



## Effect Job Pressure on Employee Performance in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Work pressure has taken various forms in every workplace and is a worldwide phenomenon. Employees in general are currently working longer hours due to increased responsibilities and workloads along with increased work performance demanded by companies to be competitive. This study examines the effect of work pressure on job satisfaction and employee performance. Respondents in this study were 100 insurance company employees. This study uses primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. This study found that work pressure has a negative and insignificant effect on employee job satisfaction, job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, and work pressure has a negative and insignificant effect on employee performance. The effect of work pressure on employee performance through job satisfaction is not significant.

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## INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization states that work pressure has become endemic worldwide (Bouzari & Karatepe, 2020; Hayes & Weathington, 2007; Jehangir et al., 2011; Jeon & Choi, 2021; Maria Tresita et al., 2022; Mishra & Bharti, 2023; Mosadeghrad et al., 2011). International studies have found that more than 40% of employees experience increased work pressure (Jehangir et al., 2011). A survey in 2017 by the American Psychological Association showed that 50 percent of employees experience work stress in America due to organizational change. The survey was conducted on full-time, part-time, and self-employed employees. This percentage is higher than in 2006 (Avey et al., 2009).

Job pressure that is not paid attention to properly will cause employees to experience job dissatisfaction and will leave the company because employees feel the company does not care about them. High work pressure requires organizations to study things that affect work pressure (Boyd et al., 2009). If this is addressed, then this is beneficial to employees and the organization. Therefore, companies need to identify employee needs to manage work pressure (Daniel, 2019).

Research that produces variables that can reduce the negative impact of work pressure is still small, and the results are mixed (AbuAlRub, 2004) even though work pressure is important for organizations to overcome (Mosadeghrad et al., 2011). In multiplication, many previous studies on

work pressure were conducted on employees working in health organizations, such as medical and paramedical personnel (AbuAlRub, 2004; Aruldoss et al., 2021a; Dodanwala & Santoso, 2022a; Flanagan & Flanagan, 2002; Jehangir et al., 2011; Mosadeghrad et al., 2011). In industrialized countries, work pressure, fatigue, and performance have been built and tested empirically (Baba et al., 1998; Chillakuri & Vanka, 2022; Maslach, 2003; Oyewobi et al., 2019), but in developing countries; it is still rarely done (bin Othman & Wahab, 2010; Carr & Pudelko, 2006; Foley et al., 2002). In addition, organizational policies such as wages, job restructuring, and coworkers are factors that shape job satisfaction and can overcome work pressure and affect employee performance (Boyd et al., 2009; Hamidi & Eivazi, 2010; Jamal, 2011; Jehangir et al., 2011; Kalliath et al., 2020; Kazmi et al., 2008; Leat & El-Kot, 2009; Orpen, 1984; Soomro & Shah, 2019).

While there have been studies examining the direct relationship between job pressure and employee performance, a notable research gap exists in understanding the mediating role of job satisfaction in this context, specifically among insurance employees in Indonesia. Research to date has primarily focused on the direct effects of job pressure on employee performance or job satisfaction separately. However, the potential mediating effect of job satisfaction has not been extensively explored, despite its theoretical significance and practical implications. Hence, this study examines work pressure's effect on employee performance by including job satisfaction as an intermediary variable.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The variables in this study consist of the independent variable, namely work pressure, the intervening variable, namely job satisfaction, and the dependent variable, namely employee performance. Five indicators measure work pressure, job satisfaction, and employee performance. The data source used in this study is primary data obtained through in-depth interviews and respondents' responses to the questionnaire. The number of respondents in this study was 100 permanent employees who work in insurance companies.

Five employees were selected as key informants for in-depth interviews. The data scale in this study for each indicator is scored according to the Likert scale with a detailed score of 1 to measure the answers of respondents who strongly disagree, a score 2 to measure the answers of respondents who disagree, a score 3 to measure the answers of respondents who entirely agree, a score 4 to measure the answers of respondents who agree and score 5 to measure the answers of respondents who strongly agree. The data analysis technique used in this study is path analysis.

**Table 1.** The definition of variables and indicators

Variable	Variable definition	Indicator	Indicator definition
Work pressure	Work pressure is a condition that arises from interactions between people and works that force employees to deviate from their normal functions (Luthans, 2006).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work instructions.</li> <li>2. Favoritism by superiors.</li> <li>3. Work standards.</li> <li>4. Workload</li> <li>5. Lack of rest time (Roberts, Lapidus, &amp; Chonko, 1997).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work instructions is instructions that are less clear from the boss.</li> <li>2. Favoritism by superiors is the act of favoritism by superiors towards subordinates.</li> <li>3. Work standards is employees have difficulty in meeting the performance standards set by the company.</li> <li>4. Workload is employees are burdened with the work responsibilities of other employees.</li> <li>5. Lack of rest time is time needed by employees.</li> </ol>

Job satisfaction	Job satisfaction is a description of employees' attitudes or feelings about their work whether it is pleasant or not with the benefits provided by the company and it is a natural desire for every employee (Luthans, 2006).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Salary.</li> <li>2. Promotion.</li> <li>3. Co-workers.</li> <li>4. Supervisors.</li> <li>5. Work itself (Spector, 1997)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Satisfaction with salary is employee satisfaction with the services provided by the organization.</li> <li>2. Satisfaction with promotion is employee satisfaction with career development opportunities provided by the company.</li> <li>3. Satisfaction with colleagues is employee satisfaction with the support and assistance provided by colleagues in the organization.</li> <li>4. Satisfaction with supervisors is employee satisfaction with the supervisor's ability to provide technical assistance and behavioral support.</li> <li>5. Satisfaction with the work itself is employee satisfaction with work when work is interesting, opportunities to learn and opportunities to accept responsibility.</li> </ol>
Employee performance	Employee performance is the result of work that employees have achieved in accordance with certain predetermined criteria (Mathis & Jackson, 2003)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality of work</li> <li>2. Quantity of work</li> <li>3. Work creativity</li> <li>4. Work knowledge</li> <li>5. Work initiatives (Mathis &amp; Jackson, 2003)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality of work is the ability of employees to complete each job well.</li> <li>2. Quantity of work is the ability of employees to complete work targets.</li> <li>3. Work creativity is the desire of employees to do work innovatively.</li> <li>4. Work knowledge is the employee's ability to master the given field of work.</li> <li>5. Work initiatives are ways that employees do to improve the progress of the organization.</li> </ol>

## Literature Review

### Work Pressure

Work pressure is the psychological and physical pressure that results when individuals cannot meet job demands due to pressure from the situation (Amiruddin, 2019; Kundi et al., 2022; Michie, 2002). Ullrich & Fitzgerald (1990) stated that work pressure results from an imbalance between what is demanded by the organization and individual abilities. The results of a study in Pakistan stated that increased work pressure was caused by a lack of resources, excessive workload, poor communication between supervisors and coworkers (Kazmi et al., 2008), role conflict, and low rewards (Warraich et al., 2014) and in Indonesia due to unclear working hours (Sari et al., 2021). Therefore, companies need to identify the causes of work pressure and overcome them to increase employee satisfaction and performance (Dodanwala & Santoso, 2022a; Soomro et al., 2018).

### The Relationship between Work Pressure and Job Satisfaction

Many researchers have conducted studies on the relationship between work pressure and job satisfaction (Aruldoss et al., 2021b; Darthey-Baah et al., 2020; Dodanwala & Santoso, 2022b; Sesen & Ertan, 2022). Employees will feel satisfied when the tension in the working relationship is low (Leat & El-Kot, 2009). In the study by Caleb & Bart (2007) in America, Jehangir et. al. (2011) in Pakistan, and

Mosadeghrad et. al. (2011) in Iran found that work pressure has an impact on low job satisfaction. Hamidi & Eivazi's (2010) study of 120 employees in Iran found that work pressure was at a moderate level and the relationship between work pressure and job satisfaction was positive and not significant, while the relationship between compensation and job satisfaction was positive and significant. Instead it was found that work pressure has a negative effect on job satisfaction (Leat & El-Kot, 2009). Managing employee job satisfaction is important so that employees do not experience high work pressure in the long term. Based on the literature review, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis 1. Work pressure has a negative and significant effect on job satisfaction.*

### **Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance**

The controversy between the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance, according to Luthans (2008), has existed for a long time. A meta-analysis conducted by Iffaldano & Muchinsky (1985) states that the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance is low. Other studies have found that the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance is positive and significant (Auer Antoncic & Antoncic, 2011; Hamidi & Eivazi, 2010; Latifah et al., 2023; Rehman & Waheed, 2011; Tarigan et al., 2022). Improving employee performance requires social support from colleagues because employees feel comfortable asking for unclear work from colleagues (AbuAlRub, 2004; Hendri, 2019). Based on the literature review, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis 2. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.*

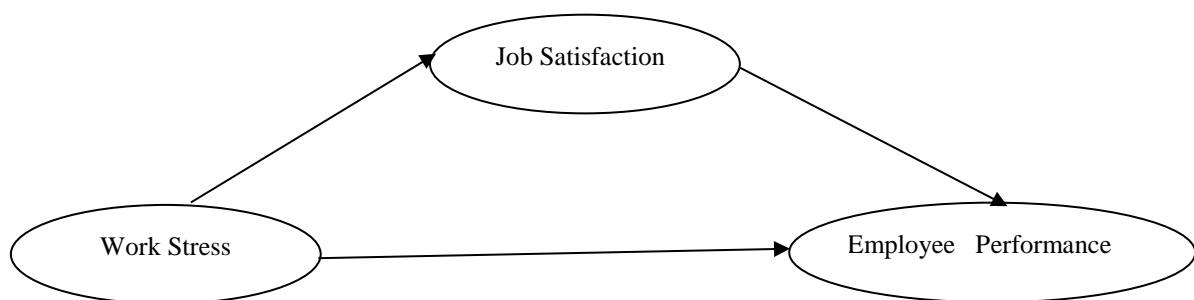
### **Relationship between Work Pressure and Employee Performance**

One of the causes of work pressure is excessive working hours, which impacts low employee performance. Another factor is the workload that exceeds employees' ability; this situation negatively impacts employee performance (Bjaalid et al., 2020; Bruggen, 2015; Oron-Gilad et al., 2008). Therefore, companies must manage work pressure by providing flexible working hours (Sari et al., 2021). Studies in Malaysia and Pakistan found that work pressure has a negative and significant effect (Jamal, 2011; Jehangir et al., 2011); in Indonesia, it has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Tsalasah et al., 2019). Level of work pressure Moderate work can improve employee performance, whereas high or low work pressure has an impact on decreasing employee performance (AbuAlRub, 2004; Hamidi & Eivazi, 2010; Junça Silva & Lopes, 2021; Khan et al., 2022). Another opinion states that high work pressure will increase performance (Keijsers et al., 1995; Kundi et al., 2022).

Organizations can achieve good employee performance by managing factors that trigger work pressure. Based on the literature review, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis 3. Work pressure has a negative and significant effect on employee performance.*

*Based on theoretical and empirical studies, the conceptual research framework is built as follows:*



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 3.1. Result

**Table 2.** Characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (year)		
20-25	19	19
26-35	60	60
36-45	16	16
46-55	5	5
Sex		
Male	48	48
Female	52	52
Highest educational attainment		
Completed tertiary education	72	72
Diploma	10	10
Undergraduate degree	17	17
Master's degree	1	1
Marital status		
Married	39	39
Single	61	61
Work duration (year)		
≤ 1	47	47
2 – 3	32	32
≥ 4	21	21

\*Data obtained from survey

**Table 3.** Statements on work pressure

Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Instructions that are less clear from the boss.	100	1.00	3.00	1.82	0.57
The act of favoritism by superiors towards subordinates.	100	1.00	3.00	1.68	0.60
Employees have difficulty in meeting the performance target.	100	1.00	3.00	2.35	0.72
Employees are burdened with the work responsibilities of other employees.	100	1.00	3.00	1.76	0.58
Lack of rest time needed by employees.	100	1.00	3.00	1.82	0.77

\*Data obtained from survey

**Table 4.** Statements on job satisfaction

Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfaction with the salary provided by the organization.	100	3.00	5.00	4.12	0.65
Satisfaction with career development opportunities.	100	2.00	5.00	4.11	0.66
Satisfaction with colleagues.	100	2.00	5.00	4.06	0.74
Satisfaction with the supervisor.	100	2.00	5.00	4.10	0.79
Satisfaction with the work itself.	100	3.00	5.00	4.16	0.61

**Table 5.** Statements on employee performance

Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees have a good ability to complete each job.	100	2.00	5.00	4.11	0.76
Employees can complete work targets.	100	3.00	5.00	4.14	0.66
Employees have the ability to innovate.	100	2.00	5.00	4.16	0.69
Employees have the ability to master the field of work given.	100	2.00	5.00	4.02	0.80
Creativity employees to improve performance.	100	1.00	5.00	4.11	0.85

\*Data obtained from survey

The validity test results showed that all items used in the study are valid with an item-total correlation between 0.590 to 0.802, and the reliability of work pressure, job satisfaction, and employee performance are 0.639, 0.883, and 0.749, respectively. Tables 3, 4, and 5 show that the standard deviation values for all items on work pressure, job satisfaction, and employee performance are smaller than the average value, meaning the data is less varied. The average value of respondents' responses to work pressure is in a low category, namely 1.89. Among the causes of work pressure, the ability of employees to meet work targets is the highest, namely 2.35. The average value of respondents' responses to job satisfaction is in the high category, namely 4.09. One of the causes of job satisfaction is the ability of employees to handle work, which is the highest, namely, 4.16. The average value of the direct supervisor's response to employee performance is in the high category, namely 4.11 one reason is that the employee's ability to innovate is the highest, namely 4.16. Pearson's product moment correlation was conducted to investigate the correlation between research variables. Analysis showed that there was a positive and significant correlation between job satisfaction and employee performance. However, the analysis showed that there was no significant correlation between work pressure and employee performance ( $r = -0.15$   $p = 0.878$ ). Moreover, there was no correlation between work pressure and job satisfaction ( $r = -0.022$ ,  $p = 0.827$ ).

**Table 6.** Pearson's correlations

Variable		Work Pressure	Job Satisfaction	Employee Performance
Work Pressure	Pearson's r	-	0.022	-0.015
	p-value	-	0.827	0.878
Job Satisfaction	Pearson's r		-	0.921***
	p-value		-	< 0.001
Employee Performance	Pearson's r			-
	p-value			-

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

\*Data obtained from survey

**Table 7.** Hypothesis test results

Direction of causality	Coefficient	t-statistics	Significant	Decision
Work pressure -> Job Satisfaction	-0.047	-0.463	0.644	Not Supported
Job Satisfaction-> Employee Performance	0.921	23.483	0.000	Supported
Work pressure -> Employee Performance	-0.270	-0.270	0.788	Not Supported

Notes: Asterisk (\*) denotes significant at the 5 percent level

The hypothesis test results show that work pressure has a negative and insignificant effect on job satisfaction and employee performance at the 5% level, with a coefficient of -0.047 and -0.270, respectively. Job satisfaction positively and significantly affects employee performance at the 5% level with a coefficient of 0.921.

### 3.2. Discussion

Employees in this organization are generally not under work pressure, this can be seen from the average score of respondents' answers to work pressure which is below the continuum of the theoretical average work pressure score of 1.89. According to employees, the low work pressure is due to clear work instructions given by superiors. In addition, employees are treated fairly, and employee responsibilities are clearly defined so that employees avoid doing other employees' work for which they are not responsible.

Another factor that also plays a role in reducing work pressure is flexible working time. Such a work system allows employees to organize breaks and time for the family. However, the obstacles that employees feel in this organization are work standards. According to employees, the

organization sets standards that take time to achieve, probably due to years of service. Most employees (47%) are new, which is about one year old.

Although the work pressure of employees in this organization is low, it does not affect job satisfaction. This organization's high level of employee job satisfaction is due to the quality of work life, such as trust in colleagues, equal opportunity, and good communication between superiors, subordinates, and fellow coworkers. This study supports Hamidi & Eivazi (2010) in Iran, who found that work pressure was moderate and the relationship between work pressure and job satisfaction was insignificant.

The results of hypothesis testing found that the relationship between job satisfaction and performance is positive and significant. It is due to the suitability of the incentives provided by the organization, promotion opportunities, and support from colleagues and superiors. According to employees, the work provided is also exciting and my abilities. This research supports Hamidi & Eivazi (2010); Auer Antoncic & Antoncic (2011); Rehman & Waheed (2011); AbuALRub (2004) found that the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance is positive and significant. This research also aligns with Luthans (2008), who states that job satisfaction is an employee's view of something that exists in the future that affects individuals in their work role in the organization.

This study found that work pressure does not affect employee performance. Job security factors are likely to affect employee performance. According to employees, the public's need for insurance is increasing every year due to income changes from the lower class to the middle class. In addition, the knowledge and awareness of the Indonesian people about the importance of insurance are improving. This situation makes employees feel safe and excited at work. This study differs from Jamal (2011); Jehangir et al. (2011); Hamidi & Eivazi (2010); AbuALRub (2004).

## CONCLUSION

This study found that work pressure has a negative and insignificant effect on job satisfaction and employee performance, and job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on performance. These results indicate that one accepted hypothesis strengthens the relationship between constructs. However, the rejected two hypotheses weaken the existing construct relationship in the conceptual research model. This study contributes valuable empirical evidence specific to the insurance industry in Indonesia. By focusing on insurance employees, the research provides insights into the unique challenges and dynamics within this sector. This data can serve as a foundation for future studies and policy-making specifically to the insurance industry. The study's findings, including both accepted and rejected hypotheses, contribute to the body of knowledge by presenting a comprehensive analysis of the relationships under investigation. Understanding both the significant and non-significant associations between variables is essential for advancing theoretical frameworks and refining future research designs. The limitation of this study was that it did not involve an in-depth interview, which could have provided a better understanding of the interplay between work pressure, job satisfaction, and employee performance. Given that work pressure was found to have a negative and insignificant effect on job satisfaction and employee performance, there may be potential mediating factors influencing this relationship. Future research could explore additional variables, such as organizational support, work-life balance, or job autonomy, to better understand how they might mediate the impact of work pressure on job satisfaction and performance. Furthermore, future research can also use job security as an intermediary variable because the results of this study indicate that even though employee work pressure is low, it does not affect performance. The job security felt by employees is highly likely to affect employee performance. In formulating human resource management policies, companies need to pay attention to work pressure because the hypothesis test results showed that work pressure could not affect job satisfaction and employee performance.

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