

Effect of Workload on Employee Performance Mediated by Job Satisfaction: A Job Demands–Resources Theory Perspective

Zulyarti¹

¹ Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Alma Ata University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh beban kerja terhadap kinerja karyawan dengan kepuasan kerja sebagai variabel mediasi berdasarkan pendekatan teori Job Demands–Resources (JD-R). Subjek penelitian adalah karyawan PT. Madubaru D.I. Yogyakarta, sebuah perusahaan manufaktur dengan sejarah panjang di sektor industri gula dan alkohol. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei terhadap 110 responden yang dipilih melalui simple random sampling. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan metode Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) melalui perangkat lunak SmartPLS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa beban kerja berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kepuasan kerja maupun kinerja karyawan. Selain itu, kepuasan kerja juga berpengaruh positif terhadap kinerja karyawan dan terbukti mampu memediasi hubungan antara beban kerja dan kinerja. Temuan ini menekankan pentingnya pengelolaan beban kerja yang seimbang dan peningkatan kepuasan kerja untuk mendorong performa karyawan secara optimal. Implikasi praktis menunjukkan bahwa perusahaan perlu menyeimbangkan tuntutan pekerjaan dengan dukungan sumber daya kerja yang memadai.

Kata Kunci: Tekanan kerja; Motivasi kerja; Produktivitas karyawan; Keseimbangan beban kerja; Kepuasan organisasi

Abstract

This study aims to examine the effect of workload on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable, using the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory as a theoretical foundation. The research focuses on employees of PT. Madubaru D.I. Yogyakarta, a long-established sugar and alcohol factory. A quantitative approach was used, with data collected from 110 employees through random sampling. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS software. The results indicate that workload has a positive and significant effect on both job satisfaction and employee performance. Additionally, job satisfaction positively influences employee performance and plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between workload and performance. These findings highlight the importance of managing workload and fostering job satisfaction to enhance overall employee performance. The implications emphasize that companies should balance job demands with adequate job resources to achieve optimal outcomes.

Keywords: Job pressure; Work motivation; Employee productivity; Workload balance; Kepuasan organisasi

Correspondence:
Zulyarti,
Management, Faculty of
Economics and Business, Alma
Ata University, Yogyakarta,
Indonesia.

E-mail:
202400184@almaata.ac.id

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Introduction

Indonesia possesses a large labor force. However, in line with the increasingly dynamic and rapid development of the industrial world, Indonesian workers are required to adapt to various ongoing changes, including in terms of technology, work structures, and organizational management patterns (Wanda, 2023). In this context, companies are expected to develop competitive advantages by optimizing their available resources. One of the most vital resources in company operations is human resources. Without the support of high-quality and competitive human capital, other resources cannot be utilized effectively (Irwan et al., 2020). Human resources are the key component in driving organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, companies must manage their human capital systematically to ensure that all organizational activities run optimally (Thoho & Kasmir, 2021).

Active employee participation is essential in achieving corporate goals (Yuan & Muhamad, 2021). In fact, companies that are able to empower their employees effectively tend to foster a positive work environment and improve employee job satisfaction (Ririn & Merta, 2020). PT. Madubaru is the only sugar and alcohol processing plant located in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The factory was established in 1955 by Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX and was inaugurated by President Ir. Soekarno in 1958 as part of a national food security program (Syafitri & Suhartono, 2023). Despite being an aging factory, PT. Madubaru still holds strong potential to grow and remain competitive in the era of globalization, primarily by fostering strategic partnerships with sugarcane farmers as part of its business model (Rofik, 2022). Maintaining production quality has become a top priority for the company to stay competitive amidst the increasingly tight competition in the sugar industry (Ardhany et al., 2024).

To enhance productivity and competitiveness, attention to workload has become increasingly important. Workload is defined as the total tasks or responsibilities that an employee must complete within a certain period (Ali & Mellanie, 2019). A proportional distribution of workload is considered a key strategy to achieve work effectiveness (Adi & Hapzi, 2022). A balanced workload is believed to encourage better employee performance, while disproportionate workload can lead to stress and decreased productivity (Riana et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown a positive and significant relationship between workload and employee performance. For example, Sahat & Ahmad (2020) found that employees responded positively to workload when company policies supported work comfort. Similarly, Siswanto et al. (2019) stated that employees with higher education levels are more capable of managing workload, thus enhancing their performance. In some contexts, even high workload levels have a positive effect due to workaholicism that boosts productivity (Spagnoli et al., 2020). Other studies have also pointed out that workload is a key determinant in performance fluctuation (Hanazohie et al., 2023).

In addition to influencing performance, workload also affects job satisfaction. Herawati et al. (2023) demonstrated that a proportional workload can enhance employee job satisfaction. When companies provide appropriate compensation relative to workload, employees tend to feel more satisfied (Candra et al., 2023). Findings from Tentama et al. (2019) at University X in Yogyakarta also confirmed that job satisfaction increases when workload aligns with management policy and does not induce excessive pressure. Furthermore, job satisfaction itself is a crucial factor in shaping employee performance. Research by Yuan & Ekhsan (2020) revealed that job satisfaction directly contributes to optimal performance achievement. This is further supported by Sapta et al. (2021), who

emphasized the importance of organizational attention to employee self-development as a form of job satisfaction fulfillment. Rahmi (2021) also found that higher job satisfaction leads to better job performance, as evidenced in the Regional Secretariat of Jayapura Regency.

Recent studies even suggest that job satisfaction acts as a mediating variable between workload and performance. In a study by Janib et al. (2021) involving university staff in Malaysia, job satisfaction served as a bridge in the relationship between workload and performance. Siswadi et al. (2024) stated that job satisfaction reflects employees' sentiments toward the company, which ultimately influences performance outcomes. Similarly, a study by Rahyuda & Danendra (2019) at PT. Amanaid affirmed that appropriately assigned workloads increase both job satisfaction and employee performance simultaneously. Based on these findings, this study aims to investigate the influence of workload on employee performance, both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction as a mediating variable, with a focus on employees at PT. Madubaru, Special Region of Yogyakarta. This research seeks to examine the relationships among workload, job satisfaction, and employee performance, supported by previous empirical findings and guided by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory.

The Direct Effect of Workload on Employee Performance

The workload assigned by a company can act as a driver for improving employee performance, provided it is managed proportionally and in line with employee capacity. Sahat & Ahmad (2020) demonstrated that company policies supporting balanced workloads are capable of enhancing performance. Siswanto et al. (2019) also stated that employee education and preparedness further reinforce this relationship. In certain contexts, even high workloads are associated with workaholism, which may lead to increased output (Spagnoli et al., 2020). These findings confirm that workload can serve as a motivating factor for performance improvement, as long as it does not become excessive and is supported by adequate organizational systems (Hanazohie et al., 2023).

H1: Workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

The Effect of Workload on Job Satisfaction

Workload also correlates with job satisfaction. Research by Herawati et al. (2023) indicates that realistic workloads can create positive challenges that stimulate satisfaction. Candra et al. (2023) added that compensation and rewards provided in a proportional manner can transform perceptions of workload into a positive experience. In the academic context, Tentama et al. (2019) found that a well-balanced and planned division of tasks can improve job satisfaction among university staff. Therefore, workload can influence employees' perceptions of their work.

H2: Workload has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

Job satisfaction is a crucial factor in shaping employee performance. Yuan & Ekhsan (2020) stated that companies that prioritize employee welfare and professional development tend to achieve improved performance outcomes. This view is supported by Sapta et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of self-development and work-life balance as essential elements in fulfilling job satisfaction. Rahmi (2021) further noted that effective management of job satisfaction directly contributes to enhanced productivity, particularly in the public sector. Thus, the higher the level of job satisfaction, the more optimal the performance achieved.

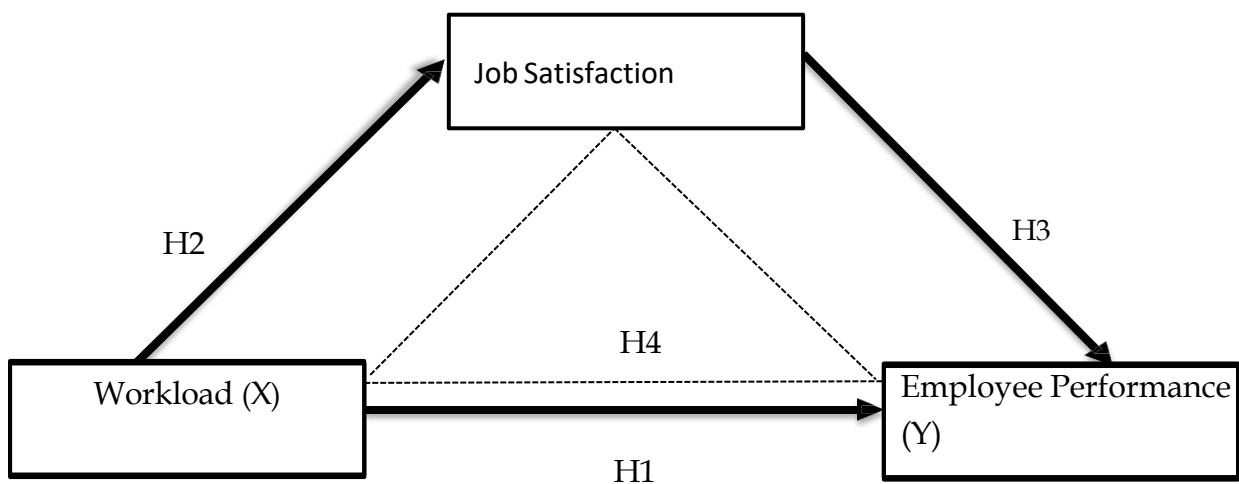
H3: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the Relationship Between Workload and Employee Performance

Several studies highlight that the impact of workload on employee performance is not always direct, but is often mediated by job satisfaction. Janib et al. (2021) emphasized that, within the context of higher education institutions in Malaysia, job satisfaction serves as a critical mediating variable between workload and performance. Siswadi et al. (2024) also asserted that job satisfaction reflects employees' positive perceptions of their organization, which in turn influence their performance. The study by Rahyuda & Danendra (2019) further demonstrated that when workloads align with employees' expectations and capacities, job satisfaction increases ultimately leading to improved performance. Therefore, job satisfaction plays a significant mediating role in this relationship.

H4: Job satisfaction mediates the effect of workload on employee performance.

Figure 1. Research Thinking Framework



Adapted from research, Rahyuda & Danendra, (2019)

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach, which involves numerical or nominal data and is commonly used in survey or opinion poll research (Waruwu, 2023). Data analysis in this study is conducted using the SmartPLS software, as it is capable of implementing the latest developments in PLS-SEM methods, handling data more effectively, and supporting researchers in conducting analysis and documenting the results (Hair et al., 2019). The population targeted in this study comprises employees of PT. MADUBARU D.I Yogyakarta. The sample was selected using the Simple Random Sampling method and calculated using the Slovin formula, resulting in 94 respondents. However, to reduce the margin of error, the researcher increased the sample size to 110.

Data analysis

Based on the population and sample data, 110 employees working at PT. MADUBARU D.I. Yogyakarta were selected. The following data analysis methods were used in this study:

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

According to Hair et al. (2019), this analysis provides a general overview of the data obtained and can be useful for providing an empirical overview based on the data collected in the study. Respondent Characteristics Based on Gender The results of the study, conducted on 110 respondents, regarding their gender, are shown in the following data:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics Based on Gender

No.	Gender	Frekuensi	Persen %
1.	Male	68	62%
2.	Female	42	38%
Total		110	100%

Source: Processed data, 2024

Table 2. Convergent Validity Test

Information	Workload	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction
WL1	0.788		
WL2	0.830		
WL3	0.794		
WL4	0.838		
WL5	0.913		
EP1		0.885	
EP2		0.829	
EP3		0.831	
EP4		0.864	

EP5	0.904
JS1	0.810
JS2	0.830
JS3	0.849
JS4	0.845
JS5	0.883

Source: Processed data, 2024

Results of table 2 above show that the measurement instrument used in this study has high convergent validity, which produces consistent results in measuring workload, employee performance, and job satisfaction (Hair, Sarsedt, et al., 2019).

Tabel 3. Uji Validitas Deskriminan

Information	Workload	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction
WL	0.834		
EP	0.523	0.863	
JS	0.529	0.655	0.844

Source: Processed data, 2024

Results indicate that Job Satisfaction and Workload have a high variance. Thus, the discriminant validity test indicates that Workload, Employee Performance, and Job Satisfaction are distinct constructs and are interrelated in different ways (Hair, Sarsedt, et al., 2019).

Table 4. Reliability Test

Information	Composite Reliability
WL	0.919
EP	0.936
JS	0.925

Source: Processed data, 2024

Results show that the items in the scale are interrelated and can be relied upon to measure the desired concept. This means that Workload, Employee Performance, and Job Satisfaction have a Cronchbach Alpha value of >0.6, which indicates that the resulting scale has better reliability (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 5. Uji R-Square

Information	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
EP	0.472	0.463
JS	0.280	0.273

Source: Processed data, 2024

F-Square test results for Employee Performance and Job Satisfaction showed a strong correlation between Job Satisfaction and the dependent variable, with a value of 0.377 (37.7%). This value indicates a fairly strong correlation between Job Satisfaction and the dependent variable. Furthermore, the F-Square test for Employee Performance and Workload showed a weak correlation between the independent and dependent variables, with a value of 0.082 (8.2%). The F-Square test for Employee Performance and Workload showed a weak correlation between the independent and dependent variables, with a value of 0.388 (38.8%), indicating a stronger correlation between the two (Hair, Sarsedt, et al., 2019).

Hypothesis Testing

Tabel 6. Path Coeficient

Information	Original Sampel	Sampel Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STIDEV)	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values
WL -> EP	0.245	0.249	0.117	2.085	0.038
WL -> JS	0.59	0.533	0.081	6.550	0.000
JS -> EP	0.526	0.532	0.104	5.069	0.000

Source: Processed data, 2024

Path Coefficient Hypothesis Test Results

Workload and employee performance have a Path Coefficient of 0.245, indicating that workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Workload and job satisfaction, with a Path Coefficient of 0.59, also indicate that workload and job satisfaction have a strong positive and significant effect on employee performance. Job satisfaction and employee performance, with a Path Coefficient of 0.526, indicate that job satisfaction does not negatively influence workload and employee performance, as otherwise the resulting value would be negative (Hair et al., 2019).

Tabel 7. Specific Indirect Effects

Information	Original Sampel	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Devication (STDEV)	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values
WL→JS→EP	0.278	0.281	0.062	4.470	0.000

Source: Processed data, 2024

Results of the Path Coefficient value of 0.278 which shows that there is an increase in Workload through Job Satisfaction, so that it can cause an increase in Employee Performance of 0.278 units, the statistical value (4.470) obtained also shows that there is a very strong influence between the variables, the results of the P-Value which has a very significant influence at the 1% level, so that these results show that Job Satisfaction which is a mediating variable that influences the relationship between Workload and Employee Performance, this influence is supported because the results of the T-Statistic value are very large and the P-Value is very small.

Discussion

Effect of Workload on Employee Performance

Results of this study, indicate that the path coefficient between workload and employee performance is 0.245. This finding demonstrates that workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Employees may perceive workload as a performance driver when the company allocates time appropriately and work is executed effectively (Syabani & Huda, 2020). As company targets increase, employee workload naturally follows. However, if the workload continues to rise without proportional task distribution, employee performance may decline (Yosevina & Dionisius, 2023). A study involving staff from the Finance and Equipment Division of the Directorate General of Livestock and Animal Health revealed that workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, suggesting that the workload assigned by the organization is reasonable and does not hinder performance (Fitriyani et al., 2024). Similar t-test results showing significant effects between workload and performance were also observed in the Civil Registry Office of Buleleng Regency (Kartika & Widiastuti, 2024). However, these findings differ from Aprilianingsih (2022), who associated workload with the "job demands" aspect of the Job Demands–Resources theory, arguing that excessively high demands can lead to employee fatigue and decrease the performance expected by the organization.

The Effect of Workload on Job Satisfaction

Relationship between workload and job satisfaction yielded a path coefficient of 0.59, indicating that workload has a strong and significant positive effect on employee performance via job satisfaction. Supporting this, Safdar et al. (2019) found that 40% of nurses' off-duty time was spent on job tasks, indicating a significant and positive effect of workload on satisfaction. Indra (2024) reported similar findings with a t-statistic of 9.734 (t-value > t-table; $9.734 > 1.997$) and a P-value < 0.05, confirming a strong correlation between workload and job satisfaction. In an academic context, Tentama et al. (2019) demonstrated that balanced and well-planned workload allocation increased job satisfaction among university staff in Yogyakarta. Likewise, Herawati et al. (2023) emphasized that appropriate workload distribution by the organization enhances employee satisfaction.

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance

Relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance yielded a path coefficient of 0.526, confirming that job satisfaction does not negatively influence either workload or performance. This is supported by Danendra et al. (2019), who found that higher job satisfaction motivates employees to perform better, enabling organizations to achieve their objectives. Similar findings were reported by Octavia & Budiono (2021), whose study at PT. Jasa Raharja East Java showed that job satisfaction aligned with performance expectations, prompting the company to reward employees accordingly.

Anwar & Budi (2018) also confirmed a positive and significant correlation between satisfaction and performance at PT. Era Media Informasi, where good management of employee satisfaction improved performance outcomes. In another study, Luthtamy & Ekhsan (2024) demonstrated a significant impact of job satisfaction on performance, emphasizing that satisfaction serves as a crucial job resource (Job Demands–Resources theory). When job satisfaction decreases, job resources diminish, potentially causing productivity losses therefore, companies must prioritize enhancing employee satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction as a Mediator Between Workload and Employee Performance

The path coefficient of 0.278 for the indirect effect indicates that workload positively influences employee performance through job satisfaction, increasing performance by 0.278 units. A t-statistic of 4.470 and a P-value at the 1% significance level confirm the strong mediating role of job satisfaction in this relationship.

This is supported by Siswadi et al. (2024), who found that although employees at PT. Industrial Kapal Indonesia experience high workloads, their job satisfaction positively affects their performance. The mediating role of job satisfaction was also evaluated using Variance Accounted For (VAF), which showed that introducing job satisfaction as a mediating variable significantly altered the direct effect of workload on performance (Danendra et al., 2019).

Further supporting this, Syamsudin et al. (2023) reported a P-value of $0.038 < 0.005$ and a t-statistic of $2.100 > 1.667$, indicating that job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between workload and performance. Likewise, Nasrudin et al. (2022) found an indirect effect value of -0.339 with a t-statistic of $2.238 > 1.96$ and a significance level of 0.026, confirming that workload affects performance through job satisfaction. Siswadi et al. (2024) further emphasized the relevance of the JD-R theory, stating that workload and job stress (job demands) impact job satisfaction and indirectly affect performance, while job satisfaction and performance represent job resources in this theoretical framework. Their findings show that although workload and job stress do not directly influence performance, they have indirect effects through job satisfaction.

Conclusion

Results of this study indicate that workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This finding emphasizes the importance for companies, such as PT. MADUBARU D.I Yogyakarta, to carefully manage the level of workload assigned to employees. When workload is maintained at an optimal level, employee performance improves, which in turn contributes positively to achieving the company's objectives. Furthermore, the study reveals that workload also has a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction. This suggests that appropriate workload allocation not only enhances performance but also increases employee satisfaction. Therefore, it is important for PT. MADUBARU D.I Yogyakarta to ensure that workload distribution is fair and aligned with employee capabilities.

Job satisfaction itself is found to have a significant positive influence on employee performance. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to perform better, which underlines the need for the company to maintain a work environment that supports satisfaction whether through recognition, career development, or a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, the results demonstrate that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between workload and employee performance. This implies that while workload directly influences performance, its impact is further strengthened when employees also experience high levels of job satisfaction. Consequently, the company should not only manage workload effectively but also actively foster employee satisfaction to maximize performance outcomes.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study also provides several suggestions for future researchers. First, it is recommended that future studies expand the model by incorporating additional dependent variables beyond the scope of this research. For instance, including variables such as job stress or work environment can offer broader insights and enrich the understanding of employee behavior and outcomes. Second, future research should consider exploring other factors that may influence employee performance, such as work motivation or organizational culture. Including these variables may provide a more comprehensive view of the determinants of performance in various organizational contexts. Third, future studies are encouraged to use more detailed and specific performance measurement indicators. Measuring performance based on criteria such as quality, quantity, and time efficiency could yield a more accurate assessment of employee output.

Practical Implications for the Company

Alongside academic implications, this study also provides practical suggestions for PT. MADUBARU D.I Yogyakarta. In order to maintain an effective balance of workload, the company should ensure that workloads are not excessive. This could involve offering sufficient rest periods, reducing working hours where necessary, or structuring tasks more efficiently. It is also essential for the company to enhance employee resources. Providing adequate support, such as training programs, social support mechanisms, or improved workplace facilities, can help employees manage their tasks more effectively.

Improving job satisfaction should also be a key focus. The company can achieve this by delivering constructive feedback, recognizing employee contributions, and offering clear career development opportunities. Reducing work-related stress is equally important and can be addressed by offering mental health support, reducing excessive job demands, and encouraging rest and recovery. Lastly, enhancing communication within the organization is vital. Clear information flow, mutual respect, and open communication channels between employees and supervisors will help foster a positive work culture and reinforce employee engagement.

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