



Workload and Employee Performance in SMEs: Investigating the Mediating Role of Job Stress

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of workload on employee performance with job stress as a mediating variable at CV. ABC in Samarinda City. The research focuses on high job demands that potentially increase stress and decrease employee performance. A quantitative approach with an explanatory design was employed. The sample consisted of 40 employees selected through a total sampling technique. Data were collected using Likert scale questionnaires, which were tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was performed using linear regression, path analysis, and the Sobel test via SPSS software. The results indicate that workload has a significant effect on both job stress and employee performance. Job stress also significantly affects employee performance and is proven to mediate the relationship between workload and employee performance. The study concludes that managing workload and controlling job stress are critical factors in enhancing employee performance. These findings provide empirical contributions to human resource management development and offer practical implications for formulating more effective workplace policies.

Keywords: Workload, Job Stress, Employee Performance



INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and increasingly intense business competition, organizations are required to possess sustainable strategic advantages. One of the primary factors determining organizational success is the quality of human resources. Human resources serve as the main driver of organizational activities, directly influencing productivity and the achievement of corporate goals (Hasibuan, 2016; Susan 2019). Therefore, effective human resources management has become an essential necessity in optimizing employee performance.

Employee performance is a key indicator in assessing organizational success. It reflects an individual's ability to complete tasks effectively and efficiently according to established targets. However, performance is influenced not only by individual competence but also by job-related factors such as workload and psychological conditions (Mangkunegara, 2017; Robbins & Coulter, 2016). A workload that is disproportionate to an employee's capacity can create pressure that leads to a decline in performance.

Globally, rising job demands and productivity pressures have become common phenomena across various industrial sectors. These conditions often trigger job stress as a response to the imbalance between job demands and individual capabilities (Chávez Arizala et al., 2024). Poorly managed job stress can lead to burnout, decreased concentration, and a decline in the quality of work output (Wahyudi & Hidayat, 2017). Consequently, the relationship between workload, job stress, and employee performance has become a critical issue that requires empirical study.

This phenomenon is also evident in the local context, specifically at CV. ABC, a medium sized furniture distribution company in Samarinda. Employee frequently experience overtime work due to high delivery demands and operational targets. The company's attendance records indicate that average working hours exceeded normal standards during February – June 2025. In March 2025, for example, employee worked an average of 11.5 hours per day, with overtime reaching 2.5 hours. In addition, around 12 out of 40 employees performed overtime work daily. These conditions indicate considerable workload pressure within the company's operational system.

To strengthen the description of workload phenomenon, the following operational data are presented:



Table 1.
Employee Overtime Data at CV. ABC

Description	Feb 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	Juny 2025
Average overtime days/month	20 days	10 days	16 days	22 days	21 days
Average number of employees doing overtime/day	16	12	10	12	13
Average working hours/day	10 h 30 m	11 h 30 m	10 h 46 m	11 h	10 h
Average overtime duration	1 h 30 m	2 h 30 m	1 h 46 m	2 h	1 h

Source: Employee Attendance Record of CV. ABC (2025)

The high workload experienced by employees is not consistently accompanied by improved performance. This is evident from the companys's delivery target achievement data, which show that actual delivery realization consistently failed to meet established targets. The gap between target and realization tends to fluctuate and widen over time, indicating a decline in operational productivity.

Table 2.
Delivery Targets and Realization at CV. ABC

Month	Delivery Target	Delivery Realization	Gap
May	100x	80x	20x
June	105x	63x	42x
July	135x	108x	27x
August	130x	92x	38x
September	120x	75x	45x
November	125x	70x	55x

Source: Delivery Operational Data of CV. ABC (2025)

Based on Table 2, it is apparent that delivery realization consisently failed to achieve company targets. The largest gap occurred in November 2025, where only 70 deliveries were completed out of a target of 125, resulting in a deficit of 55 deliveries. This condition indicates that increasing operational demands and working hours do not necessarily improve employee performance. Instead, an



excessive workload may contribute to fatigue and psychological pressure, which reduce employee effectiveness in meeting operational targets.

Theoretically, the relationship between workload, job stress, and employee performance can be explained through the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). This theory states that an imbalance between job demands and individual resources increases job stress and decreases performance. High workload, as a form of job demand, can lead to psychological pressure if not balanced with adequate resources.

Previous studies regarding workload, job stress, and employee performance have yielded inconsistent findings. Some studies found that workload has a positive effect on employee performance because it encourages employees to work more productively (Mudrika et al., 2021). In contrast, other studies found that an excessive workload negatively affects employee performance due to physical and psychological exhaustion (Iriansyah et al., 2024). Similar inconsistencies are also found in studies examining the relationship between job stress and employee performance (Tinambunan et al., 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2024).

In addition, most previous studies still position job stress as an independent variable rather than as a mediating variable. Furthermore, previous research has largely focused on large organizations, banking institutions, public sector organizations, and government agencies, such as studies conducted by Iriansyah et al. (2024) in the banking sector and Nopriani et al. (2025) in government institutions. Empirical studies examining the mediating role of job stress in medium-sized distribution companies, particularly in the furniture distribution sector, remain limited. This sector possesses distinct operational characteristics, including physical workload, tight delivery deadlines, and intensive operational demands, which may create different patterns of stress and performance outcomes compared to other industries.

Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by examining job stress as a mediating mechanism between workload and employee performance in a medium sized furniture distribution company, namely CV. ABC. This study not analyzes the direct relationship between workload and employee performance but also explains how workload indirectly influences performance through job stress. Thus, this research is expected to enrich the application of the JD-R Theory in medium scale distribution companies.

Based on the empirical phenomena, theoretical framework, and identified research gaps, this study aims to analyze the influence of workload on employee



performance with job stress as a mediating variable at CV. ABC. The findings of this research are expected to provide both theoretical contributions to human resources management studies and practical implications for organizations in managing workload and reducing job stress to improve employee performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is grounded in a theoretical framework that explains the relationship between workload, job stress, and employee performance. The grand theory employed is the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). The theory posits that every occupation contains two major components, namely job demands and job resources. Job demands refer to the physical, psychological, and emotional aspects of work that require sustained effort, such as workload, time pressure, and task complexity. Meanwhile, job resources encompass organizational support, work autonomy, and individual capabilities that help employees manage these demands effectively (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). When job demands exceed available resources, employees undergo a health impairment process that creates psychological strain in the form of job stress, which eventually diminishes employee performance.

In this study, workload is positioned as a form of job demand because employees are required to complete a specific volume of work within a limited timeframe, in terms of both quantity and quality (Wahyudi & Hidayat, 2017; Koesmowidjojo, 2017). An excessive workload requires employees to expend greater physical and mental energy. Within the JD-R framework, workload serves as the primary source of pressure that triggers psychological strain when employees perceive that operational demands exceed their capabilities and available resources. Consequently, prolonged workload pressure can reduce an employee's capacity to maintain optimal performance.

Job stress represents the psychological strain resulting from excessive work demands. According to Hasibuan (2016), job stress is a state of tension that affects emotions, cognitive processes, and individual behavior. In JD-R Theory, job stress emerges when employees continuously face high job demands without adequate resources or support. Employees encountering heavy workloads, strict deadlines, and intense pressure are more susceptible to emotional exhaustion, anxiety, fatigue, and reduced concentration. Therefore, job stress acts as a critical psychological mechanism explaining how workload influences employee performance.



Employee performance refers to the quality and quantity of work achieved by individuals in fulfilling their assigned responsibilities (Mangkunegara, 2017). Robbins and Coulter (2016) explain that employee performance is reflected through several dimensions, including work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence. Within the JD-R framework, employee performance is the final work outcome influenced by job demands and psychological strain. When employees experience an excessive workload and prolonged stress, their concentration, productivity, accuracy, and effectiveness tend to decline, resulting in lower overall performance.

The indicators used in this study are derived from established theoretical frameworks. Workload indicators adopted from Koesmowidjojo (2017) include working conditions, use of working time, work targets, and task standards. These indicators describe the extent to which employees experience demanding workloads and time pressure. Job stress indicators adopted from Robbins and Judge (2017) comprise physiological, psychological, and behavioral symptoms that reflect employees' psychological responses to work pressure. Meanwhile, employee performance indicators adopted from Robbins and Coulter (2016) include work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence, representing an employee's ability to complete work efficiently and responsibly.

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between workload, job stress, and employee performance. Qoyyimah et al. (2019) found that job stress had a significant negative effect on employee performance, whereas workload did not significantly affect performance. Similarly, Sulastri and Onsardi (2020) reported that workload and job stress negatively and significantly affected employee performance. Mardiani and Khamdanah (2022), as well as Widiанти and Herlina (2023), also concluded that an excessive workload and high job stress lead to a decline in employee performance.

However, some studies have reported inconsistent findings. Tinambunan et al. (2022) found that workload and job stress simultaneously exerted a positive and significant effect on performance. Similar findings were reported by Iriansyah et al. (2024), who found that workload and job stress positively influenced employee performance. These inconsistencies indicate that the relationships among workload, stress, and performance may vary depending on organizational conditions, employee characteristics, and work environments.

Several mediation-based studies further support the JD-R Theory by demonstrating that job stress acts as a psychological mechanism connecting workload and employee performance. Raditya and Supartha (2023) found that



workload significantly increased job stress, which subsequently reduced employee performance. Similar findings were reported by Herdiana and Sary (2023) and Iriansyah et al. (2024), who concluded that job stress significantly mediates the relationship between workload and employee performance. These studies strengthen the argument that workload does not merely influence performance directly, but also indirectly through the psychological strain experienced by employees.

Despite extensive research on these variables, several research gaps remain. Conceptually, many previous studies still position job stress solely as an independent variable rather than as a mediating variable. In contrast, the JD-R Theory explicitly emphasizes that stress is a psychological strain arising from excessive job demands, functioning as an intermediary mechanism that affects performance. Contextually, most previous studies were conducted in banking institutions, government organizations, and large-scale manufacturing companies, leaving medium-sized companies with distinct operational characteristics largely underexplored.

Another limitation of prior research is the heavy reliance on self-reported questionnaire data without integrating actual operational performance data. As a result, many findings remain generalized and less contextualized to real organizational conditions. Therefore, this research attempts to address these gaps by examining the mediating role of job stress in the relationship between workload and employee performance within a medium-sized company, namely CV. ABC, while incorporating actual operational conditions into the analysis.

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical findings discussed above, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

- H1: Workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.
- H2: Workload has a positive and significant effect on job stress
- H3: Job stress has a positive and significant effect on employee performance
- H4: Job stress mediates the effect of workload on employee performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative explanatory approach to examine the casual relationships among variables through hypothesis testing (Sugiyono, 2013: Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research was conducted at CV. ABC, a furniture



and household appliance distribution company in Samarinda City. The study population consisted of all 40 employees within the company. Due to the relatively small population size, a total sampling technique was applied, whereby all employees were selected as respondents (Sugiyono, 2013). Although total sampling was appropriate for this context, the relatively small sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings, particularly in the mediation analysis.

The study utilized primary data collected through structured questionnaires and secondary data obtained from company documents. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), to 5 (strongly agree) (Sugiyono, 2017). The variables examined in this study were workload as the independent variable (X), job stress as the mediating variable (Z), and employee performance as the dependent variable (Y).

The research instrument was developed based on established indicators from Koesmowidjojo (2017), Robbins and Judge (2017), and Robbins and Coulter (2016). Workload was measured using 9 items covering working conditions, use of working time, and work targets. Job stress was measured 14 items related to task demands, role demands, interpersonal demands, organizational structure, and leadership. Employee performance was measured using 15 items covering work quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence.

Instrument testing included validity and reliability assessments performed via SPSS software. Items were considered valid if their significance value was below 0,05, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha with a minimum threshold of 0.70 (Ghozali, 2017). The detailed validity and reliability results are presented in the result and discussion section.

Data analysis techniques encompassed descriptive analysis, classical assumption test, regression analysis, coefficient of determination analysis, path analysis, and the Sobel test using SPSS software (Ghozali, 2018). The mediation analysis was conducted in several stages: testing the effect of workload on employee performance, testing the effect of workload on job stress, testing the simultaneous effects of workload and job stress on employee performance, and finally, executing the Sobel test to determine the statistical significance of the mediating role of job stress.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistical Test



The results of the descriptive statistical test on the independent variables, moderated dependent variables can be seen in the following table:

Table 3.
Descriptive Analysis Results

Variable	SS (%)	S(%)	R(%)	TS(%)	STS
Workload	10%	31.67%	44.72%	13.33%	0.28%
Employee Performance	7.83%	24%	43.33%	20%	4.83%
Job Stress	0.18%	2.68%	22.86%	48.39%	25.89%

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Based on the Table 3, it can be seen that:

1. Workload Variable: Dominated by "Neutral" (44.72%) and "Agree" (31.67%) responses, indicating a moderate workload that remains manageable.
2. Job Stress Variable: Mostly consists of "Disagree" (48.39%) and "Strongly Disagree" (25.89%) responses, showing that the majority of respondents do not experience high levels of job stress.
3. Employee Performance Variable: Primarily categorized as "Neutral" (43.33%) and "Agree" (24.00%), suggesting that performance is relatively good but has room for improvement.

Classical Assumption Test

Normality test

The results of the normality test in this study can be seen in the Table 4:

Table 4.
Normality Test Result

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Workload	.102	40	.200*	.965	40	.239
Employee Performance	.065	40	.200*	.978	40	.603
Job Stress	.060	40	.200*	.982	40	.774

Source: Data Processed (2026)

The normality test result show that the significance values for each variable are greater than 0.05, specifically for workload (0.239), employee performance (0.603), and job stress (0.774). This indicates that the data are normally distributed and meet the requirements for regression analysis.

**Heteroscedasticity test**

The results of the heteroscedasticity test can be seen in the Figure 1:

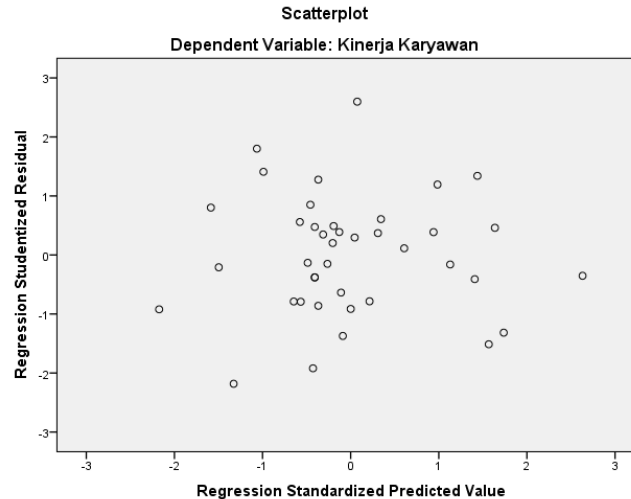


Figure 1.

Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Source: Data Processed (2026)

The heteroscedasticity test results show that the points on the scatterplot are spread randomly above and below the zero axis and do not form a specific pattern. This indicates that the regression model does not suffer from heteroscedasticity.

Linearity test

The results of the linearity test in this study can be seen in the following Table 3:

Table 5.
ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Employee Performance * Workload	Between Groups	(Combined)	4480.083	19	235.794	5.536	.000
		Linearity	2444.287	1	2444.287	57.383	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	2035.796	18	113.100	2.655	.019
	Within Groups		851.917	20	42.596		
	Total		5332.000	39			

Source: Data Processed (2026)



Table 6.
ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Employee Performance * Job Stress	Between Groups	(Combined)	3708.833	23	161.254	1.590	.171
		Linearity	2509.236	1	2509.236	24.734	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	1199.597	22	54.527	.537	.912
	Within Groups		1623.167	16	101.448		
	Total		5332.000	39			

Source: Data Processed (2026)

The linearity test results show different outcomes for each relationship. The relationship between job stress and employee performance meets the linearity assumption because the Deviation from Linearity significance value is 0.912 (> 0.05), indicating that the relationship can be considered linear.

However, the relationship between workload and employee performance shows a Deviation from Linearity significance value of 0.019 (< 0.05). This indicates that the linearity assumption may not be fully satisfied. Therefore, the relationship between workload and employee performance should be interpreted with caution, as the association may contain non-linear patterns.

Hypothesis Testing

t-test

The results of the t-test by comparing the t-table with the calculated t-table can be seen in the Table 7:

Table 7.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.447	6.033		-.074	.941
	Workload	.889	.207	.466	4.288	.000
	Job Stress	.701	.158	.482	4.434	.000

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Based on the results of the t-test in the table above can be concluded:

1. In the workload variable (X), the sig. value is $0.000 < 0.05$, so H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, which means that the workload variable (X) has an effect on employee performance (Y).



2. In the job stress variable (Z), the sig. value is $0.000 < 0.05$, so H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, which means that the job stress variable (Z) has an effect on employee performance (Y).

Coefficient of determination test

The results of the coefficient of determination test (R Square) can be seen in the following table:

Table 8.
Coefficient of Determination Table

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.804 ^a	.646	.627	7.139

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Based on the Table 6, it can be seen that the R Square value is 0.646. This means that 64.6% of the variation in employee performance (Y) can be explained by workload (X) and job stress (Z) variables. Meanwhile, the remaining 35.4% is explained by other variables outside this study that are not included in the research model.

Path analysis

The result of the path analysis test can be seen in the Table 9,10,11:

Table 9.
Workload on Employee Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.268	7.054		1.030	.309
	Workload	1.291	.228	.677	5.671	.000

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Table 10.
Workload on Job Stress

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	11.000	5.925		1.857	.071
	Workload	.573	.191	.437	2.999	.005

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Table 11.
Workload and Job Stress on Employee Performance



Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.447	6.033		-.074	.941
	Workload	.889	.207	.466	4.288	.000
	Job Stress	.701	.158	.482	4.434	.000

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Based on the path analysis results presented in the Table 7,8,9, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. First, workload has a significant positive effect on employee performance, as indicated by a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05) and a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.677. This finding indicates that higher workload is associated with higher employee performance at CV. ABC. The result suggests that employees may perceive workload as a productive challenge that encourages them to work more actively and efficiently in achieving organizational targets.
2. Second, workload also has a significant positive effect on job stress, with a significance value of 0.005 (< 0.05) and a beta coefficient of 0.437. This indicates that increasing workload tends to increase employees' job stress levels due to higher work demands, tighter deadlines, and operational pressure.
3. Third, when job stress is included in the regression model, workload continues to have a significant positive effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.466$; $p = 0.000$), while job stress also shows a significant positive effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.482$; $p = 0.000$). These findings indicate that higher job stress is statistically associated with higher employee performance in the context of this study.

This result suggests that the stress experienced by employees at CV. ABC may still be categorized as functional stress or eustress, namely a form of work pressure that motivates employees to remain focused, alert, and productive in completing their tasks. Therefore, job stress in this study does not appear to weaken employee performance, but instead may encourage employees to improve their work achievement under demanding operational conditions.



Overall, the research model demonstrates that workload has both a significant direct effect on employee performance and a significant indirect effect through job stress as a mediating variable.

Sobel test

The result of the Sobel test can be seen in the following table:

Table 12.
Sobel Test Result

Workload		Test Statistic	p-Value	Conclusion
a	0.573	2.485	0.01294	Berpenaruh Signifikan
b	0.701			
sa	0.191			
sb	0.158			

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Based on the results of the Sobel test at table 10, it is known that the test statistic value is 2.485, which is greater than the t-table value of 2.026, and the p-value is 0.01294, which is smaller than 0.05. This indicates that job stress has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between workload and employee performance. Thus, workload not only affects employee performance directly, but also indirectly through job stress as a mediating variable. Therefore, it can be concluded that job stress significantly mediates the effect of workload on employee performance in this study.

The Influence of Workload on Employee Performance

The hypothesis testing results show that workload has a significant positive effect on employee performance, with a significance value of 0,000 (< 0.05) and a standardizes coefficient of 0.677. These finding indicate that higher workload is associated with higher employee performance at CV. ABC.

This result suggests that the workload experienced by employees is still perceived as a productive challenge rather than an excessive burden. Employees may interpret higher workloads as part of their responsibility to achieve organizational targets, thereby encouraging greater focus, discipline, and productivity. In this context, workload functions as a motivating factor that stimulates employees to improve their performance. However, this interpretation should be made cautiously because an excessive workload may eventually induce fatigue and reduce employee performance if not properly managed.



According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, job demands such as workload do not always produce negative outcomes. When employees possess adequate resources, skills, and work adaptation, workload can foster motivation and higher achievement. Therefore, the workload at CV. ABC appears to remain within a manageable level that positively contributes to employee performance. These findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Sulastris and Onsardi (2020), Widiyanti and Herlina (2023), and Yuli et al. (2023), which found that workload can significantly influence employee performance and productivity.

The Influence of Workload on Job Stress

The hypothesis testing results show that the workload variable has a significance value of 0.005 (< 0.05), with a t-statistic of 2.999, which is greater than the t-table value of 2.021. Furthermore, the beta coefficient of 0.437 This indicates that an increasing workload tends to elevate employees' perceived job stress.

In the operational environment of CV. ABC, employees frequently face strict deadlines, high distribution demands, and mandatory overtime. These conditions increase psychological pressure and may lead to tension, fatigue, and emotional strain among the workforce. According to the JD-R Theory, workload is categorized as a job demand that triggers stress when operational demands exceed employees' available resources and recovery capacity. Therefore, a higher workload naturally contributes to higher levels of job stress. These findings support previous research by Raditya and Supartha (2023) and Rahmawati et al. (2024), which concluded that workload significantly affects job stress.

The Influence of Job Stress on Employee Performance

The hypothesis testing results show that the job stress variable has a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), with a t-statistic of 4.434, which is greater than the t-table value of 2.026, and a beta coefficient of 0.482. This indicates that job stress has a significant positive effect on employee performance; therefore, the research hypothesis is accepted. This finding confirms that job stress plays an important role in influencing employee performance at CV. ABC.

This result suggest that job stress experienced by employees can be categorized as functional stress or eustress, which helps individuals remain focused, alert, and motivated. Moderate stress levels can improve efficiency and accountability, especially when operating under strict deadlines and high accuracy demands.



In the context of CV. ABC, job stress arises from high job demands, a consistent work rhythm, and pressure to minimize errors. Rather than diminishing performance, these conditions create constructive pressure that enhances overall work output.

Furthermore, this study aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, which posits that job stress does not always produce negative outcomes. Provided that adequate resources and support are available, job stress can function as a motivating factor that drives higher performance.

These findings are consistent with previous studies by Mardiani and Khamdanah (2022) and Sulastris and Onsardi (2020), which demonstrate that job stress can positively influence employee performance under specific organizational conditions.

The Influence of Workload on Employee Performance Mediated Job Stress

The Sobel test results indicate that job stress significantly mediates the relationship between workload and employee performance, as evidenced by a test statistic value of 2.485, which exceeds the critical t-table value of 2.026, and a p-value of 0.01294 (< 0.05). These findings suggest that workload affects employee performance both directly and indirectly through job stress. Specifically, a higher workload increases job stress, which subsequently contributes to higher employee performance.

This result indicates that the stress experienced by employees at CV. ABC functions as productive pressure, encouraging individuals to maintain their performance under demanding work conditions. Employees tend to perceive work pressure as a challenge that motivates them to complete tasks effectively and achieve corporate targets. Nevertheless, if workload and stress continue to escalate beyond employees' adaptive capacity, they could potentially produce detrimental consequences for long-term employee well-being and performance.

According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, job demands such as workload typically lead to strain; however, under specific conditions, employees can adapt positively to these demands, provided that adequate personal and organizational resources are available. Therefore, workload and job stress in this study appear to function not merely as psychological pressures but also as motivating factors that drive employees to sustain their performance. These findings are supported by previous studies conducted by Raditya and Supartha (2023), Rahmawati et al. (2024), and Herdiana and Sary (2023), which



identified job stress as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between workload and employee performance.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that workload significantly influences employee performance, both directly and indirectly through job stress. A high workload is proven to increase stress levels, which ultimately leads to a decline in employee performance. Conversely, a proportionally managed workload can drive productivity. Furthermore, job stress is proven to serve as a mediating variable that explains the mechanism between workload and employee performance.

These findings reinforce the relevance of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory in explaining the relationship between job demands, psychological conditions, and work outcomes. Practically, the results imply that organizations should manage workloads equitably, regulate working hours and rest periods, and create a work environment that supports stress management. Such efforts are crucial for maintaining employee psychological stability and enhancing sustainable performance.

Scientifically, this study contributes to the enrichment of human resource management literature, particularly regarding the role of job stress as a mediating variable between workload and performance. It also provides empirical evidence within the context of medium-sized distribution companies, which remains limited in scope. However, this study is constrained by its limited research object and variables that do not yet include other factors such as work motivation or organizational support. Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand the scope of the study, increase the sample size, and integrate other relevant variables to achieve more comprehensive results.

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