



## Job Stress and Workload as Determinants of Employee Performance: Mediated by Job Satisfaction Evidence from UD. XYZ Kediri

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### Abstract

This study investigates how work stress, workload, and job satisfaction influence employee performance at UD XYZ is a trading-sector SME. Specifically, the study examines the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationships between work stress, workload, and performance. A quantitative associative research design was employed with a population of 35 employees using saturated sampling. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS 26, including validity and reliability testing, classical assumption testing, regression analysis, and path analysis. The results indicate that work stress significantly reduces job satisfaction and performance, while job satisfaction positively affects performance. Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work stress and performance, serving as a psychological buffer that mitigates the effects of stress. In contrast, workload does not significantly influence job satisfaction or performance, nor does job satisfaction mediate the impact of workload. These findings imply that managing work stress and enhancing job satisfaction are crucial for sustaining employee performance in SMEs. However, the study is limited by its small sample size and focus on a single company. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing the results, and opportunities exist for broader, multi-organizational research.

Keywords: *Job Stress, Workload, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a critical factor in the competitiveness and sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Lukito, Susanti, Susanto, Judijanto, & Ali, 2025). In trading-sector businesses, employees are essential for ensuring operational efficiency, maintaining service quality, and supporting organizational adaptability in increasingly dynamic markets. (Yitayew & Ketema, 2025). Beyond technical competencies, employee performance is influenced by psychological and organizational factors, such as work stress, workload, and job satisfaction (Singh et al., 2022). These variables interact in complex ways and may jointly influence productivity and work outcomes, making them essential to investigate in the SME context.

Work stress, defined as an individual's response to job-related pressures, has been widely recognized as a factor that can disrupt motivation and impair performance (Bui et al., 2021). Employees who experience stress exceeding their coping capacity may struggle to fulfill their responsibilities, which can undermine organizational effectiveness (Maharani & Surya, 2024). Unmanaged stress can also diminish an employee's ability to adapt to work demands, thereby reducing task execution and hindering performance achievement (Hariyanto et al., 2023). Additionally, prior studies emphasize that work stress's influence on performance is often indirect, operating through psychological mechanisms such as job satisfaction.

Another factor that substantially influences employee performance is workload, which includes the volume, complexity, and intensity of assigned tasks. An excessive workload can hinder task completion and reduce job satisfaction when job demands surpass an employee's ability to perform effectively (Upadyaya et al., 2016). In trading companies such as UD. XYZ Kediri, high workloads characterized by demanding sales targets and stringent stock management responsibilities may place additional pressure on employees, potentially affecting their well-being and performance.

Job satisfaction, defined as a positive emotional response to one's job, is frequently identified as a key mediating variable linking work stress, workload, and employee performance (Manuel & Priyowidodo, 2025). Job satisfaction reflects an employee's feelings of fulfillment or dissatisfaction with their work conditions. Its presence or absence can substantially influence behavior, motivation, and performance quality (Issa et al., 2024). Understanding its mediating role is therefore essential, especially in organizations where performance is closely tied to daily operational demands, such as UD. XYZ Kediri.

Preliminary observations at UD. XYZ Kediri suggest suboptimal performance despite the company's efforts to provide competitive wages and a suitable work environment. Several employees reported significant work pressure stemming from heavy workloads, strict sales targets, and tight scheduling. Interestingly, some employees experiencing high stress and heavy workloads do not necessarily exhibit declining performance. This suggests that other internal factors, such as job satisfaction, may moderate the impact of these stressors.

Previous studies in this field have produced inconsistent findings. Work stress and workload were not significantly associated with employee performance, and job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between work stress and performance (Uma & Swasti, 2024). Similarly, job satisfaction did not mediate the effect of workload on performance, though it did partially mediate the relationship between work stress and performance (Wulandari et al., 2022). However, another study found that job satisfaction could mediate the effect of workload on performance, but not work stress (Zahro & Abadiyah, 2024). Furthermore, work stress and workload did not significantly influence job satisfaction, nor did job satisfaction mediate the effects of these factors on employee performance (Wijayanti et al., 2024).

These inconsistent findings highlight a clear research gap regarding the extent to which job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work stress, workload, and employee performance. The mixed empirical evidence suggests that this relationship may vary across organizational contexts, job characteristics, and operational structures. In the specific setting of a trading company, such as UD XYZ Kediri, workload and stress dynamics may differ from those in other sectors. Thus, the present study aims to address this gap by examining the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between work stress,

workload, and employee performance.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Job Stress

Job stress refers to the pressure employees experience while performing their work. It is commonly manifested as psychological and physiological symptoms, such as feelings of loneliness and sleep disturbances (Kusumawati & Linando, 2024). Job stress generally arises when job demands do not align with employees' abilities, triggering physical, mental, and emotional strain (Jesslyn & Khoiri, 2024). Excessive work stress has been shown to reduce productivity, stamina, and service quality (Aurellifa & Permatasari, 2024). However, work stress does not always have adverse effects. When managed optimally, it can function as eustress, stimulating motivation and encouraging employees to improve their work performance (Putra & Dewirahmadanirwati, 2024).

### 2.2 Workload

Workload refers to the responsibilities that must be completed within a specified timeframe. It encompasses both physical and mental demands. Variations in job demands can lead to unequal workloads, and an excessive workload tends to increase stress at work (Kusumawati & Linando, 2024). Conceptually, workload refers to the volume of performance required of employees in a particular role, which can be assessed from objective and subjective perspectives, including physical and mental burdens. An excessive workload can result in physical and psychological fatigue, as well as adverse emotional reactions. Conversely, workloads that are too light or repetitive can generate boredom and reduce work engagement (Iriansyah et al., 2024).

### 2.3 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to an employee's positive attitude toward their work. Job satisfaction contributes to employees' physical and mental well-being. Therefore, job satisfaction significantly impacts employee productivity (Khairunnisa et al., 2024). High employee productivity affects the company's goals and targets. Therefore, company leaders must understand how to maintain and improve job satisfaction among employees (Kusumawati & Linando, 2024). Additionally, a company's success depends on its employees' responses, particularly their job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an emotional state that indicates whether someone is satisfied with their work (Hariyanto et al., 2023).

Job satisfaction is a positive attitude or emotional state experienced by employees while performing their work. It plays a vital role in supporting their physical and mental well-being. Consequently, job satisfaction is closely associated with employee productivity because higher job satisfaction encourages improved work performance (Khairunnisa et al., 2024). Increased employee productivity directly contributes to achieving organizational goals and work targets, which underscores the importance of organizational leaders understanding and implementing strategies to maintain and enhance job satisfaction. Furthermore, organizational success is determined primarily by employees' responses, specifically job satisfaction, which reflects the extent to which individuals are satisfied or dissatisfied with their work (Hariyanto et al., 2023).

### 2.4 Employee performance

Employee performance refers to the outcomes individuals achieve while carrying out their job duties. This performance is influenced by factors such as ability, perseverance, experience, sincerity, and effective time management (Tamara & Heliyani, 2024). Performance can also be understood as the quantity and quality of work produced by employees within a given timeframe. Employees who perform their tasks effectively are more likely to demonstrate optimal performance and produce high-quality work (Busro in Harianto et al., 2024). Optimal performance is crucial for organizations to compete in the business environment and achieve their vision, mission, and strategic objectives because strong employee performance contributes to overall organizational performance (Uma & Swasti, 2024). Furthermore, employee performance is an essential benchmark for

organizations to evaluate and assess their human resources (Iriansyah et al., 2024).

## 2.5 Job Demands Resources Model

Recent advancements in Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory underscore its significance in explaining how job characteristics impact employee outcomes. Over the past decade, the JD-R framework has expanded to incorporate multilevel perspectives, person-situation interactions, proactive approaches, and work-home resource extensions. This evolution provides a more comprehensive understanding of how job demands and resources influence strain and motivational processes in the workplace (Bakker & Demerouti, 2024; Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2023). This theoretical evolution supports the idea that high job demands lead to strain and decreased well-being, whereas adequate job resources promote engagement and favorable results. Within this framework, job satisfaction serves as a mediating mechanism through which stress affects performance. As job demands increase stress and reduce satisfaction, employees' motivation and behavioral engagement decline, resulting in lower performance. Conversely, sufficient job resources sustain job satisfaction, mitigate the negative impact of stress, and improve performance, which is consistent with the JD-R dual pathways of health impairment and motivational processes.

## 2.6 Research Hypothesis

### 2.6.1. The Effect of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction.

Studies have found that occupational stress negatively affects job satisfaction. Higher levels of work-related stress tend to decrease positive evaluations of jobs and overall work experiences. According to Yildirim et al. (2024), empirical findings indicate that increased occupational stress is associated with lower levels of job satisfaction. This suggests that unmanaged stress can significantly undermine employees' well-being and attitudes toward their work. Consistent with these findings, occupational stress has also been identified as an important factor influencing job satisfaction. Employees who experience higher levels of work-related stress tend to be less satisfied with their jobs. Excessive workloads, administrative demands, and challenging work environments can diminish positive perceptions of work and reduce overall well-being (Kundu & Banerjee, 2025). Based on the results of previous studies, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

**H<sub>1</sub>: Job Stress Negatively Affects Employee Job Satisfaction.**

### 2.6.2. The Effect of Workload on Job Satisfaction

The study by Muslim et al. (2023) found that workload significantly affects employee job satisfaction. Similarly, Saputra et al. (2025) found that workload significantly affects job satisfaction among employees at SMAN 3 Bukit Tinggi. These findings are supported by Alam et al.'s (2023) study, which indicated that workload negatively affects job satisfaction. These results suggest that higher workloads tend to reduce job satisfaction because excessive demands can create physical and psychological stress, affecting employees' perceptions and attitudes toward their work. Furthermore, Haiedar and Kholifah (2025) revealed that a heavy workload negatively affects job satisfaction. These results suggest that an increased workload tends to reduce job satisfaction due to the stress, fatigue, and decreased morale that excessive job demands can cause. Based on these results, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

**H<sub>2</sub>: Workload Negatively Affects Employee Job Satisfaction.**

### 2.6.3. The Effect of Job Stress on Employee Performance.

A study by Pant (2025) indicates that occupational stress factors significantly impact employee performance. A supportive work environment, balanced workload, competitive salary and benefits, and job security can reduce stress, enhancing employees' focus, motivation, and work effectiveness. This ultimately improves employee performance within the organization. Similarly, Malathi and Srilatha (2025) found that job stress factors such as workload, work pressure, roles and responsibilities, and interpersonal communication influence IT company employees' job performance. These stress-related factors shape how employees perform their tasks and affect their work effectiveness within the organization. Based on these results, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

**H<sub>3</sub>: Job Stress Negatively Affects Employee Performance.****2.6.4. The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance.**

The study conducted by Memon et al. (2023) found that job satisfaction positively and significantly affects employee performance. Employees who are more satisfied with their jobs tend to be more productive and effective, which ultimately improves organizational performance. Consistent with these findings, Rustina et al. (2025) also found that job satisfaction positively and significantly affects employee performance. Employees with higher levels of job satisfaction perform their duties more effectively, contributing to improved organizational performance. Based on these results, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

**H<sub>4</sub>: Job Satisfaction Positively Affects Employee Performance.****2.6.5. The Effect of Workload on Employee Performance.**

The results of the study conducted by Fujiyanto et al. (2025) indicate that excessive workload negatively affects employee performance. An excessive workload can reduce an employee's ability to complete tasks effectively because they must handle numerous responsibilities within limited time and resources. Ultimately, this leads to decreased performance within the organization. However, Safitri et al. (2025) reported different findings, concluding that workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. A balanced workload can encourage employees to be more productive and motivated, ultimately contributing to improved organizational performance. Based on these results, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

**H<sub>5</sub>: Workload Negatively Affects Employee Performance.****2.6.6. The Effect of Job Stress on Employee Performance Through Job Satisfaction.**

The results of this study align with those of Saputra et al. (2025), who explained that work stress significantly impacts employee performance via job satisfaction at SMAN 3 Bukit Tinggi. Similarly, Saputra (2022) found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work stress and employee performance at Bank Kalsel. These findings are supported by Fadila et al.'s (2025) study, which showed that work stress significantly affects employee performance directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. These results suggest that job satisfaction plays an important role in explaining the relationship between work stress and employee performance. Consistent with these results, Kumendong et al. (2025) found that job stress significantly affects employee performance and job satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction significantly influences employee performance and can mediate the relationship between job stress and performance. This highlights the crucial role of job satisfaction in explaining how job stress influences performance. Based on these results, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

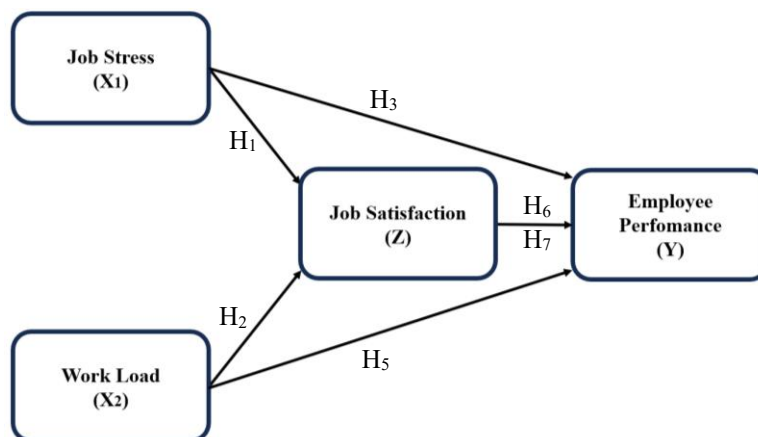
**H<sub>6</sub>: Job Satisfaction Mediates the Relationship Between Job Stress and Employee Performance.****2.6.7. The Effect of Workload on Employee Performance Through Job Satisfaction.**

The study by Muslim et al. (2023) found that workload significantly affects employee performance through job satisfaction among police unit employees in the East Kalimantan Province of Indonesia. Consistent with these findings, Aulia and Setiani (2024) also discovered that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between workload and performance. Further supporting these findings, Fidyatunnisa et al. (2025) reported that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between workload and performance. These findings suggest that workload indirectly influences employee performance through job satisfaction; higher workloads tend to reduce job satisfaction, which subsequently affects performance. Similarly, Siswadi et al. (2024) confirmed that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between workload and performance, indicating that workload has a direct and indirect effect on performance. Based on these results, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

**H<sub>7</sub>: Job Satisfaction Mediates the Relationship Between Workload and Employee Performance.****2.7 Theoretical Framework**

This study's theoretical framework was developed to explain the relationships among job stress, workload, job satisfaction, and employee performance, based on relevant theories and empirical evidence. The framework provides a systematic foundation

for understanding how psychological and organizational factors interact to influence employee behavior and performance outcomes, particularly in small- and medium-sized enterprises. Integrating established theories of stress, motivation, and job satisfaction, the framework illustrates the direct and indirect pathways through which work stress and workload affect performance. Job satisfaction is positioned as a mediating variable in these pathways. This theoretical structure serves as a basis for formulating hypotheses and guiding the empirical analysis conducted in this study. The theoretical framework of this study is presented in Figure 1:



**Figure 1.** Theoretical framework  
Source: Data processed by researchers, 2026

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research design with an associative approach to generate conclusions about a population based on empirical data obtained from a selected sample. Quantitative research emphasizes the numerical measurement of variables and statistical testing to verify theoretical propositions (Barella et al., 2024). Within this framework, the associative approach identifies, measures, and analyzes the magnitude of relationships or causal influences among two or more variables (Daeli et al., 2024). This design is ideal for testing predetermined hypotheses and producing objective, replicable results.

The population in this study consists of 35 UD employees. XYZ. Due to the small population size and the need for comprehensive representation, a nonprobability sampling technique called saturated sampling was used. With this technique, every population member is included as a respondent, reducing sampling bias and enhancing the generalizability of the findings to the population under study (Kiyak & Taskin, 2025). Thus, this study is a census of the entire organizational population rather than a sample, ensuring full coverage of the defined research context. While internal representation is maximized, caution is exercised in extending the findings beyond this specific organizational setting.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on relevant theoretical constructs. Each item in the questionnaire was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), which allowed for standardized assessment of respondent perceptions (Chen et al., 2025).

The methodological procedures applied in this study include several stages of data analysis. First, the instruments were tested for validity and reliability to ensure that each measurement accurately reflects the intended construct and produces consistent results (Amirzadeh et al., 2024). Next, classical assumption tests were performed, including normality and heteroscedasticity tests, to confirm that the data met the statistical requirements for further analysis (Juliyana & Marthalena, 2025). Due to the small sample size ( $N = 35$ ), special care was taken to verify statistical assumptions, thereby enhancing the robustness and stability of the regression estimates.

Then, path analysis was employed to examine the direct and indirect influences among variables, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the causal relationships within the proposed model (Yang & Liu, 2023). Due to the small sample

size, the proposed structural model was parsimoniously specified with a limited number of predictors to maintain estimation stability and reduce the risk of overfitting. In addition to statistical significance testing, effect sizes (including standardized regression coefficients and coefficients of determination) were reported to clarify the magnitude and practical relevance of the relationships. Non-significant findings were interpreted cautiously to minimize the risk of Type II error.

All data processing and statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26. Where relevant, additional robustness procedures, such as resampling techniques, were applied to strengthen the reliability of parameter estimates. These methodological steps are presented in detail to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and consistency. This enables other researchers to replicate the procedures and obtain comparable results.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 RESULTS

#### 4.1.1. Instrument Validity Test

A validity test was conducted to evaluate how accurately the measurement instrument captures the phenomena under investigation. Instrument validity is determined by comparing the obtained significance value with the predefined significance level of 0.05. If the obtained value is below 0.05, the item is considered valid and suitable for use in the analysis. The results of the validity test performed using SPSS 26 in this study are presented in Table 1:

TABLE 1| Validity Test

Variables	Item	Prob (Sig 2-tailed)	<0.05 or >0.05	Conclusion
Work Stress	1	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	X1			
	2	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	3	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	4	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	5	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	6	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
Workload	1	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	X2			
	2	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	3	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	4	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	5	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	6	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	7	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
Job Satisfaction	1	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	Z			
	2	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	3	0,000	< 0,05	Valid

Variables	Item	Prob (Sig 2-tailed)	<0.05 or >0.05	Conclusion
Employee Performance Y	4	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	5	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	6	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	1	0,003	< 0,05	Valid
	2	0,006	< 0,05	Valid
	3	0,002	< 0,05	Valid
	4	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	5	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	6	0,000	< 0,05	Valid
	7	0,000	< 0,05	Valid

Source: SPSS 26 Output, 2026

As presented in Table 1, the results of the validity test using SPSS 26 indicate that all statement items for the variables of work stress, workload, job satisfaction, and employee performance have p-values less than 0.05. Therefore, all items are considered valid.

#### 4.1.2. Instrument Reliability Test

The validity test evaluates the consistency of responses over time to determine accuracy. The reliability test compares Cronbach’s alpha values. Values greater than 0.70 indicate high reliability. In this study, reliability testing was performed with the help of SPSS 26, and the results are presented in Table 2:

TABLE 2| Results of Normality Test

Variables	Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)	<0.07 or ≥0.07	Conclusion
Job Stress (X1)	0,803	≥ 0,70	Reliable
Workload (X2)	0,814	≥ 0,70	Reliable
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0,816	≥ 0,70	Reliable
Employee Performance (Y)	0,813	≥ 0,70	Reliable

Source: SPSS 26 Output, 2026

As shown in Table 2, all constructs have Cronbach's alpha values greater than the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. These results confirm that the measurement instruments used in this study are reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

#### 4.1.3. Normality Test

A normality test is conducted to determine if the research data is normally distributed. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test is used to apply the criterion that if the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) is greater than or equal to 0.05, then the data can be considered normally distributed. The results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov procedure are presented in Table 3:

**TABLE 3|** Normality Test Results

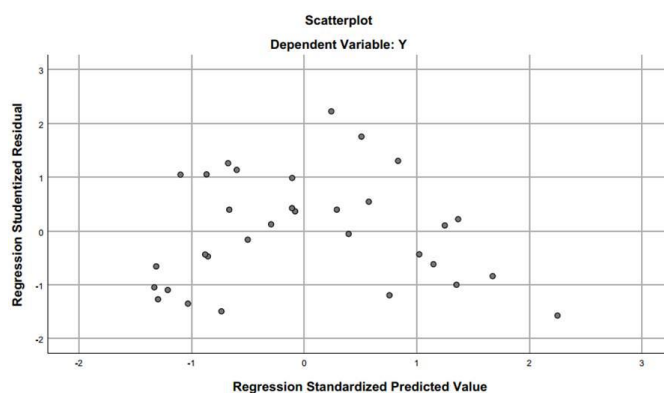
Asymp. Sig. (2 tailed)	≤0.05 or ≥0.05	Conclusion
0,200	≥0,05	Normal

Source: SPSS 26 Output, 2026

As shown in Table 3, the asymptote is... Sig. (two-tailed) of 0.200 exceeds the threshold of 0.05, indicating that the data are normally distributed. Therefore, the normality assumption required for subsequent parametric analyses has been satisfied.

**4.1.4. Heteroscedasticity Test**

A heteroscedasticity test determines if the residual variance in a regression model is constant. If the residual variance varies across the values of the independent variables, then heteroscedasticity is indicated. This condition can reduce the accuracy of the regression estimation. In this study, the heteroscedasticity test was performed using the scatterplot method with SPSS 26. The results are presented in Figure 1:



**Figure 2.** Heteroscedasticity Test (Scatter Plot)  
Source: SPSS 26 Output, 2026

The results of the heteroscedasticity test, as shown in Figure 1, consist of points distributed above and below the X-axis and on the left and right sides of the Y-axis. These points do not form a discernible pattern. Figure 2 shows no evidence of heteroscedasticity in the research model.

**4.1.5. Regression Analysis Model 1**

The results of the heteroscedasticity test, as shown in Figure 1, indicate that the data points are dispersed above and below the X-axis and on both sides of the Y-axis without forming a discernible pattern. Therefore, the research model does not exhibit heteroscedasticity, as shown in Figure 1. Regression model 1 was used to assess the effects of work stress and workload on employee job satisfaction. The results of the calculations using SPSS version 26 are presented in Table 4:

**TABLE 4|** Regression Analysis of Model 1

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.	Conclusion
X1	-0,678	-4,962	0,000	Significant
X2	-0,002	-0,016	0,987	Not Significant
R Square	0,459			

Source: SPSS 26 Output, 2026

The regression analysis for Model 1, presented in Table 4, shows an R-square value of 0.459. This indicates that job stress and workload jointly explain 45.9 percent of the variance in employee job satisfaction. The remaining 54.1 percent is influenced

by other independent variables that were not examined in this study.

#### 4.1.6. Regression Analysis Model 2

A regression analysis was performed on Model 2 to determine the influence of work stress, workload, and job satisfaction on employee performance. The results of the calculations performed with SPSS 26 are presented in Table 5:

TABLE 5| Regression Analysis of Model 2

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.	Conclusion
X1	-0,469	-3,302	0,003	Significant
X2	0,058	0,556	0,582	Not Significant
Z	0,438	3,087	0,005	Significant
R Square	0,695			

Source: SPSS 26 Output, 2026

Regression analysis of Model 2 shows an R-square value of 0.695, indicating that work stress, workload, and job satisfaction collectively explain 69.5 percent of employee performance variance. The remaining 30.5 percent is affected by variables not included in this study.

#### 4.1.7. Path Analysis

The findings can be illustrated in the form of a path analysis based on the regression analysis results for Models 1 and 2 presented in Tables 5 and 6:

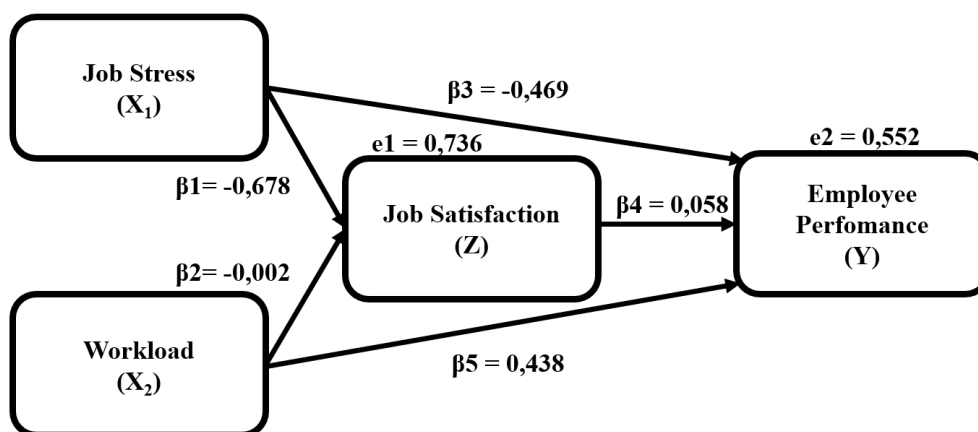


Figure 3. Path Analysis  
Source: Processed data, 2026

## 4.2 DISCUSSION

### 4.2.1. Job Stress on Job Satisfaction

As shown in Table 5, the partial hypothesis testing results for the relationship between work stress and job satisfaction indicate that the test statistic is -4.962, which is significant because it is greater than the critical value of -2.042. This confirms that work stress substantially and adversely affects job satisfaction. The negative coefficient shows that, as employees experience higher levels of work stress due to workload pressure, emotional exhaustion, or perceived organizational demands, their job satisfaction tends to decline. Conversely, when stress levels are lower, employees are more likely to feel comfortable, supported, and motivated, thereby contributing to greater satisfaction with their work environment. This pattern aligns with theoretical perspectives that suggest unmanaged stress undermines employees' psychological well-being and reduces positive attitudes toward their jobs.

These findings are supported by previous studies' empirical evidence, which highlights occupational stress as a significant

factor influencing job satisfaction. High levels of work pressure, including an excessive workload and administrative responsibilities, can create psychological strain that diminishes employees' positive perceptions of their work, consequently reducing their job satisfaction (Shuaili, 2025). Consistently, occupational stress has been shown to negatively impact job satisfaction, with higher levels of work-related stress tending to lower employees' positive evaluations of their jobs and overall work experience. Further, empirical evidence indicates that increased occupational stress is associated with reduced job satisfaction, suggesting that unmanaged stress can substantially undermine employees' well-being and attitudes toward work (Yildirim et al., 2024).

#### 4.2.2. Workload on Job Satisfaction

The partial hypothesis testing results for the association between workload and job satisfaction, shown in Table 5, indicate non-significance, as the  $p$ -value is  $0.016 > 2.042$  and  $0.016 < -2.042$ . This suggests that workload does not significantly affect job satisfaction at UD XYZ. In practice, changes in workload do not consistently affect employee satisfaction. This may be explained by employees' ability to adapt to varying work demands. Employees are accustomed to handling multiple tasks and managing shifting workloads, reflecting a relatively high level of adaptability. Consequently, fluctuations in workload do not necessarily disrupt their comfort or attitudes toward their jobs, thereby minimizing their impact on overall job satisfaction.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research findings. A study at PT Maxipro Group Indonesia likewise concluded that workload does not significantly influence job satisfaction (Wijayanti et al., 2024). Similar conclusions were reported in research on police employees in the Samarinda City civil service, in which workload was not significantly associated with job satisfaction (Maharani & Surya, 2024). These consistent results across organizational contexts suggest that workload may not always be a primary determinant of job satisfaction, particularly in environments where employees have developed strong adaptability and are accustomed to multitasking. This strengthens the idea that factors other than workload play a dominant role in shaping employees' satisfaction levels. Evidence indicates that variations in task volume, complexity, or intensity do not consistently alter employees' overall satisfaction with their work (Kirana et al., 2021).

#### 4.2.3. Job Stress on Employee Performance

The partial hypothesis testing results presented in Table 6 show that  $-3.302 < -2.042$  and  $3.302 > 2.042$ , indicating a significant result. This finding demonstrates that work stress substantially and adversely affects employee performance at UD XYZ. An adverse effect means that the higher the level of work stress employees experience, the greater the decline in their performance in terms of both quality and quantity. Increased stress can reduce focus, disrupt motivation, and hinder an employee's ability to complete tasks effectively, ultimately lowering their performance.

These results are consistent with evidence reported in previous studies. For example, research conducted on civil service police unit employees in East Kalimantan Province found that work stress significantly affects performance (Muslim et al., 2023). Similarly, another study concluded that work stress significantly impacts performance at SMAN 3 Bukit Tinggi (Saputra et al., 2025). These findings, aligned across various organizational contexts, reinforce the idea that work stress significantly impacts employee performance. This underscores the importance of implementing effective stress management strategies in the workplace.

#### 4.2.4. Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

As presented in Table 6, the results of the hypothesis test regarding the effect of job satisfaction on performance show that  $3.087 > 2.042$ , indicating a significant impact. This finding demonstrates that job satisfaction significantly affects employee performance at UD XYZ. Satisfied employees tend to be more motivated and committed, and are more willing to deliver optimal performance. High levels of job satisfaction encourage employees to think more creatively and proactively when carrying out their responsibilities, thereby improving the quality and productivity of their work.

These results align with previous studies, reinforcing the interpretation of the observed relationship. Empirical evidence

from a study at Bank Kalsel demonstrates that job satisfaction positively and significantly affects employee performance (Saputra, 2022). Similarly, another study reported that job satisfaction positively and significantly influences employee performance (Nurainunnisa et al., 2024). These findings, aligned across diverse organizational contexts, reinforce the conclusion that job satisfaction is an essential determinant of employee performance. They also underscore the need for organizations to cultivate supportive work conditions that enhance employee satisfaction. Job satisfaction significantly affects employee performance, suggesting that improving job satisfaction strengthens it (Wardani, 2022).

#### **4.2.5. Workload on Employee Performance**

As presented in Table 6, the results of the hypothesis test regarding the effect of workload on performance show that  $0.556 < 2.042$ , indicating a non-significant result. This suggests that workload does not significantly impact employee performance at UD XYZ. In practice, variations in workload are common and constitute part of the organization's natural work dynamics. Furthermore, non-permanent employees at UD XYZ are accustomed to fluctuating task demands, which may enable them to maintain performance levels amid changes in workload. This adaptability helps ensure that performance remains relatively stable even when workloads shift.

These findings align with previous research that has drawn similar conclusions. For example, a study of the Samarinda City Civil Service Police Unit found that workload does not significantly affect employee performance (Maharani & Surya, 2024). Similarly, research on the Traffic Unit of the Malang City Police revealed that workload does not significantly impact employee performance (Uma & Swasti, 2024). These consistent findings across different institutional settings support the idea that workload may not be a dominant factor in shaping employee performance in specific work environments, especially when employees have developed strong adaptability to varying job demands.

#### **4.2.6. Job Satisfaction mediates Job Stress and Employee Performance.**

The mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between job stress and employee performance is evident from the obtained coefficient. The calculation results show that  $-0.0039 > -0.469$ , indicating support for H6. This suggests that job satisfaction mediates the effect of job stress on employee performance at UD XYZ. In practical terms, job satisfaction mitigates the negative impact of job stress on performance. When employees are more satisfied with their jobs, the negative effects of stress (e.g., reduced motivation, diminished focus, and emotional fatigue) tend to decrease. This enables them to maintain optimal performance, even under pressure. Thus, job satisfaction functions as a psychological buffer that helps employees manage stress more effectively.

Previous studies have provided empirical evidence supporting these findings. These studies demonstrate that work stress significantly affects employee performance both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. This highlights the important role of job satisfaction in explaining the relationship between work stress and employee performance (Fadila et al., 2025). Similarly, other studies indicate that job stress significantly affects employee performance and job satisfaction, and that job satisfaction significantly influences employee performance. Furthermore, job satisfaction can mediate the relationship between job stress and performance, reinforcing its critical role in explaining how work stress impacts performance (Kumendongl et al., 2025).

#### **4.2.7. Job Satisfaction mediates Workload and Employee Performance.**

The obtained value indicates that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between workload and employee performance at UD XYZ, supporting the mediating role of job satisfaction in this relationship. This occurs because workload has no significant influence on job satisfaction. While a moderate workload may provide motivating challenges, excessive or insufficient fluctuations can disrupt employees' perceptions, preventing job satisfaction from effectively improving performance.

These findings are consistent with previous research, strengthening the conclusion that job satisfaction is not a suitable mediator in this context. For example, one study reports that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between workload

and performance at PT Maxipro Group Indonesia (Wijayanti et al., 2024). Similarly, another study shows that job satisfaction does not mediate the effect of workload on employee performance at the Samarinda City Civil Service Police Unit (Maharani et al., 2025). These studies' alignment with the present findings further reinforces the argument that workload variations inconsistently affect job satisfaction, thereby limiting its ability to mediate employee performance outcomes.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that employee performance at XYZ is significantly influenced by job stress and job satisfaction. , job stress and job satisfaction significantly influence employee performance. High levels of job stress tend to reduce job satisfaction, which negatively affects performance. Job satisfaction acts as a psychological buffer that enables employees to maintain optimal performance even under work pressure. Therefore, organizations must implement effective stress management strategies and initiatives to enhance job satisfaction and promote sustainable employee performance. Conversely, workload does not significantly impact job satisfaction or employee performance, nor does job satisfaction mediate the relationship between workload and performance. This suggests that employees at XYZ have adapted to varying workloads. XYZ have developed the capacity to adapt to varying workloads; therefore, this factor does not consistently influence their performance. These findings underscore the importance of fostering a supportive work environment and provide a foundation for future research exploring other internal and external factors that impact employee performance in the trading sector.

## 6. LIMITATION AND IMPLICATION

### 6.1 Limitations

Several limitations of this study should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the sample size was limited to 35 employees from one SME in the trading sector: UD XYZ Kediri. Although saturated sampling was applied to capture the entire organization's population, the relatively small sample size and single organizational context limit the generalizability of the results to other SMEs or industries with different organizational structures, cultures, and work characteristics. Second, the study focused solely on work stress, workload, job satisfaction, and employee performance. Other potentially influential variables, such as leadership style, organizational support, compensation systems, and work-life balance, were not included. Third, the data were collected using self-reported questionnaires, which are subject to response bias, including social desirability and perceptual subjectivity. Additionally, the cross-sectional design and time constraints prevented the analysis of changes in employee perceptions and performance over time. Resource limitations, particularly regarding time and access to broader organizational samples, also constrained the scope of the research design.

### 6.2 Implications

Despite its limitations, this research has essential theoretical and practical implications. The findings support existing theories that emphasize the critical role of job satisfaction as a psychological mechanism linking work stress to employee performance. The findings also highlight that workload does not always have a direct or indirect effect in contexts where employees have developed adaptability. These results contribute to the ongoing debate in the literature by clarifying inconsistent empirical findings, particularly in the small-to-medium enterprise (SME) trading sector. From a practical standpoint, the study suggests that managers should prioritize stress management initiatives and policies that enhance job satisfaction, such as supportive supervision, clear communication, and fair work practices, to sustain employee performance. Beyond academia, SME practitioners can apply these insights directly to improve workforce effectiveness. Future research should involve larger, more diverse samples, employ longitudinal designs, and incorporate additional organizational and individual variables to deepen the understanding of employee performance dynamics and strengthen the external validity of the findings.

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