision still has to leave and accept the situation. I think the conditions here are like the island of Java in the 90s, cows are still roaming around, school buildings are not feasible, education is still lagging behind, and the condition of the road is still sometimes found in the form of land." (I1, KCP Buol)

Narrative I1 reveals dimensions that were not captured by previous quantitative research

(Rahmawati & Adiwati, 2021; Hapida et al., 2024): the impact of mutations is not only on job satisfaction, but on the entire ecosystem of employee lives. Housing conditions (windowless bed houses behind offices), accessibility (dozens of hours by road from the provincial capital with a rental cost of Rp 1,51.8 million), and cost of living (food prices 2 times the price of Java Island) create multiple financial and psychological burdens. This is in line with the findings of Gani et al. (2022) that insufficient compensation relative to the cost of living in remote locations is a significant driver of turnover intention.

On the other hand, I2 (Buda, Junior Manager, KACAB Papua Mimika) received his mutation in the context of a position promotion, with the provision of previous experience serving in a similar 3T environment. Information about field conditions was provided in full by the management before departure, the facilities were considered feasible, and the team faced was quite competitive. This fundamental difference is consistent with the findings of Dirja and Razak (2020) that the positive effects of mutations are only realized when accompanied by adequate preparation.

"The expectations are much different from the real conditions of life outside the office much better than when I first served in Mimika. The job challenges turned out to be much bigger than my expectations, but that was what made me excited. The management provided the motivational support, enthusiasm, and data I needed to carry out my work." (I2, KACAB Papua Mimika)

Theme 2: Organizational Support Gap by Job Level

The second most striking theme is the sharp difference in perceptions and experiences of organizational support between the two informants. I1 experienced a lack of comprehensive and systemic support: (1) there was no comprehensive briefing on the field conditions before departure; (2) financial assistance was only in the form of moving money which, after tax deductions, was not proportional to the real cost of relocation; (3) there were no expensive incentives or isolation allowances even though the price of basic necessities was 2x more expensive; (4) visits from the regional office only 1 time and from the parent branch office only 2 times a year; and (5) the most painful stigma came from the HR of the Head Office.

"There was once a feeling of being overlooked when the HR department of the Head Office considered that the Sub-Branch Office in a remote area was 'no work' or that the burden was light. We felt that our contributions and difficulties were underestimated just because we were in a small unit. Even though to get just one participant requires a physical struggle through the tough terrain and extraordinary social adaptation." (I1, KCP Buol)

This experience of I1 represents exactly what Cooke et al. (2022) call 'forms of exclusion in the labour market and workplaces' when employees on the periphery are symbolically and materially discriminated against by an organizational system centered on large offices in the city. From the perspective of psychological contract theory (Rousseau, 1989), this stigma and neglect are the most damaging forms of contract violation because they touch on the dimension of reward and recognition of intrinsic needs that are much deeper than just financial compensation. In contrast, I2 enjoys a much better support ecosystem: visits to the regional office and head office teams with an adequate intensity, supervisors who are supportive and provide constructive evaluations, a fairly competitive and solid team, and easy access to HR. This systemic difference can be explained through two structural factors. First, as a Junior Manager, I2 is in a more active managerial communication chain where the direct supervisor has an interest in ensuring the performance of the unit under his coordination. Second, KACAB (Branch Office) has much higher visibility from regional offices than KCP (Auxiliary Branch Office), so it receives more attention and regular visits. These findings confirm and expand on the research of Lu et al. (2023) that adequate organizational support

builds employee resilience with the added nuance that access to such support is uneven based on the level of position and the size of the work unit.

Theme 3: Dynamics of Turnover Intention Between Family, Career, and Field Conditions

The third theme reveals a very different profile of turnover intention between the two informants, which can be categorized as high-risk turnover (I1) and conditional retention (I2). I1 experiences the desire to go out almost every day, with the main triggers being accumulative: depression and acute boredom due to isolation without entertainment, deep longing for children and wives domiciled in Surabaya, misalignment of communication with superiors, and lack of certainty when the assignment will end. Most significantly, I1 has a very concrete and structured exit plan.

"The desire to find another job or leave BPJS Ketenagakerjaan appears almost every day. In the next 5 years, my confidence to survive began to fade. I have a big plan to become an entrepreneur by opening an Outpatient Clinic with my wife who God willing, next year will become a Pediatric Specialist. Building this family business is a much more attractive option because it promises physical closeness to family and financial independence that is difficult to achieve if you continue to be in a 3T placement." (I1, KCP Buol)

This I1 profile reflects the advanced stages of Mobley's (1978) model of turnover process: from simply 'thinking to quit' (Y1), he has moved to 'intention to seek alternatives' (Y2) and even to 'intention to exit within a certain time' (Y3) with a specific timeline and plan. Soraya and Ardiyanti (2024) explain that in the context of remote work, the absence of social support and work-life balance accelerates progress through the stages of Mobley's model, which is consistent with what I1 experienced. I2, on the other hand, admits that there have been occasional thoughts of going out, especially when alone in a stressful situation or when seeing other colleagues who have careers close to home, but the holding factor he has is much stronger. The family factor (support and motivation from the family) is the main buffer, followed by a long-term career perspective and the belief that dedication in 3T will result in better assignments in the future.

"The motivation and enthusiasm given by my family is the biggest factor that makes me survive. I see the existence of BPJS Ketenagakerjaan getting better and one of the agencies that offers a good career journey. In the next three years, I see myself assigned to one of the offices on the island of Java working and performing very well is the way to make that happen." (I2, KACAB Papua Mimika)

The I2 profile is in line with the findings of Adismana et al. (2025) and Handaru et al. (2021) that the calculative commitment in which employees persist because they consider long-term career investment and high exit costs can be a strong retention factor even in challenging working conditions. The difference between I1 and I2 also reflects the position-level moderation proposed in P2: I2's access to a clearer career path and better managerial support creates a 'reason to stay' that I1 lacks.

Theme 4: Hope for Humanitarian-Based Mutation Policy Reform

The fourth theme arises organically from the question of the most expected policy changes. Interestingly, although the experiences of the two are very different, there is a convergence on two fundamental issues: the lack of transparency in the system of determining who is mutated to the 3T, and the uncertainty of the duration of assignments. The differences lie in the emphasis and proposed solutions that reflect the perspectives of the respective position level.

"Mutation should no longer be just a 'swap' on paper, but must consider the mental readiness, background of the area of origin, and domestic conditions of the employee in depth. The priority of staff positions in the 3T area should be filled by

regional sons, or if not regional sons, priority is given to new employees as the initial phase of service, not for senior employees who have families and served for more than 10 years without humanitarian considerations." (I1, KCP Buol)

"The assignment period in the 3T area needs to be extended to 3 years but given higher compensation, namely the addition of a flight ticket facility back home. Transparency of mutations, especially for the implementation team, needs to be improved, the current system is not transparent. The force distribution assessment policy should be removed in 3T assignments in order to motivate employees." (I2, KACAB Papua Mimika)

The recommendations of these two informants collectively form a comprehensive policy reform agenda that is in line with the principles of Sustainable HRM (Hulu et al., 2025; Harefa, 2026; Lu et al., 2023): sustainable HR policies must consider the humanitarian dimension, procedural fairness, long-term well-being of employees, and incentives proportionate to the burden of assignment. The difference in perspective between I1 (emphasizing reform of selection criteria) and I2 (emphasizing transparency and compensation) actually complements each other and together forms a more holistic reform map.

Table 3. Summary of Themes, Key Findings, and Theoretical Connections

Theme	I1 Senior Officer, Buol	Junior Manager, Mimika	Theoretical Connection
1. Mutation Experience	Shock, without notice, very remote conditions, complex domestic load	Promotion context, experienced, better than expected	3T Dirja & Razak (2020); Kristof-Brown dkk. (2005); Järlström dkk. (2023)
2. Organizational Support	Very minimal: no supply, no incentives, the stigma of HR	Good: full information, embracing employer visits, easy access	Rahmawati & Adiwati (2021); Lu et al. (2023); Rousseau (1989)
3. Turnover Intention	High-risk: almost every day, concrete exit plan (clinic with the wife of a specialist)	Conditional retention: occasional, strong holding factors (career, family, prospects of mutations)	Mobley (1978); Permatasari & Sugiarto (2024); Adismana et al. (2025)
4. Policy Recommendations	Priority of the new regional son/employee, certainty of duration, guarantee of mutation to the location of choice	Transparency of executive mutations, extend 3 years of service return tickets, remove force distribution	Hulu et al. (2025); Harefa (2026); Cooke et al. (2022)

Source: Thematic analysis of in-depth interviews (2026)

CONCLUSION

This qualitative case study research reveals that turnover intention in BPJS Employment employees in 3T areas is a highly contextual phenomenon formed by the complex interaction between job levels, the quality of organizational support, the domestic conditions of employees, and the geographical characteristics of the assignment location. Through in-depth interviews with two different level informants, four central themes were identified that together form a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of human resources in remote areas of Indonesia. The most significant finding was the identification of two qualitatively different turnover intention profiles: high-risk turnover (I1, Senior Officer) and conditional retention (I2, Junior Manager). These differences are

not solely due to individual differences, but rather reflect systemic failures in the distribution of organizational support: lower-level employees in the smallest work units in the most remote areas bear the heaviest assignment burden with the least support. This is the antithesis of the Sustainable HRM principle (Hulu et al., 2025; Lu et al., 2023) which emphasizes that HR policies should give the most attention and resources to employees in the most vulnerable positions.

The theoretical contribution of this study includes three main points. First, this study provides the first qualitative empirical evidence of position-level moderation in the mutation-turnover intention relationship in the context of Indonesia's 3T, a moderation that was not detected by previous aggregate quantitative approaches (Rahmawati & Adiwati, 2021; Hapida et al., 2024). Second, this study extends the Sustainable HRM framework (Hulu et al., 2025; Harefa, 2026) to the dimension of procedural justice in mutation policies in Indonesian quasi-government public institutions, filling the gap identified by Cooke et al. (2022). Third, this study confirms that Mobley's (1978) turnover intention model operates at different speeds depending on the availability of social and organizational support findings that complement and expand the studies of Permatasari and Sugiarto (2024) and Soraya and Ardiyanti (2024). The practical implications for BPJS Ketenagakerjaan include five concrete policy recommendations: (1) designing an individual-profile-based mutation policy that takes into account the domestic conditions, working period, geographical background, and mental readiness of employees rather than simply 'swapping' to fill vacancies; (2) establishing an equal minimum standard of support for all 3T work units regardless of unit size, including comprehensive pre-assignment briefings, fair depreciation allowances, and regular visit programs from the regional office; (3) establishing and executing transparent rotation schedules with certainty of assignment duration and guaranteed reverse mutation mechanisms; (4) evaluating and removing force distribution policies in performance assessments that are considered unfair for employees in remote areas; and (5) developing meaningful non-financial incentive packages such as periodic homecoming ticket facilities, remote health service access, and 3T post-assignment career acceleration pathways.

The limitations of this study include: (1) the number of informants limited to two people limiting the transferability of the findings even after they had reached initial thematic saturation; (2) interviews conducted online may miss contextual nuances that can only be captured through direct field observation; and (3) this study is cross-sectional so that it does not capture temporal dynamics. Further research is suggested using a mixed methods approach combining this qualitative depth with quantitative hypothesis testing using SEM-PLS in all 25 3T work units by adding organizational commitment as mediators, 3T special compensation as moderators, and work-life balance as a second mediator, in order to produce a more comprehensive and generalized understanding of the dynamics of Sustainable HRM and employee retention in remote areas of Indonesia.

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