

## **The Performance of Sub-District Office Employees in South Nias That Influenced by The Work Environment and Job Stress Through the Mediation of Job Satisfaction**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the influence of the work environment and work stress on employee performance, as mediated by job satisfaction. This type of research is quantitative, with data analysis using path analysis through partial least squares, while data processing is carried out using Smart PLS software. The population determined was all representatives of the sub-district office in three sub-districts (Telukdalam, Fanayama, and Amandraya), totaling 89 people. The questionnaire was distributed to the entire population, but only 77 copies were returned. The results of the study showed that directly, the work environment and stress had a positive effect on job satisfaction and performance, and indirectly, through the mediation role of job satisfaction, the work environment and work stress had a positive effect on performance. Practical Implications of this study: Strong synergy among representatives should be used as a strength in producing job satisfaction, even in sudden and urgent work situations. It is hoped that job satisfaction can boost employee performance. Research Limitations: The number of research locations is still limited, hopefully in the future it can be increased so that it can represent more representatives of the sub-district office in South Nias.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Good and exemplary public service is a portrait of the government's success, from the centre to the district and indeed to the farthest and most isolated corners of the country. Serving the nation and state could be a request that must be met by respectful hirelings, such as state civil servants (ASN). Since the most drivers of open benefits in different fields seem to be "burdened on the shoulders" of ASN. There is no exemption for representatives in sub-district offices throughout Indonesia.

They are required to provide the best benefits to the community. Quality human resources are assets that can bolster representative performance (Marendra & Aryata, 2024). The sub-district office is a government agency at the sub-district level that plays a role in carrying out different official issues at the sub-district level and proceeds to facilitate at the next level (locale) and at a lower level (sub-district and town). Given its exceptionally central position (within the centre of the coordination stream), it is not an embellishment in the event that the sub-district office is considered exceptionally crucial in open benefit.

In managing and serving such a complex society, it is vital to have workers who are extreme and responsive in providing services. Be that as it may, some of the time representatives can be overwhelmed in managing inhabitants who come to bargain with them. In some cases, inhabitants come all of a sudden without prior notice in case they need to come, and their arrival is in exceptionally huge numbers. As a result, the living room, which is usually used as a hall, becomes overcrowded. Indeed, they went out of the room. This, of course, disturbs the portability of representatives or other inhabitants who need to go in and out of the sub-district office. A room with constrained space will result in snugness and thickness, disrupted air circulation, hot temperatures, and smells, which will potentially disrupt representatives at work. Representatives require a conducive work environment to be more productive (Azmy, 2019). Representatives who serve earnestly in some cases "battle" with their claim sentiments and need consolation in working. The work environment is a vital factor in maintaining worker enthusiasm (Yani, 2021).

Sub-district Office representatives must have the capacity to execute administrative functions, specifically the capacity to carry out the arranging, organising, mobilising/actualising, and controlling/supervising forms and be able to facilitate all assets claimed by the Sub-district Office so that the success and viability of the execution of the community benefit handle can be accomplished. In any case, now and then, the circumstances are outside the planning. For illustration, there is a village head who brings two groups of villagers who are battling over and debating the boundaries of the land/gardens. They must be served. However, there is a welcome from a non-governmental organisation that needs to conduct a focus group discussion, and it has been scheduled in advance. Usually, one case is fair, and there are numerous other cases that cause freeze and pressure to sub-district office representatives. Representatives who experience psychological pressure at work are referred to as stressed (Fickrie Alfian, 2020). Typically bad, but representatives are still willing to face it as a portion of serving the community.

With such varied activities, it is troublesome to foresee the satisfaction of sub-district office representatives. This job satisfaction is sometimes abstract and involves the feelings of each worker. Job satisfaction is exceptionally needed by representatives. Satisfaction is a solid reason for an employee to be comfortable and happy to work, despite the fact that the atmosphere is not supportive. This is what the representatives really hope for: limited conditions but willingness to work without limits. This is difficult but exists and occurs in many locations. When an employee's job satisfaction is well established, they are more enthusiastic about being involved in various workplace activities (Wardhana et al., 2024). There is nothing off-base with the leader of an agency investigating the factors that deliver job satisfaction. In the event that job satisfaction decreases, it is suspected that worker performance will also decrease. Co-workers are one of the factors that contribute to job satisfaction among representatives. Representatives will be appreciated if they work with people who are willing to work together, complain

somewhat, and are willing to work in all work situations. Representatives who are reluctant and lazy can be enthusiastic because of unique, understanding, and accommodating co-workers. Job satisfaction is usually expected by representatives. But sometimes, lacking a work partner of the same level, representatives feel overwhelmed by numerous urgent tasks.

The end of all employees' work efforts is performance. The performance of employees varies and depends on the capacity and capability of a worker in carrying out his/her work. Performance is based on the quality and quantity of work accomplished by representatives in carrying out their obligations as anticipated (Lukiyana & Wansesa, 2024). Good performance is the dream of all representatives, since it can increment an employee's work notoriety as a way to job advancement and to preserve an employee's existence in their work. In some cases, leaders genuinely expect their employees to perform well, but employees often feel unsupported by their superiors in achieving this performance. However, this may not be true and is merely an assumption. In this manner, this miscommunication should be dispensed with, because guesswork is not good for work coordination. Based on the different wonders over, this study needs to conduct a study on the influence of the work environment and work stress with the mediation of job satisfaction on the performance of representatives at the sub-district office in South Nias.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Work Environment**

Enny contends that the work environment incorporates a conducive environment, great communication between representatives, no suspicion of each other, and a sense of caring for others (Waimuri et al., 2024). From the above understanding, it can be inferred that the work environment is isolated into two fundamental parts: the first regarding physical conditions (circumstances, conditions, visual appearance, buildings, rooms, equipment, supplies/facilities, and infrastructure) and the second regarding social conditions (relationships between individuals within the organisation, culture and work mechanisms, dynamics, and improvement of the work process).

### **Work Stress**

According to Greenberg and Baron, stress is a pattern of emotional states and physiological responses that emerge in response to demands that come from inside or outside the organisation (Gunawan, 2024). Stress cannot be taken lightly and should not be dreaded. Stress has regularly been synonymous with negativity. However, stress also provides positive input for the development of employee advancement. For example, in a tense and panic situation, representatives are confronted with having to instantly complete a job within a limited time, which will certainly cause work stress for them. Be that as it may, when this work stress exists, it can cause adrenaline for representatives so that representatives have more courage and also work hard to urge out of the pressure as long as possible. The employee will attempt to be as difficult as conceivable, combining their mind, physical strength, and concentration to unite to create the correct activity to complete the job.

### **Job Satisfaction**

According to Robbins, job satisfaction is a positive attitude of representatives towards their work that emerges based on an evaluation of the work situation (Jufrizen &

Kandhita, 2021). Satisfied representatives prefer their work circumstances to disappointed representatives. Satisfaction cannot be assessed only from a few variable viewpoints but is exceptionally subordinate to employees' understanding of themselves and what they are confronting. The more significant something is to representatives, the more their satisfaction will increase, since satisfaction is abstract. For illustration, representatives who work in a non-air-conditioned room can still say they are satisfied if there are co-workers who continuously provide assistance and support them while working.

### **Performance**

Fahmi defines performance as the outcome of an organisation, whether the organisation is profit-orientated or non-profit-orientated, delivered over a period of time (Steven & Prasetyo, 2020). Performance, when caught on broadly, provides three images that each representative must have to be said to have performance, namely: work endurance (not effortlessly bored, working according to working hours), work capacity (knowing the ins and outs of work, including technical and problem handling at work) work reliability (completing work processes, being able to meet work targets and indeed surpass work targets, and being able to create work reports).

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Subject, Population, Sample**

This study was conducted in three sub-district workplaces in South Nias: Telukdalam, Fanayama, and Amandraya. This study aims to examine the impact of the Work Environment and Work Stress on the performance of sub-district office representatives, mediated by job satisfaction. The subjects of this study were all representatives of the sub-district offices in the three sub-district workplaces. The population in this study was all representatives of the three sub-district offices, totaling 89 individuals, consisting of active representatives. The population in this study was not more than 100 respondents; therefore, the author took 100% of the population in the three sub-district offices, which was 89 respondents. This sample is a type of saturated/non-probability sampling (Wahyudi et al., 2023).

### **Data Collection**

The data collection procedure in this study used a survey method, with a questionnaire (closed) tool, for each statement item the respondent chooses one of the reply choices that have been given, with alternative answers consisting of intervals valued at 1–5 (Likert scale) (Budijati, 2013). The questionnaire was distributed to 89 representatives of the Sub-district Office who were respondents in this study, but 77 duplicates of the questionnaire were returned. The data that had been collected through the questionnaire, at that point the author processed it into quantitative form.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, data analysis uses the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach with the SmartPLS Version 4.0 calculation device to determine the characteristics of respondents so that conclusions are obtained that will clarify the picture of the research object. PLS is a powerful analysis method because it is not based on many normally distributed assumptions, and the sample size does not have to be large. The theoretical model built in the first stage is depicted in a path diagram. In the flow diagram, the relationships

between the constructs are expressed through arrows. Straight arrows indicate coordinate causality between one construct and another (Iba & Wardhana, 2023).

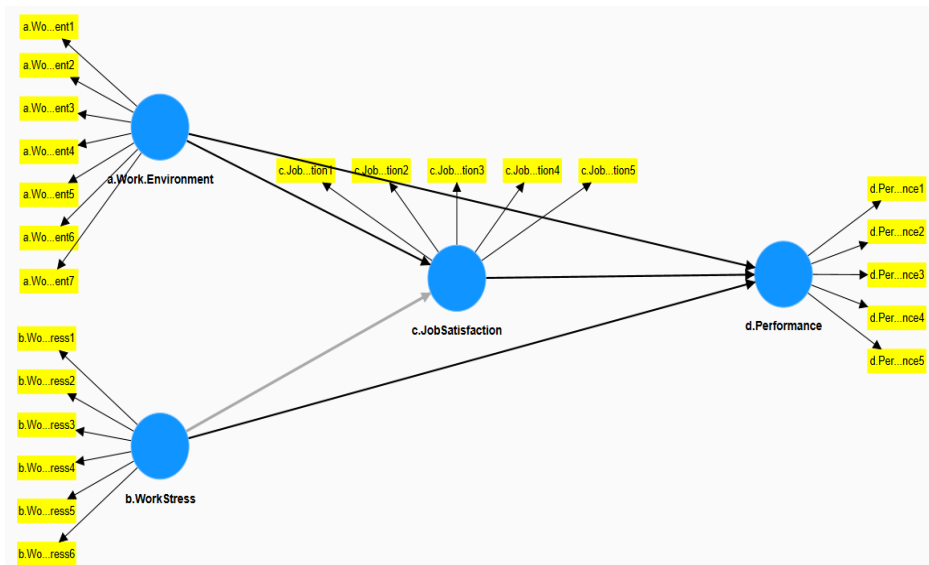


Figure 1. Design Model (Path Diagram)

### Model Testing

This study conducted two tests, namely the outer model test and the inner model test. The tests conducted on the outer model are as follows:

- Convergent Validity Test (Convergent Validity Test)
- Discriminant Validity Test Discriminant validity
- Reliability Test (Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha)
- Model Evaluation Measurement (Inner Model Test)

However, the inner model, which specifies the relationship between latent variables (structural model), is also called the inner relation

### Data Analysis

Hypothesis Testing (Influence between Variables)

The hypothesis testing proposed is carried out by looking at the path coefficients, which show the parameter coefficients and the significance value of the t-statistic. The significance of the estimated parameters can provide information about the relationship between the research variables. Ensure that the T statistic value of all first-order constructs is  $> 1.96$ ;

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Data Analysis

PLS model specifications can be made using SmartPLS software version 4.0 for Windows which will be estimated in this study based on the operational description of each research variable. Because there are several indicators whose loading factor values are  $< 0.70$ , these indicators are removed from the model and not included in the data processing for evaluating the inner model and outer model.

## Validity Test

Table 1. Discriminant Validity

Indicator Variable ↓→	a.Work Environment	b.Work Stress	c.Job Satisfaction	d.Performance
a. Work.Envir3	0.806	-0.011	0.238	0.414
a. Work.Envir4	0.733	-0.013	0.160	0.354
a. Work.Envir5	0.839	0.142	0.154	0.432
a. Work.Envir6	0.761	0.131	0.021	0.443
b. Work Stress2	0.107	0.936	0.104	0.321
b. Work Stress3	0.074	0.928	0.093	0.215
b. Work Stress4	0.028	0.848	0.076	0.246
c. J. Satisfaction3	0.183	-0.036	0.859	0.344
c. J. Satisfaction5	0.134	0.212	0.855	0.304
d. Performance2	0.241	0.194	0.446	0.728
d. Performance3	0.495	0.186	0.304	0.869
d. Performance4	0.531	0.243	0.243	0.838
d. Performance5	0.371	0.328	0.253	0.763

The test is used to assess whether the construct discriminant validity value has been met. If the resulting value is greater than the correlation between latent constructs, then it can be stated that all indicator items are valid. If you look at the bold numbers, the value is greater than the other parallel numbers (as in the first row: 0.806 > -0.011; 0.238; 0.414). Then it can be stated that the model has passed the construct validity test. This assumption is reinforced because the convergent validity test is stated to meet the requirements in the 'good' category because the value of all outer loading indicator values is greater than 0.7. Some indicators have been removed from the model (see Figure 1). Some indicators that have been removed from the model are work environment (1, 2, 7), work stress (1, 5, 6), job satisfaction (1, 2, 4), and performance (1).

## Construct Reliability Test

Table 2. Structural Model Evaluation

Variable Name	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	(AVE)
a.Work Environment	0.793	0.799	0.866	0.618
b.Work Stress	0.889	0.926	0.931	0.819
c.Job Satisfaction	0.638	0.638	0.847	0.734
d. Performance	0.813	0.825	0.877	0.642

From the table above, it is known that all Cronbach's Alpha values of the four variables are > 0.70. Thus, all research variables have passed the reliability test. The overall Rho\_A value is above 0.70, so it can be stated that all variables have passed the test. The overall composite reliability value is above 0.70, so it can be stated that all variables have passed the reliability test. The total Average Variance Extract (AVE) value is also above 0.50; thus, all variables have met the reliability requirements.

**Loading Factor Test**

Table 3. Outer Loading PLS

Indicator Name	Original Sample	Sample average	Dev Standards	T Statistics ( 0/STDEV )	P Value
a. Work.Envir3	0.806	0.800	0.057	14,032	0.000
a. Work.Envir4	0.733	0.731	0.077	9,503	0.000
a. Work.Envir5	0.839	0.835	0.056	15,005	0.000
a. Work.Envir6	0.761	0.756	0.079	9,623	0.000
b.Work Stress2	0.936	0.928	0.057	16,551	0.000
b.Work Stress3	0.928	0.920	0.063	14,714	0.000
b.Work Stress4	0.848	0.836	0.090	9,372	0.000
c.Job Satisfaction3	0.859	0.827	0.152	5,653	0.000
c.Job Satisfaction5	0.855	0.843	0.131	6,544	0.000
d.Performance2	0.728	0.722	0.090	8,082	0.000
d.Performance3	0.869	0.866	0.038	22,757	0.000
d.Performance4	0.838	0.838	0.037	22,663	0.000
d.Performance5	0.763	0.760	0.068	11,298	0.000

Loading Factor Testing is declared to have met the requirements if the overall value of the Original Sample is 0.4. It is known that the original sample value of all indicators is 0.4. Thus, all indicators have met the requirements to pass the loading factor test.

**Regression Coefficient Test**

Table 4. Outer Weight PLS

Indicator Name	Original Sample	Sample average	Dev Standards	T Statistics ( 0/STDEV )	P Value
a. Work.Envir3	0.343	0.337	0.065	5.276	0.000
a. Work.Envir4	0.282	0.284	0.069	4.068	0.000
a. Work.Envir5	0.335	0.334	0.052	6.485	0.000
a. Work.Envir6	0.310	0.308	0.067	4,642	0.000
b.Work Stress2	0.449	0.448	0.108	4.166	0.000
b.Work Stress3	0.311	0.310	0.096	3.250	0.001
b.Work Stress4	0.343	0.341	0.129	2,654	0.008
c.Job Satisfaction3	0.587	0.558	0.204	2,878	0.004
c.Job Satisfaction5	0.580	0.580	0.196	2,958	0.003
d.Performance2	0.262	0.260	0.056	4,679	0.000
d.Performance3	0.334	0.333	0.036	9,320	0.000
d.Performance4	0.347	0.347	0.041	8,489	0.000
d.Performance5	0.299	0.298	0.041	7.267	0.000

The fifth column shows the overall value of the T statistic  $> 1.96$  (standard determination value), which means that all indicators are well positioned in predicting the variables. In other words, each variable's indicators are well positioned to explain them. This assertion is reinforced by the overall p-value  $< 0.05$ , so that each indicator in each variable is worthy of playing a role in explaining/measuring the construct variable. The number of indicators for each variable decreases. This reduction is because there are several indicators that have p-values of 0.05. Therefore, several indicators have been removed. Regarding which indicator items have been removed, this has been pointed out in the explanation of the results of the discriminant validity test above.

## Hypothesis Testing

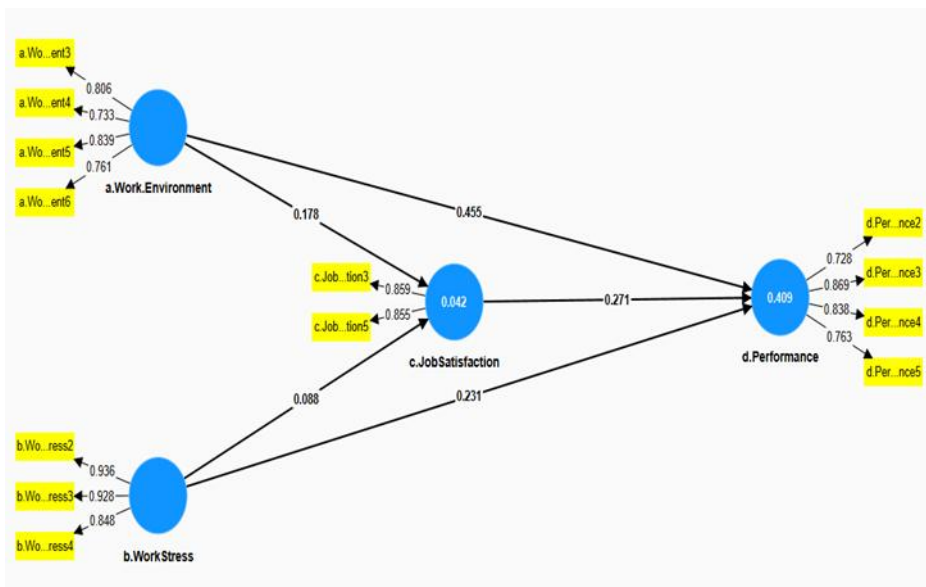


Figure 2. Graphical display of data processing results

From the five directions (arrows) of the direct influence model, it is known that the work environment variable has a very strong influence on performance, with a value of 0.455; this implies that representatives really need comfort when carrying out their work because their workplace is very conducive in supporting them to work well. In the meantime, job satisfaction is influenced by the work environment by 0.178; this implies that the role of the work environment is very supportive for representatives in creating job satisfaction. Another meaning is that they may be able to produce good performance but are still less satisfied. There is something they have to anticipate; they, the representatives, anticipate more improvement from the work environment so that their performance is in line with their job satisfaction. It can be expected that if the magnitude of employee job satisfaction is more than 0.178, at that point the magnitude of the influence of the work environment on performance will moreover surpass 0.455.

Whereas the influence of work stress on performance is not too large but still positive, which is 0.231; this means that representatives when in a fit condition, and not tense, will produce good performance, and vice versa. Which is very surprising because the influence of work stress on job satisfaction is only 0.088, even though the value is not negative, but this is a warning that stress causes employee dissatisfaction. If employee dissatisfaction continues for a long time, it is not impossible that it will threaten employee performance, which will decline. While the influence of job satisfaction on performance is quite large at 0.271, this proposes that job satisfaction plays an imperative and central position in helping representatives deliver their best performance. Hence, various things that influence employee job satisfaction ought to be studied carefully so that representatives are comfortable and upbeat while working. So that when representatives are in that circumstance, they will work hard voluntarily without worrying about profit and loss. For illustration, indeed, in case representatives add to their working hours without additional pay, they will do it joyfully, since they are not burdened but proud to do their jobs.



Table 5. Path coefficients

Coefficient Direction ↓	Bootstrapping				
	Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
<b>Direct Effect</b>					
Work. Envir -> Job Satisfaction	0.178	0.197	0.135	1,319	0.187
Work. Envir -> Performance	0.455	0.458	0.104	4.375	0.000
Job Stress -> Job Satisfaction	0.088	0.114	0.152	0.574	0.566
Work Stress -> Performance	0.231	0.236	0.097	2,379	0.017
Job Satisfaction -> Performance	0.271	0.271	0.103	2,640	0.008
<b>Indirect Effect</b>					
Work Environment -> Job Satisfaction -> performance	0.048	0.056	0.045	1,063	0.288
Stress.Work -> Job Satisfaction -> performance	0.024	0.029	0.042	0.558	0.577
<b>Total Effect</b>					
Work. Envir -> Job Satisfaction	0.178	0.197	0.135	1,319	0.187
<b>Work. Envir -&gt; Performance (0.045+0.048)</b>	0.503	0.514	0.097	5.186	0.000
Job Stress -> Job Satisfaction	0.088	0.114	0.152	0.574	0.566
<b>Work Stress -&gt; Performance (0.231+ 0.024)</b>	0.255	0.265	0.092	2,768	0.006
Job Satisfaction -> Performance	0.271	0.271	0.103	2,640	0.008

Indirect influence of W. Environment → J.Satis → Performance of 0.048 or 4.48% (This is obtained from  $0.178 \times 0.271$ ; examine Table 5). Indirect influence of W.Stress → J.Satis → Performance of 0.0238, which is rounded up to 0.024 or 2.40% (this number is obtained from  $0.088 \times 0.271$ ; check Table 5).

The value of both the indirect effects is very small, but from both of these indirect effects, it confirms that job satisfaction as an intervening variable plays a very good role in increasing the value of the T statistic for the work environment from 4.375 (before mediation) to 5.186 (after mediation) and for work stress from 2.379 (before mediation) to 2.768 (after mediation). So, it can be stated that job satisfaction plays a good role in mediating the direct influence of the work environment and work stress on employee performance. So that the influence of the work environment and work stress each have a positive effect (because each T statistic value is  $> 1.96$ ) on employee performance. While the P values did not change, all below 0.05, this means that the influence of the work environment and work stress each have a significant effect on employee performance.

## Discussion

### The influence of the work environment on job satisfaction

Specifically, the work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction. Expanding Job Satisfaction will affect the effectiveness of the Sub-district Office representatives. Usually obtained from co-workers, since they are part of the work environment. Representatives have a desire to accomplish, develop new relationships, and become experts in an assignment to require more responsibility when doing everything has an impact on the level of employee Job Satisfaction. All of this information was obtained from qualified and experienced co-workers. Meanwhile, if representatives have fewer or no co-workers who bolster them in their work, they will also have less or no job satisfaction. A positive work environment produces genuine and satisfying results,

motivating and engaging representatives in their work, leading to increased levels of satisfaction and lower retention within an organisation (Shammout, 2021).

### **The effect of work stress on job satisfaction**

Representatives who work ordinarily and normatively do not experience disturbances and panic. It is distinctive in case the employee is confronted with pressing work, large work volumes, and limited coordination, which will make representatives panic and stress. This is because representatives will be carried away by the pressure that arises. If representatives find it difficult to cope with the pressure, work stress will arise. Meanwhile, if work stress always arises, it is difficult for representatives to achieve job satisfaction. Individual stress levels can affect job satisfaction, so when workers are in a state of high work stress, it can increase job satisfaction (Safrida et al., 2023). This argument can be reinforced by Fahmi's supposition that work stress is closely related to job satisfaction because stress is the biggest indicator of job satisfaction, and the cause of laziness in representatives can be due to high levels of stress (Yunita & Budiana, 2021).

### **The influence of the work environment on performance**

Although the building is ancient and the building area is limited, if work facilities are continuously accessible, representatives will effortlessly do their jobs. If all the devices and equipment needed for work are accessible, representatives will perform well. In this way, representatives can perform their jobs well (Siallagan, 2024). This is why the coefficient value of the influence of the work environment on employee performance is the largest among other coefficient paths in this study. Work facilities and infrastructure are part of the work environment.

### **The effect of work stress on performance**

The magnitude of the influence of work stress on performance (0.231 or 23.1%) is typically a decent value, even though it is still relatively low. This indicates that the implementation of work coordination between representatives is very effective in overcoming various obstacles and work problems so that they do not spread and grow. The longer the handling of obstacles or problems, the more stressed the representatives will be, and work can be neglected. In other words, representatives do not want to be stressed so that their work runs smoothly and produces good performance. According to Robbins and Judge, there is a relationship between stress and performance. When an employee is under the right amount of pressure, they will do their best work. If they are under too much or too little pressure, their performance deteriorates (Hanifa & Oktafani, 2019). To clarify in advance, positive psychology proposes that work stress includes two main categories: challenge stress and obstacle stress. Cavanaugh et al. and Le Pine et al. summarised that challenge stress is stress that has a positive impact on employee work attitudes and behaviour, which improves employee performance by increasing work responsibilities; on the contrary, hindrance stress has a negative impact on employee work attitudes and behaviours, which diminishes employee performance by increasing role ambiguity (Chen et al., 2022).

### **The influence of job satisfaction on performance**

Job satisfaction was a central variable in this study. Discussing job satisfaction is the same as discussing employee success in achieving high performance. Torlak and Kuzey contend that the way to encourage employee performance is by satisfying representatives

in their work (Apriansyah et al., 2024). The more regularly representatives have job satisfaction, the more often employees perform. Leaders must understand and consider the job satisfaction of their subordinates, as it plays a role in increasing employee performance. Employee job satisfaction is also a crucial factor in determining the success or disappointment of a company's performance.

Employee job satisfaction is also a crucial factor in determining the success or failure of an organisation's actions (Rustini & Muslichah, 2022). The decline in employee job satisfaction results in the low performance of the representatives (Susanti & Fahmy, 2020).

**The influence of the work environment on performance is mediated by job satisfaction.**

A satisfactory work environment for representatives can improve performance (Listiani et al., 2022). If representatives feel satisfied and comfortable with the climate or conditions of their work, they will be more dynamic in their work, which can eventually lead to the success of the organisation, thereby optimally increasing employee productivity and work results (Sitiari et al., 2023).

**The effect of work stress on performance is mediated by job satisfaction.**

In the initial stage of stress, representatives do not consider themselves stressed, but maybe excited, enthusiastic, passionate, or full of enthusiasm (considered satisfied) and are able to pass the initial point. Therefore, employee performance increases with increasing stress (Sitiari et al., 2023).

**CONCLUSION**

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that a big part of the hypothesis that was submitted in the study was successfully achieved based on the results of the hypothesis test and the presentation of seven data findings in the discussion section above. This study also highlights the complexity of factors that influence employee performance and emphasises the importance of a comprehensive management approach in improving employee performance. In general, this study provides new contributions to the understanding of the various variables that influence employee performance at the Sub-district Office. These findings underline the importance of a conducive work environment and fast and effective handling of employee work stress in creating job satisfaction for employee professional growth and shared success so that it can produce good employee performance. In addition, this study also provides insight into the complexity of the relationship between the work environment, work stress, and job satisfaction for employee performance, which can be the basis for developing a more effective sub-district office management strategy in the future.

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