

The Effect of Work Stress and Work Environment on Employee Performance

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance is a critical element in organizational success, particularly in labor-intensive industries such as garment manufacturing. This study aims to analyze the effect of work stress (X1) and work environment (X2) on employee performance (Y) in garment industry companies in Semarang Regency. A quantitative descriptive approach with multiple linear regression analysis was employed. The population and sample comprised 96 employees using total sampling. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire (1–5) with 10 items per variable. All classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity) were satisfied. Reliability tests yielded Cronbach's Alpha of 0.866 (work stress), 0.941 (work environment), and 0.937 (employee performance), confirming instrument reliability. Results indicate: (1) work stress has no significant partial effect on employee performance ($t = 1.581$; $sig. = 0.117$); (2) work environment has a significant positive partial effect on employee performance ($t = 9.618$; $sig. = 0.000$); (3) simultaneously, both variables significantly affect employee performance ($F = 56.630$; $sig. = 0.000$) with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 54.9%. These findings confirm that optimizing the work environment both physical and non-physical is the primary strategic priority for enhancing employee performance in the garment industry.



1. INTRODUCTION

The garment industry is one of Indonesia's strategic manufacturing sectors, absorbing millions of workers, particularly women in the industrial areas of Central Java. In a production environment oriented toward quantity and speed, employee performance serves as the primary measure of operational success. Employee performance can be defined as the quality and quantity of work outcomes achieved by an employee in executing tasks according to assigned responsibilities [22]. In the context of managerial accounting and operational performance measurement, workforce productivity is a key cost driver: labor efficiency, output quality, and standard cost compliance are directly linked to individual employee performance—making this study relevant beyond HRM to performance measurement and cost management practice. The level of employee performance is inseparable from the internal psychological and external situational conditions surrounding employees, particularly work stress and work environment [1].

Work stress is defined as a condition of tension that creates physical and psychological imbalance affecting an employee's emotions, thought processes, and work behavior [14]. In the garment industry, sources of work stress are diverse: high production targets, tight deadlines, precise quality standards, and the risk of errors that directly impact the production line. This phenomenon has been documented across various studies, yet the direction of its effect on performance remains an empirically interesting debate. Multiple studies report significant negative effects of work stress on performance [1], [4], [7], [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], while others find that moderate stress may serve as a productivity trigger through the eustress mechanism [5], [6].

On the other hand, work environment encompasses all physical and non-physical facilities and infrastructure surrounding employees during work execution that can influence work performance [23]. Work environment includes two main dimensions: physical work environment (layout, lighting, temperature, ventilation, occupational health and safety facilities) and non-physical work environment (social relationships, supervisory support, communication, and organizational culture). A conducive work environment has been shown to positively influence employee enthusiasm and work motivation, thereby increasing productivity and quality of work [2], [3], [12], [13]. Conversely, a poor work environment can exacerbate the negative impact of stress and systematically reduce performance.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship among work stress, work environment, and employee performance across various contexts. The work environment has been found to have a significant positive effect on manufacturing employee performance, while work stress tends to show a negative effect [1], [4]. Significant partial effects of both variables were confirmed in a manufacturing context [5]. Strong simultaneous effects of both variables were documented in a hospital setting [2]. A positive effect of work stress was noted among trained medical professionals with high task mastery [6]. The work environment has also been demonstrated to mediate the relationship between work stress and employee performance [9]. Cross-sectional evidence further indicates that workplace stress is associated with reduced productivity across multiple industry sectors [14], [15], [16], [17], [18].

Despite these prior contributions, empirical studies specifically targeting garment industry workers in Semarang Regency remain scarce. The respondent profile dominated by young workers (≤ 22 years, 85.4%), female employees (81.3%), and new recruits (tenure ≤ 1 year, 68.75%) presents a unique demographic context differentiating this study from prior research. This profile potentially moderates responses to stressors and work environment conditions differently than experienced employee groups. Understanding the determinants of performance in this context also carries practical relevance for labor cost management and productivity monitoring in garment operations. Based on this background, this study aims to: (1) analyze the partial effect of work stress on employee performance; (2) analyze the partial effect of work environment on employee performance; and (3) analyze the simultaneous effect of both variables on employee performance in garment industry companies in Semarang Regency. Hypotheses: H1 = work stress affects employee performance; H2 = work environment affects employee performance; H3 = work stress and work environment simultaneously affect employee performance.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-causal design to examine causal relationships between independent variables (work stress and work environment) and the dependent variable (employee performance). The population and sample comprised 96 employees from multiple garment industry companies in Semarang Regency including PT Liebra Permana, PT Sumber Bintang Rejeki (Sumbiri), PT Woori Sukses Apparel, PT Sam Sam Jaya Garment, PT Starlight Garment, PT Morich Indo Fashion, PT Hesed Indonesia, and others. Given the total population of ≤ 100 , total sampling was applied following [26]. Data were collected from January to March 2026 via an online Google Form questionnaire distributed to all employees.

The research instrument comprised a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) with 10 items per variable (30 items total; theoretical score range: 10–50 per variable). Operational definitions: (1) Work Stress (X1) — psychological and physical pressure arising from imbalance between job demands and individual capacity, measured through 10 indicators covering deadline pressure, production demands, error risk, interpersonal relations, workload, role ambiguity, competition, exhaustion, and career concerns [22], [25]; (2) Work Environment (X2) — all physical and non-physical conditions surrounding employees during work, measured through 10 indicators

including workspace ergonomics, cleanliness and lighting, occupational safety facilities, role clarity, social relationships, supervisory support, psychological safety, organizational culture, career development, and management policy [24], [23]; (3) Employee Performance (Y) — quality and quantity of work outcomes aligned with assigned responsibilities, measured through 10 indicators covering work quantity, quality, timeliness, efficiency, autonomy, commitment, initiative, problem-solving, team contribution, and continuous learning [22], [23].

Validity testing used Pearson Product Moment correlation. For $n = 96$ at $\alpha = 5\%$, $r_{\text{table}} = 0.201$; items are valid when $r_{\text{computed}} \geq 0.201$. Reliability was assessed via Cronbach's Alpha (threshold: $\alpha \geq 0.60$) [20]. As presented in Table 1, all 30 items were valid and all three variables were highly reliable. Classical assumption tests included: Shapiro-Wilk normality test ($n < 200$), VIF-based multicollinearity test, and Breusch-Pagan heteroscedasticity test. Multiple linear regression was used for hypothesis testing—partial (t-test) and simultaneous (F-test) at $\alpha = 5\%$ [27]. All data processing was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 [28], [29], [30].

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Item	r-computed	r-table (n=96)	Validity	Cronbach's α
Work Stress (X1)	X1.1	0.681**	0.201	Valid	0.866 (Reliable)
	X1.2	0.643**	0.201	Valid	
	X1.3	0.671**	0.201	Valid	
	X1.4	0.505**	0.201	Valid	
	X1.5	0.691**	0.201	Valid	
	X1.6	0.777**	0.201	Valid	
	X1.7	0.689**	0.201	Valid	
	X1.8	0.701**	0.201	Valid	
	X1.9	0.716**	0.201	Valid	
	X1.10	0.641**	0.201	Valid	
Work Env. (X2)	X2.1	0.786**	0.201	Valid	0.941 (Reliable)
	X2.2	0.730**	0.201	Valid	
	X2.3	0.738**	0.201	Valid	
	X2.4	0.812**	0.201	Valid	
	X2.5	0.825**	0.201	Valid	
	X2.6	0.848**	0.201	Valid	
	X2.7	0.785**	0.201	Valid	
	X2.8	0.856**	0.201	Valid	
	X2.9	0.860**	0.201	Valid	
	X2.10	0.855**	0.201	Valid	
Emp. Perf. (Y)	Y.1	0.757**	0.201	Valid	0.937 (Reliable)
	Y.2	0.843**	0.201	Valid	
	Y.3	0.797**	0.201	Valid	
	Y.4	0.773**	0.201	Valid	
	Y.5	0.707**	0.201	Valid	
	Y.6	0.816**	0.201	Valid	
	Y.7	0.821**	0.201	Valid	
	Y.8	0.842**	0.201	Valid	
	Y.9	0.823**	0.201	Valid	
	Y.10	0.812**	0.201	Valid	

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). $r_{\text{table}} = 0.201$ ($n=96$, $\alpha=5\%$)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The study involved 96 employees from multiple garment companies in Semarang Regency. Table 2 presents the demographic profile. The dominance of female respondents (81.3%) is consistent with the labor composition of garment production lines, where sewing operations are predominantly performed by women. The predominantly young age structure (≤ 20 years: 66.67%; 21–25 years: 33.33%) and majority new-employee status (tenure ≤ 1 year: 68.75%) reflect the high turnover and

continuous recruitment characteristic of labor-intensive industries. Operator positions constitute the largest occupational group (72.9%), representing the operational backbone of garment production.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics (N = 96)

Characteristic	Category	Freq.	Percent
Gender	Female	78	81.3%
	Male	18	18.8%
Age	≤ 20 years	64	66.67%
	21–25 years	32	33.33%
Length of Service	< 6 months	18	18.75%
	6 months – 1 year	48	50.00%
	> 1 year	30	31.25%
Primary Position	Operator (Sewing/Production)	70	72.9%
	Helper, QC, Leader, Others	26	27.1%

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

3.1. Descriptive Statistics and Item-Level Analysis

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for all three variables. The mean work stress score of 29.39 (58.77% of the 10–50 scale) reflects a moderate stress level. The work environment score averaged 36.53 (73.06%), indicating a fairly good environmental condition. Employee performance averaged 35.50 (71.00%), suggesting a fairly high performance level. The relatively large standard deviation for work environment (SD = 9.996) indicates diverse perceptions among respondents.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics (N = 96)

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Work Stress (X1)	96	10	50	29.385	8.821
Work Environment (X2)	96	10	50	36.531	9.996
Employee Performance (Y)	96	10	50	35.500	9.314

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Item-level analysis reveals important patterns. For Work Stress (X1), the highest mean item is X1.4 ('I worry about the high risk of errors in my work due to strict quality standards'; mean = 3.44), indicating that concerns over quality standards are the most prominent stressor. The lowest mean item is X1.7 ('Role ambiguity adds to my stress level'; mean = 2.57), suggesting that employees have relatively clear role understanding. For Work Environment (X2), the highest scoring item is X2.5 ('Social relationships with co-workers are well established and mutually supportive'; mean = 3.89), reflecting strong social cohesion in the workplace. The lowest item is X2.1 ('The workspace layout is ergonomic and facilitates daily work'; mean = 3.25), pointing to physical layout as the most underperforming environmental dimension. For Employee Performance (Y), the highest item is Y.10 ('I continuously learn from work experience to improve my performance'; mean = 3.87), demonstrating high learning orientation. The lowest is Y.4 ('I work efficiently by minimizing time and resource waste'; mean = 3.23), identifying efficiency as the performance dimension with the most room for improvement. A detailed breakdown of the mean scores for all questionnaire items across these variables is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Item Mean Summary by Variable

Item	Statement Summary	Mean
X1.1	Tight deadline pressure	3.000
X1.2	Work environment causes discomfort/pressure	2.906
X1.3	High production demands are difficult to achieve	3.031
X1.4	Worry about error risk due to quality standards ★ Highest	3.438
X1.5	Interpersonal work relations cause stress	2.802
X1.6	Workload imbalance with capability	2.656
X1.7	Role ambiguity adds to stress	2.573
X1.8	Pressure to innovate and compete	2.667
X1.9	Physical and mental exhaustion	3.198
X1.10	Worry about job stability and career development	3.115
X2.1	Workspace ergonomics facilitates work	3.250
X2.2	Cleanliness, lighting, temperature, and ventilation	3.667
X2.3	OHS facilities (PPE, emergency tools) are adequate	3.875

X2.4	Role, tasks, and responsibilities are clearly understood	3.771
X2.5	Social relationships with co-workers are supportive	3.885
X2.6	Supervisor provides effective support and communication	3.667
X2.7	Psychological safety to express ideas	3.594
X2.8	Organizational culture supports collaboration and growth	3.625
X2.9	Organization provides training and career development	3.583
X2.10	Management policy supports employee welfare	3.615
Y.1	Able to complete work targets per company standards	3.635
Y.2	Quality of work meets established standards	3.542
Y.3	Completes work on time as per deadline	3.479
Y.4	Works efficiently, minimizing time and resource waste	3.229
Y.5	Able to work independently	3.333
Y.6	High commitment to work and organizational goals	3.688
Y.7	Initiative to improve work-related skills	3.708
Y.8	Able to overcome obstacles with effective solutions	3.469
Y.9	Contribution to departmental targets is meaningful	3.552
Y.10	Continuously learns from experience to improve	3.865

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

3.2. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the effects of Work Stress (\$X_1\$) and Work Environment (\$X_2\$) on Employee Performance (\$Y\$). Based on the statistical processing of the data, the multiple linear regression equation is formulated as shown in Equation (1).

$$Y = 8.118 + 0.121 X_1 + 0.652 X_2 \quad (1)$$

The detailed coefficients, significance levels, and overall model fit metrics resulting from this regression analysis are summarized in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients

Model	B (Unstd.)	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-statistic	Sig.
(Constant)	8.118	2.900	—	2.799	0.006
X1 Work Stress	0.121	0.077	0.115	1.581	0.117
X2 Work Environment	0.652	0.068	0.700	9.618	0.000

Note: NS = Not Significant; *** = Significant at $p < 0.001$.

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 7. Model Summary and ANOVA

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F-statistic	Sig. F
0.741	0.549	0.539	6.321	56.630	0.000

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Effect of Work Stress on Employee Performance

The partial test reveals that work stress (X1) has no significant effect on employee performance ($t = 1.581$; $\text{sig.} = 0.117 > 0.05$; $\beta = 0.115$), leading to rejection of H1. Although the coefficient direction is positive, it lacks statistical significance at the 5% level. This finding diverges from the majority of prior studies that report significant negative effects of work stress on performance [1], [4], [7], [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], yet aligns with a subset of research identifying positive or non-significant relationships [5], [6]. Three theoretical explanations are proposed.

First, the eustress-distress distinction is central to interpretation [24]. The mean work stress score of 29.39 (58.77% of scale range) indicates moderate stress. Item-level analysis shows that the highest stressor is X1.4—concerns about error risk due to strict quality standards (mean = 3.44)—while the lowest is X1.7 role ambiguity (mean = 2.57). Clear role definition allows employees to channel moderate stress productively rather than experiencing it as debilitating distress. The Yerkes-Dodson inverted-U model predicts optimal performance at moderate arousal, consistent with the current data

pattern. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework [19], [21] further clarifies this dynamic: when job resources such as role clarity and supervisory support are sufficient, job demands do not necessarily translate into strain or performance impairment [20]. Non-significant or positive stress effects under moderate-demand conditions have similarly been reported [5], [6], [16].

Second, the work environment functions as a stress buffer. A conducive work environment has been empirically shown to mediate and weaken the negative impact of stress on performance [9]. In this study, the average work environment score of 36.53 (73.06%) reflects a fairly good condition particularly the strong social cohesion captured in X2.5 (social relationships with co-workers; mean = 3.89) and adequate supervisory support in X2.6 (mean = 3.67). When social and supervisory conditions are supportive, moderate stress levels may not translate into performance decrements [3], [20].

Third, the respondent demographic profile may contribute to this outcome. With 81.3% of respondents aged ≤ 20 years and 68.75% with tenure ≤ 1 year, the sample consists predominantly of young, newly-employed workers. It is plausible that this group has not yet accumulated sufficient chronic stress exposure to materially impair performance, and that initial employment conditions remain broadly aligned with personal expectations. However, this interpretation should be treated as a tentative contextual explanation rather than a definitive conclusion, as the relationship between age, tenure, and stress sensitivity was not directly tested within the current model. Research suggests that work experience and tenure may modulate stress sensitivity in industrial settings [1], [11].

4.2. Effect of Work Environment on Employee Performance

Work environment (X2) demonstrates a significant positive partial effect on employee performance ($t = 9.618$; $\text{sig.} = 0.000$; $B = 0.652$; $\beta = 0.700$), confirming H2. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.700 compared to 0.115 for work stress establishes work environment as the overwhelmingly dominant predictor in this model. The correlation between X2 and Y ($r = 0.733$) further reflects a strong, consistent relationship between the two variables. This finding is highly consistent with the established body of evidence [1], [2], [4], [5], [7], [10], [11], [12], [13].

Item-level analysis enriches this interpretation considerably. Among work environment dimensions, the highest-scoring item is X2.5 ('Social relationships with co-workers are well established and mutually supportive'; mean = 3.89), followed by X2.3 ('OHS facilities are adequate'; mean = 3.88) and X2.4 ('Role clarity'; mean = 3.77). The lowest-scoring dimension is X2.1 ('Workspace ergonomics'; mean = 3.25), which falls noticeably below the variable mean (3.65). This pattern suggests that while social cohesion and psychological safety are relatively well developed in these garment companies, physical ergonomics remains the most critical gap. In garment production, where sewing operators work for prolonged hours in fixed postures, ergonomic deficiencies directly increase physical fatigue, reduce precision, and lower output quality connecting physical environment quality directly to the performance indicators measured in the Y variable.

Theoretically, Sedarmayanti [14] explains that a conducive physical environment (adequate lighting, comfortable temperature, ergonomic layout, cleanliness, and adequate OHS facilities) reduces physical fatigue, improves concentration, and minimizes accident risk—all of which contribute to productivity gains. The high mean of Y.10 ('Continuous learning'; mean = 3.87) alongside the high scores on work environment support items (X2.8 organizational culture for growth: 3.63; X2.9 career development support: 3.58) suggests a virtuous cycle: supportive environment enables capacity building, which in turn drives performance. Robbins and Judge [15] affirm that non-physical environment quality social relationships, supervisor support, psychological safety, role clarity strongly shapes intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment.

The practical implications are significant. With $b = 0.652$, every 1-point improvement in work environment score predicts a 0.652-point gain in performance. A comprehensive environmental improvement program—upgrading workstations and seating to ergonomic standards, improving ventilation and lighting, and strengthening supervisory communication—that lifts the work environment score by 10 points would be predicted to increase employee performance by 6.52 points (approximately 16.3% relative to total scale). These findings are consistent with multiple prior studies [1], [4], [5], [7], [10], [12], [13] documenting significant positive work environment effects in comparable settings. The coefficient also carries direct relevance for management accounting: improvements in work environment quality translate into measurable gains in labor efficiency and output quality—dimensions routinely captured in standard cost and productivity reporting systems.

4.3. *Simultaneous Effect of Work Stress and Work Environment on Employee Performance*

Simultaneously, work stress and work environment significantly affect employee performance ($F = 56.630$; $\text{sig.} = 0.000$), confirming H3. The magnitude of $F = 56.630$ indicates excellent model fit, and $R^2 = 0.549$ (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.539$) demonstrates that the two predictors explain 54.9% of variance in employee performance—a robust explanatory level for behavioral science research. This simultaneous effect is consistent with findings across multiple prior studies confirming significant combined effects of both variables [1], [2], [4], [8], [11].

Connecting the item-level findings across variables reveals an integrated picture. The highest performance dimension Y.10 (continuous learning; mean = 3.87) co-occurs with strong organizational support items in the work environment (X2.3, X2.4, X2.5, X2.9). The lowest performance dimension—Y.4 (efficiency; mean = 3.23) corresponds with the lowest work environment dimension—X2.1 (ergonomics; mean = 3.25). This congruence is not coincidental: physical ergonomic quality directly affects the ease and efficiency of sewing operations, making it a key leverage point for simultaneously addressing the weakest performance dimension (efficiency) through the weakest environment dimension (workspace ergonomics). This nexus provides management with a clear priority target for investment.

The unexplained variance (45.1%) suggests that additional variables—such as work motivation [10], compensation, transformational leadership, organizational commitment, and individual competence contribute to employee performance. Amir et al. [8] specifically found organizational loyalty as a mediating variable between stress/environment and performance, suggesting that future research incorporating mediator or moderator variables will yield a more comprehensive explanatory model. The simultaneous findings underscore that optimal performance management requires addressing both variables synergistically: maintaining stress at productive moderate levels while continuously investing in environmental quality improvement.

5. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the effects of work stress and work environment on the performance of 96 garment industry employees in Semarang Regency using multiple linear regression. Three main conclusions are drawn. First, work stress has no significant partial effect on employee performance ($t = 1.581$; $\text{sig.} = 0.117$; $\beta = 0.115$). This is attributed to moderate stress levels, the stress-buffering role of a conducive work environment, and the predominantly young and newly-employed respondent profile—though the last factor should be regarded as a plausible contextual explanation rather than a confirmed causal mechanism. Second, work environment exerts a significant positive partial effect on employee performance ($t = 9.618$; $\text{sig.} = 0.000$; $B = 0.652$; $\beta = 0.700$), making it the most dominant predictor—with physical ergonomics (X2.1) identified as the critical underperforming dimension requiring priority attention. Third, both variables simultaneously and significantly affect employee performance ($F = 56.630$; $\text{sig.} = 0.000$; $R^2 = 0.549$), explaining 54.9% of performance variance.

From a managerial perspective, garment industry managers should prioritize investment in physical ergonomics (workstations, seating, lighting, ventilation) and non-physical environment quality (supervisory communication, role clarity, psychological safety, career development support) as high-return performance enhancement strategies. Stress management programs should focus on preventing escalation from moderate to distress levels through workload monitoring and open communication channels. These findings also carry implications for management accounting practice: work environment quality directly influences labor efficiency variance and output quality—two key performance metrics tracked in standard cost and productivity reporting systems. Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The use of total sampling ($n = 96$) drawn from a single industry (garment manufacturing) within a single geographic region (Semarang Regency) restricts the generalizability of these findings to other industries or regions; future research should replicate this model across different manufacturing sectors and geographic contexts to test its robustness. Additionally, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference. Future research is recommended to: (1) incorporate mediating variables such as work motivation, organizational loyalty, or job satisfaction; (2) add moderating variables such as social support and employee resilience; (3) employ mixed methods

to obtain deeper insights into subjective experiences of garment workers; and (4) include accounting-relevant outcome variables such as labor cost variance and labor productivity ratio to strengthen the link between HRM findings and operational performance measurement.

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