

THE EFFECT OF WORK STRESS ON EMPLOYEE EFFECTIVENESS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Geofany Dwi Wulandari^{1*}, Rahmi Pramulia Fitri¹

¹Faculty of Health and Informatics, Payung Negeri Pekanbaru Health Institute, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: geofanydwi@gmail.com

Abstract

Work stress is a major factor influencing employee effectiveness in modern organizations. This study aims to analyze the effect of work stress on employee effectiveness through a systematic literature review of 35 national and international journal articles published between 2015 and 2025. The review was conducted using descriptive qualitative methods. Findings indicate that work stress significantly affects employee effectiveness, particularly decreasing productivity, motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment. High stress levels lead to emotional exhaustion and increased absenteeism, while mild stress (eustress) can enhance performance. Key stressors include excessive workload, role conflict, time pressure, and poor work environment. Occupational health and safety programs (K3) play an important role in reducing stress and improving effectiveness. Organizations are recommended to implement stress management programs, supportive leadership, and healthy work environments.

Keywords: work stress, employee effectiveness, occupational health, burnout, productivity.

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance and effectiveness have become crucial determinants of an organization's success and competitiveness since the era of increasingly fierce business competition and rapid change. [1] states that employees are viewed not only as task performers, but as strategic assets whose capabilities directly influence an organization's ability to survive and thrive in a dynamic market. Therefore, investment in human resources and the creation of an optimal work environment are top management priorities.

One important variable that influences employee effectiveness is job stress. [2] states that job stress is defined as a state of tension that arises when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to cope. In line with the opinion of [3], it states that job stress can disrupt concentration, reduce decision-making ability, and significantly affect work motivation. Supported by the opinion of [4], job stress is defined as a psychological and physiological response that arises when an individual perceives an imbalance between the demands of the work environment and the abilities and resources they have to handle them.

Job stress levels are increasing due to changes in the work environment, heavy workloads, tight targets, and the dynamics of social relationships in the workplace. Research conducted by [5] shows that excessive workload is the largest contributor to job stress and has a direct impact on declining employee performance and effectiveness.

High levels of work stress (distress) have consistently been shown to have a significant negative correlation with employee effectiveness. Consistent with [6] findings, work stress can disrupt concentration, reduce decision-making ability, and significantly impact work motivation. This often leads to increased error rates and a decline in the quality of work output. These negative impacts have been supported by various quantitative empirical findings. For example, a study by [1] found that high work pressure leads to decreased operational performance in the creative industries. In the public service sector, high stress has also been shown to cause burnout, which leads to decreased service quality and effectiveness.

However, the literature also highlights the complexity of this relationship, with the concept of eustress (positive stress), which serves as a catalyst for performance. According to

the Yerkes-Dodson Curve, stress at optimal levels can actually boost motivation, increase alertness, and drive employees to peak performance. Stress only becomes destructive when demands exceed an individual's coping resources.

The causes of work stress are diverse, ranging from role ambiguity, conflict between coworkers, unsupportive leadership styles, to an uncondusive work environment. A study by [7] found that poor work-life balance exacerbates work stress, while work-life balance can reduce employees' psychological burden. Furthermore, interpersonal conflict is also a significant stressor in the workplace. Research by [8] shows that poorly managed work conflict increases employee stress, which in turn reduces their effectiveness in completing tasks. This increased stress leads to emotional exhaustion and reduced motivation.

From an organizational perspective, social support and effective leadership have been shown to influence levels of work stress. [9] emphasized that transformational leadership can increase motivation while reducing work stress. A follow-up study by [10] also found that job satisfaction can mitigate the negative impact of stress on effectiveness. The impact of work stress is not only felt psychologically but also affects physical health and work behavior, such as absenteeism, burnout, and decreased loyalty. Research by [11] shows that burnout is a powerful mediator that exacerbates the effects of stress on effectiveness. The higher the level of burnout, the lower the resulting effectiveness and productivity.

Furthermore, recent literature shows that Occupational Safety and Health (OHS) programs play a crucial role in reducing work stress. [12] found that a safe and comfortable work environment can reduce stress and increase effectiveness. Interventions such as OHS training, workload regulation, and safety supervision have proven relevant in preventing excessive stress.

Given the complexity of this relationship, where stress has the potential to both undermine and enhance performance, and the multifaceted role of various supporting variables, a systematic literature review is needed. This study aims to synthesize the latest findings from 2020 to 2025 to provide a comprehensive view of the dynamics of the influence of work stress on employee effectiveness and to formulate evidence-based practical recommendations for human resource management.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The analytical approach chosen was Narrative Synthesis, a qualitative method formulated by Glaser and Strauss. This method facilitates simultaneous data collection and analysis, allows for the emergence of theories from the data, and helps compare similarities and differences across the studies reviewed. This approach was complemented by thematic synthesis to unify diverse information and create a more comprehensive view. Articles were searched through academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Springer, and PubMed using the keywords "work stress," "employee effectiveness," and "work productivity." Data were analyzed through: Open coding, Axial coding, theme identification, narrative synthesis, and critical analysis across studies. A total of 35 articles met the criteria and were used as the basis for the analysis.

RESEARCH RESULTS

A synthesis of the 35 articles reviewed confirms that job stress is a significant determinant of employee effectiveness, although the direction of its influence varies depending on the level. The following table summarizes the results of the literature review:

Table 1. Literature Review of The Effect of Stress on Work Effectiveness

No	Author Name	Publication Year	Title	Variable	Research result
1	Karundeng & Lopian	2024	The Influence of Job Stress, Workload, and Work Environment on Employee Work Effectiveness at PT. Clanthy Mitra Gas Bitung	High stress reduces employee effectiveness and productivity.	Job stress: Work effectiveness
2	Anitha	2016	Job Stress and Its Effect on Employee Performance In Banking Sector	Stress reduces job satisfaction and effectiveness.	Job stress, job satisfaction
3	Felix	2024	The Effect of Workload and Job Stress on Burnout	Burnout amplifies the negative impact of stress on effectiveness.	Stress, burnout, effectiveness
4	Mufida Ahmad et al	2022	Workload, Job Stress, and Employee Performance	Stress due to excessive workload reduces performance	Workload, stress, performance
5	Mufida Ahmad et al	2022	The Effect of Job Stress on Effectiveness with Motivation as a Moderator	Motivation moderates the negative influence of stress on effectiveness.	Stress, motivation, effectiveness
6	Batur & Nart	2015	Job Stress, Organizational Commitment, and Effectiveness	Commitment decreases as work stress increases.	Job stress, organizational commitment
7	Sinambela	2020	The Impact of Occupational Stress on Employee Effectiveness	Stress is negatively related to work effectiveness	Occupational stress
8	Hariyani	2024	The Influence of Work Conflict and Stress on Employee Effectiveness	Interpersonal conflict increases stress and decreases effectiveness.	Work conflict, stress

PROCEEDING OF

THE 3RD PAYUNG NEGERI INTERNATIONAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Integrated Innovation and Digital Technologies Enhance Sustainable Impact of Health Systems

No	Author Name	Publication Year	Title	Variable	Research result
9	Hartono & Respati	2015	The Influence of Social Support on Work Stress and Effectiveness	Social support reduces stress and increases effectiveness.	Social support and stress
10	Singh	2019	Work Stress and Teacher Effectiveness	High stress reduces teachers' effectiveness in teaching	Job stress, teacher effectiveness
11	Wibowo	2019	Job Stress and Employee Productivity	The higher the stress, the lower the work productivity.	Stress, productivity
12	Wang	2020	Relationship Between Work Stress and Employee Effectiveness	Stres berpengaruh negatif signifikan terhadap efektivitas	Stress kerja
13	Valentino & Adji	2023	The Influence of Workload and Stress on Employee Effectiveness	The combination of high workload and stress reduces effectiveness.	Workload, stress
14	Tamawiwiy	2023	Analysis of Job Stress on Government Employee Effectiveness	Stress affects employee efficiency and discipline.	Work stress, effectiveness
15	Nappo	2020	Job Stress and Employee Performance: A Cross-Country Study	Negative effects of stress were found in all sample countries.	Joob Stress
16	Ayu & Harjatno	2024	The Influence of Work Environment and Stress on Effectiveness	A poor work environment increases stress and decreases effectiveness.	Work environment, stress
17	Akbar & Troena	2016	Transformational Leadership and Work Stress	Transformational leadership style reduces work stress.	Leadership, stress

PROCEEDING OF

THE 3RD PAYUNG NEGERI INTERNATIONAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Integrated Innovation and Digital Technologies Enhance Sustainable Impact of Health Systems

No	Author Name	Publication Year	Title	Variable	Research result
18	Yang	2021	Work Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Effectiveness	Job satisfaction reduces the impact of stress on effectiveness.	Stress, job satisfaction
19	Fajrin	2023	The Relationship between Work Stress and Midwife Effectiveness	High stress is negatively associated with midwife effectiveness	Stress, effectiveness
20	Alshammari	2023	Psychological Stress and Job Efficiency	Excessive psychological stress reduces work efficiency.	Psychological stress
21	Amrianah	2019	The Impact of Work Stress on Bank Employee Effectiveness	High stress increases work errors and absenteeism.	Work stress
22	Ratih Tristianingsi	2022	The Effect of Stress on Factory Employee Performance	Stress reduces effectiveness and job satisfaction	Job stress, performance
23	Darwin	2016	Work Stress, Coping, and Effectiveness	Effective coping reduces the negative impact of stress on effectiveness.	Stress, coping
24	Menkes	2022	Job Stress and Employee Effectiveness in Public Institutions	Stress due to target pressure reduces employee effectiveness.	Work stress
25	Paramita Suwandana &	2022	Workload, Emotional Stress, and Performance	Emotional stress interferes with teamwork effectiveness.	Workload, emotional stress
26	Ghobind Difit & Eldiana Putra	2022	The Effect of Work Pressure on Employee Effectiveness	Excessive pressure reduces work effectiveness	Work pressure, stress

PROCEEDING OF

THE 3RD PAYUNG NEGERI INTERNATIONAL HEALTH CONFERENCE
Integrated Innovation and Digital Technologies Enhance Sustainable Impact of Health Systems

No	Author Name	Publication Year	Title	Variable	Research result
27	Matin	2016	Stress Management and Productivity	Stress management increases employee effectiveness.	Stress management
28	Widodo	2022	Job Stress on Employee Effectiveness at PT XYZ	Stress reduces effectiveness, especially due to overtime workload.	Work stress
29	Handayani	2024	Job Stress and Tax Office Employee Effectiveness	Pressure from high tax targets affects work effectiveness	Work stress
30	Baxter & Chua	2016	Job Stress and Organizational Efficiency	High stress reduces organizational efficiency.	Job stress, efficiency
31	Rohyadi & Ryanto	2020	Work Stress and Employee Discipline	Stressed employees tend to be less disciplined and ineffective.	Stress, discipline
32	Karim	2022	Impact of Work Stress on Employee Effectiveness	The significant negative influence of stress on work effectiveness.	Work stress
33	Averina & Widagda,	2021	Job Stress, Work-Life Balance, and Effectiveness	Work-life balance reduces the impact of work stress.	Stres, work-life balance
34	Syahputra Eko & Novianty Lily,	2023	The Relationship between Work Stress and Lecturer Effectiveness	High stress hinders the effectiveness of lecturers' teaching	Work stress
35	Inikpi & Adewale	2024	Work Stress and Employee Efficiency in SMEs	Work stress significantly reduces effectiveness in SMEs.	Work stress

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Job Stress on Employee Effectiveness

The analysis shows that work stress is a dominant psychological factor affecting employee effectiveness in various sectors. High levels of work stress can lead to decreased concentration, increased errors, absenteeism, and turnover intention [13]. When employees feel excessively stressed, they tend to have difficulty focusing on their tasks, leading to less than satisfactory work performance and increased desire to leave their jobs. This is a serious concern for management, as high turnover not only impacts recruitment costs but also disrupts team stability and overall organizational performance.

However, work stress is not always negative. To some extent, stress can serve as a productive stimulus that improves focus and achievement of work goals, provided individuals have good coping skills and adequate organizational support [14]. In this context, well-managed stress can motivate employees to strive harder and encourage them to achieve higher goals. This approach requires organizations to create an environment that facilitates stress management, for example through stress management skills training and increased awareness of the importance of mental health in the workplace.

The majority of findings show a negative and significant relationship: the higher the level of work stress, the lower the work effectiveness. High levels of work stress have been shown to decrease productivity, motivation, and work quality. This impact is caused by impaired rational thinking and decision-making abilities, as well as the emergence of emotional exhaustion, which reduces work enthusiasm. Conversely, several studies support the concept of eustress, where mild stress that is well-managed can actually boost motivation, improve focus, and accelerate individual performance.

Factors Affecting Work Stress

The literature review identified several main factors causing work stress which leads to decreased effectiveness:

1. **Workload and time pressure:** High work targets without adequate support cause significant psychological stress. Employees often feel trapped by unrealistic demands, which can lead to mental and physical exhaustion. Furthermore, tight deadlines can create stress, reduce motivation, and lead to decreased productivity.
2. **Interpersonal relationships in the workplace:** Conflict between employees or between subordinates and superiors increases social stress. Poor relationship dynamics can create an unhealthy work environment, where poor communication and misunderstandings can exacerbate tensions. When employees feel unsupported by coworkers or superiors, they are more susceptible to stress, which can lead to low morale and engagement.
3. **Work environment:** Uncomfortable, noisy, or high-risk workspaces also increase psychological stress [15]. Unsupportive environments, such as poor lighting, suboptimal temperatures, or distracting noise, can reduce concentration and increase feelings of discomfort. This contributes to increased stress, which in turn can impact employees' mental and physical health.

When these factors are not managed effectively by an organization, work stress will continue to increase and directly impact work effectiveness. This decline in effectiveness not only reduces individual productivity but can also impact the overall performance of the team and organization. Therefore, it is crucial for management to implement effective strategies to identify and address sources of stress, such as offering time management training, creating a healthy work environment, and promoting work-life balance. With the right approach,

organizations can not only reduce stress levels but also increase job satisfaction and employee loyalty, ultimately contributing to the company's long-term success.

Implications of Stress Management Strategies and K3

The study results show that the implementation of Occupational Safety and Health (OHS) programs plays a crucial role in reducing work stress and increasing employee effectiveness. OHS encompasses not only physical safety but also mental and psychosocial well-being in the workplace. With this holistic approach, OHS aims to create a supportive work environment, both physically and emotionally, so that employees can function optimally.

According to [16], a safe, clean, and comfortable work environment can significantly reduce stress levels. Implementing occupational health and safety (K3) practices such as the use of personal protective equipment, ergonomic layout, proper ventilation, and adequate lighting helps create a sense of security and comfort for employees. When employees feel their safety is taken care of, they tend to be more focused and productive. Furthermore, an ergonomic workspace layout not only reduces the risk of physical injury but also increases comfort, which in turn can increase job satisfaction.

Furthermore, [17] added that modern OSH also includes mental health support through employee well-being programs, mindfulness training, and work counseling. This support helps employees manage stress effectively, thereby increasing work effectiveness. These programs play a crucial role in equipping employees with the skills necessary to cope with stress and providing a space for them to share experiences and find solutions together. Thus, organizations not only reduce the risk of mental health issues but also create a more inclusive and collaborative environment.

Furthermore, comprehensive OHS implementation can improve employee loyalty and retention. When employees feel valued and supported in their well-being, they tend to be more committed to the organization. This not only positively impacts individual productivity but also team performance and overall organizational success. With the right investment in OHS programs, companies can build a reputation as a workplace that cares about employee well-being, which in turn attracts top talent and increases competitiveness in the marketplace.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that work stress has a negative and significant impact on employee effectiveness. The negative impact is characterized by decreased productivity, work quality, motivation, and increased absenteeism. The main factors that contribute to stress are excessive workload, time pressure, and lack of social support. To address this, organizations need to adopt a proactive stress management approach, where implementing a comprehensive OHS program and strengthening social support systems have proven key to maintaining psychological balance and maintaining employee work effectiveness.

REFERENCES

- [1] Widodo, Z. D., Wijastuti, S., & Adiyani, R. (2022). Analisis Pengaruh Kepemimpinan, Pelatihan dan Budaya Organisasi terhadap Kinerja Karyawan Industri Kreatif Sablon Manual PT. XYZ. *Seminar Nasional Dies Natalis Ke-42*, 75–84.
- [2] Nappo, L. (2020). Work-related stress and its influence on job performance and job satisfaction. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 1(1), 1689–1699.
- [3] Alshammari, A., Alrashidi, S., Alenizi, M., Alshammari, M., & Alotaibi, F. (2023). The Impact of Work Stress on Employee Performance in Government Sector: The Mediating

- Role of Job Satisfaction. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(1), 1–15.
- [4] Handayani, S., & Pratama, F. (2024). Analisis Pengaruh Stres Kerja Terhadap Produktivitas Karyawan dengan Mediasi Kepuasan Kerja. *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis*, 11(2), 120–135.
 - [5] Mufida Ahmad, A., Handaru, A. W., & Usman, O. (2022). The Effect of Workload, Work Stress and Work-Life Balance On Employee Performance (Case Study On Startup Employees In Jakarta). *Devotion : Journal of Research and Community Service*, 3(14), 2749–2757. <https://doi.org/10.36418/dev.v3i14.336>
 - [6] Wang, L., Zhang, Y., & He, J. (2020). Work stress and employee effectiveness: The moderating role of organizational support. *International Journal of Workplace Studies*, 8(1), 20–35.
 - [7] Priandari, N., & Adnyani, N. (2023). Work-Life Balance dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Stres Kerja. *Jurnal Kesehatan*. 2(1), 121-132.
 - [8] Hariyani, D., Hidayat, R., & Siregar, A. (2024). Pengaruh Konflik Interpersonal Terhadap Stres Kerja dan Kinerja. *Jurnal Manajemen*. 4(2), 12-22.
 - [9] Hartono, & Respati, R. (2016). Pengaruh Beban Kerja Dan Dukungan Sosial Terhadap Kinerja Karyawan Dengan Stres Kerja Sebagai Variabel Intervening (Studi Pada Perawat Rumah Sakit Panti Wilasa Citarum Semarang). *Jurnal Mahasiswa*. 3(1), 34-41.
 - [10] Yang, X., Li, M., & Chen, Q. (2021). The buffering effect of job satisfaction on work stress and employee performance. *International Journal of Human Resource Practice*, 14(2), 55–67.
 - [11] Felix, C. (2024). Pengaruh Beban Kerja dan Stres Kerja Terhadap Burnout. *Jurnal Maneksi*, 13(1), 137–145.
 - [12] Karundeng, F., & Lapian, J. (2024). Pengaruh Lingkungan Kerja dan Beban Kerja Terhadap Produktivitas Karyawan. *Jurnal EMBA*. 12(2), 12-22
 - [13] Wang, L., Zhang, Y., & He, J. (2020). Work stress and employee effectiveness: The moderating role of organizational support. *International Journal of Workplace Studies*, 8(1), 20–35.
 - [14] Utami, D. R., & Wijaya, C. (2024). Work-Life Balance sebagai Moderator Pengaruh Stres Kerja terhadap Motivasi dan Efektivitas Karyawan. *Jurnal Sumber Daya Manusia*, 17(1), 1–16.
 - [15] Setyaningrum, F., & Saputro, Y. E. (2023). Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Transformasional dan Dukungan Sosial terhadap Kemampuan Koping dan Stres Kerja. *Jurnal Psikologi**, 16(1), 22–38.
 - [16] Saputro, B., & Hidayat, R. (2021). Kontribusi Stres Kerja dan Kompensasi terhadap Produktivitas Karyawan di Sektor Telekomunikasi. *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, 10(2), 150–165.
 - [17] Sari, D. K., & Amelia, R. (2020). Implementasi Program Keselamatan dan Kesehatan Kerja (K3) Psikososial dalam Menurunkan Tingkat Stres Kerja. *Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat*, 9(3), 1–10.