

## The Effects of Work Stress and Work Motivation on Employee Performance

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**ABSTRACT:** High levels of work stress (WS) can significantly lower work motivation (WM) as the energy is prone to deplete, causing burnout, and undermining employees' belief to succeed in their career. On the other hand, low motivation level makes them more susceptible to experiencing WS and less resilient in coping with stressful situations. Thus, what is the connection between WS and WM on employee performance (EPf)? In fact, there are still few researches discussing the issue, particularly in telecommunications companies and this became the background for this study. To conduct the research, qualitative and quantitative data are used. The population comprised all employees of PT Hutchison 3 Indonesia (H3I) Makassar Branch who also become a sample or census sampling. For the data collection, a survey method is implemented with multiple linear regression as its technique of analysis. The results showed that the variables of WS and WM had a positive and significant impact on EPf. All research hypotheses are declared accepted, which indicates that an increase in the variables of WS and WM will improve EPf. The findings contribute to the development of theory and practice in the fields of performance and human resources management.

**Keywords:** Work Stress, Work Motivation, and Employee Performance.



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## INTRODUCTION

The changes in human life cannot be separated from the developments in technology and science, and these changes have an impact on higher demands for individual performance ([Luu, 2020](#); [Mubarok et al., 2021](#); [Román et al., 2018](#); [Susanto & Anjana, 2022](#)). The condition triggers competition to enhance professionalism in the work environment to take place, resulting in various pressures individuals must face ([Kelly et al., 2022](#); [Larastrini & Adnyani, 2019](#); [Sulaiman, 2022](#); [Toft & Reiersen, 2017](#)). Any individuals expecting to exist in a work environment should be ready to experience stress, since such ability help them adapt to the ongoing developments ([Sari et al., 2022](#)). Today, anxiety provokes individuals to get trapped in various emotional disorders, such as

stress, depression, frustration, anxiety for no apparent reason ([Fahad & Kistyanto, 2021](#); [Suhery & Nurofik, 2020](#)). Stress is a mental disorder that causes emotional conditions, thought processes and physical conditions to become unstable ([Mellor et al., 2013](#); [Sulaiman, 2021](#)).

Moreover, challenges in the realizations of company goals cause not only burdens but also demands for effective performance trigger tiredness and WS ([Foy et al., 2019](#); [Kalyar & Kalyar, 2018](#); [Perez-Floriano & Gonzalez, 2019](#); [Sulaiman, 2021](#)). Indeed, this is what occurs at PT Hutchison 3 Indonesia (H3I) Makassar Branch which is one of the fast growing telecommunications service provider companies operating with a 4G national license in Indonesia. The branch provides quality and innovative mobile internet services as well as affordable telephone and SMS communication services. In reality, the increasingly heavy job demands for employees has taken place, and these include target versus actual workload, coordination with vendors, equipment troubleshooting, and customer complaints. Various studies have examined the connection between WS and EPf. The research results explain that WS affects EPf ([Fahad & Kistyanto, 2021](#); [Foy et al., 2019](#); [Román et al., 2018](#); [Suhery & Nurofik, 2020](#)). In general, low WS will have an impact on high EPf and productivity.

Stress at workplace has now become a common problem in contemporary firms, in which workers' productivity and well-being are affected ([Shah et al., 2023](#)). In order to properly address and manage this pervasive phenomenon, organizations must first understand the history of work stress issues. Over time, there has been a substantial evolution in the nature of work. The increasing workloads, the fast-paced workplaces, and the higher job expectations are the results of widespread globalization, technology improvements, and tight competition. Employees' stress levels are frequently raised as a result of the increasing pressures to meet deadlines, to achieve goals, and to adjust to the shifting work dynamics ([Dodanwala & Santoso, 2022](#)). To stay competitive and adaptive to the changing market conditions, organizations frequently go through restructuring, downsizing, or mergers. Uncertainty, job insecurity, and increasing workloads are the gradual effects of the continuous developments. Employees experience anxiety and stress due to the fear of job loss, the increased workload, or the changes in roles and responsibilities ([Avgar et al., 2014](#)).

As the results of the worrying situations, employees find it hard to maintain a good work-life balance. The blending of work and home lives, the requirements for longer workdays, and the expectation for constant contact through technology exacerbated more stress. Employees experience stress and burnout due to their inability to balance both personal and professional obligations ([Avgar et al., 2014](#)). Moreover, workplace stress issues are influenced by excessive workloads and time constraints in which tight deadlines and unreasonable expectations contribute to the ongoing stress, less job control, and little room for rehabilitation. The demands may cause employees to feel overburdened, worn out, and demotivated.

Workplace stress can also be triggered when workers feel they have little control what they do. Autonomy can be hampered and a sense of helplessness can be produced by micromanagement, strict protocols, and limited decision-making capacity. Frustration and tension intensify as workers are unable to change how things should properly be done at work or how to make important decisions ([Hulls et al., 2022](#); [Shah et al., 2023](#); [Tsutsumi et al., 2020](#)). In addition, issues concerning

a poor communication among people within the organization make matters worse. The facts that misunderstandings, role conflicts, and stress levels begin to elevate are other impacts when a lack of clarity, hazy expectations, insufficient feedback, and inefficient communication occur. Besides, insufficient knowledge or guidance worsen the work conditions as employees find it difficult to cope with the demands.

There are some other significant points to note that workplace disputes, tense relationships with managers or coworkers, and a lack of social support bring about more stress at work. Lack of support in the workplace, unsolved disagreements, and poor communication contribute further to the increased stress and the decreased work satisfaction. In addition, insufficient recognition and rewards lower the motivation and increase the stress, since respects and acknowledgement prevent employees from being demotivated, unhappy, and stressful. In fact, organizational culture and leadership philosophies have big impacts on how work stress issues occurred. Workplace stress is prone to exacerbate by a toxic or a nonsupporting work environment marked by intense competition, a lack of trust, and punitive methods. Furthermore, poor leadership practices, such as autocratic decision-making, lack of support, and ineffective conflict management, can also contribute to work stress problems.

Thus, a number of strategies to overcome this condition from recurring are promoting teamwork, offering resources and expertise, and eliminating conflicts by establishing a supportive and proper work environment. The next strategies are offering incentives and job flexibility. Establishing specific, attainable goals and recognizing accomplishments increase motivation as well. Moreover, giving sufficient feedback on a regular basis inspire employees to reach their full potential and crucial progress. It is also helpful to give people tasks that capitalize on their advantages. Creating routines, establishing goals, and assisting staff in completing tasks and improving their abilities will, undoubtedly, serve as motivation boosters.

EPf itself is not only influenced by the level of WS but also by the WM factors which are the important elements for the organization in achieving its goals. Motivation refers to a process that determines one's choices of the various forms of activity desired (Savolainen, 2018). WM is an encouragement to work harder in the work situation and environment that exists in an organization or agency. The element is something that moves, directs or distributes behavior, and one that maintains or supports behavior. Thus, motivation becomes the impetus or driving force to arouse and the direct behavior in an act or work. There are various studies discussing the relationship between WM and performance. (Suhartini & Mada, 2020) in their findings stated that WM has a significant effect on performance. Suhartini & Mada, explained in her research results that increased performance is determined by high employee motivation. WS and motivation are interconnected phenomena that can subsequently influence and impact EPf. High levels of WS significantly reduce employees' motivation through energy depletion, which causes burnout, and undermine their belief in the abilities to succeed. On the other hand, low motivation levels can make employees more susceptible to experiencing WS and being less resilient in coping with stressful situations.

To encourage work motivation, goals must be specific and meaningful. Employee motivation may suffer if there aren't clear objectives, that is, personal goals and the company's goals do not align.

Employee sense of direction can be affected, so can their motivation for work, by poorly communicated goals, unclear expectations, or competing priorities ([Saether, 2019](#)). When it comes to motivating employees, autonomy and decision-making power are crucial. Employees' motivation may suffer if they are not given enough room to carry out their jobs or if they are subjected to excessive micromanagement. Employees who lack autonomy may feel powerless and restricted to use their knowledge and skills, and this will lower their motivation.

In the workplace, rewards and recognition are strong motivators. Employees' motivation, however, may suffer if companies don't offer enough praise or don't put in place good incentive programs. Low motivation and decreased commitment to the organization can result from a lack of appreciation for achievements, inconsistent or unfair reward procedures, and inadequate feedback. The perception of opportunities for professional advancement has been shown to influence employees' motivation ([Dipboye, 2018](#)). Employees may feel uninspired and stagnant when organizations are unable to provide supporting learning space, clear career paths, or necessary training. Employees' intrinsic motivation can be hampered and their enthusiasm for work can be diminished when there is no opportunity for career advancement or when the opportunity to pick up new skills is not well-facilitated.

Furthermore, problems with work motivation may be caused by ineffective or unsupported leadership. Employees' motivation can be damaged by autocratic leadership philosophies, a lack of communication and support, favoritism, or inconsistent feedback. Additionally, poor supervisory such as inadequate coaching or lack of direction lower an employee's performance. Employee motivation tend to decline if they are given repetitive or uninteresting tasks or if they are unable to relate their work to a bigger goal or a wider impact on society. A low sense of fulfillment or purpose can also occur when there is a minimum engagement and a decreased motivation. Thus, to keep work motivation high, a healthy work-life balance must be attained. It is obvious, however, that employees' motivation may suffer due to the excessive workloads, the lengthy workweeks, or the ongoing work-life conflicts. The lack of time for rest and recovery, the difficulties in managing personal commitments, and the feeling of getting overburdened at work are other factors that can lower motivation and raise stress levels ([Arshad et al., 2021](#)). To promote employees' motivation, organizations need to offer enough assistance and abundant resources since employees' inability to perform effectively is affected by a lack of resources, such as outdated technology or restricted access to essential tools. Consequently, a low motivation is detected when inadequate supervisory support is not facilitated and a good cooperation and teamwork is not created.

Work Stress. WS is a prevalent phenomenon in today's fast-paced and demanding work environments. It has attracted significant attention from researchers, psychologists, and organizations due to its negative impact on individuals and their overall well-being ([Hamouche & Marchand, 2020](#)). WS can stem from various sources within the work environment ([Chandrasekar, 2011](#); [Estrada & Bastida, 2023](#); [Kullab, 2017](#); [Youn, 2018](#)). High workload, time pressure, and long working hours have consistently been identified as primary contributors to WS. Role ambiguity and conflict, lack of control and autonomy, poor interpersonal relationships, and organizational culture also play significant roles ([P. Ruppel et al., 2013](#)). Furthermore, factors outside the workplace, such as work-life imbalance, job insecurity, and societal pressures, can further

exacerbate WS ([Hamouche & Marchand, 2020](#)). The consequences of WS can be detrimental to both individuals and organizations. On an individual level, WS has been linked to various health problems, including cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal disorders, and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression ([Adekanmbi et al., 2022](#)). Moreover, WS negatively impacts job satisfaction, job performance, and overall career outcomes ([Román et al., 2018](#)).

**Work Motivation.** WM plays a crucial role in employees' engagement, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. Understanding the various theories and factors that influence WM is essential for organizations to create a motivating work environment ([Dipboye, 2018](#)). This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of WM, including its theories, key factors, and implications for individuals and organizations. Several prominent theories explain WM from different perspectives. The content theories, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, focus on identifying the specific needs that drive individuals in the workplace ([Pinder, 2014](#)). High levels of WM have several positive implications for individuals and organizations. Motivated employees are more likely to experience job satisfaction, engage in discretionary effort, and demonstrate higher levels of performance and productivity ([Hackman & Oldham, 1976](#); [Saether, 2019](#)).

**Employee Performance.** EPf is a critical aspect of organizational success. Understanding the factors that influence EPf, the methods used as its measurement, and the implications for organizations is crucial for effective management ([Meijerink, 2014](#)). Various approaches are employed to estimate EPf. Objective measures, such as productivity metrics, sales figures, and quality indicators, provide quantitative assessments of performance outcomes ([Royster et al., 2020](#)). Subjective measures, including supervisor ratings, peer evaluations, and self-assessments, capture the perceived performance and behavioral aspects ([Lasisi et al., 2020](#)). 360-degree feedback, which incorporates multiple perspectives, offers a comprehensive view of EPf ([Huang & Yuan, 2022](#)). Furthermore, EPf has significant implications for individuals and organizations ([Ma et al., 2022](#)).

The goal setting theory is a well-known theory in human resources management that explains how goal setting can influence individual performance and motivation ([Locke & Latham, 2002](#)). Key Principles of the Goal Setting Theory: (1) Goals should be clear, specific, and well-defined rather than vague or general. Specific goals provide a clear target for individuals to aim for, enabling them to focus their efforts and resources effectively; (2) Goals should be challenging yet attainable. Challenging goals inspire individuals to stretch beyond their current abilities and push their performance boundaries. However, if goals are perceived as too difficult or unrealistic, they can lead to demotivation and decreased performance; (3) Individuals must be committed to their goals to be motivated and perform well. When individuals are involved in the goal-setting process and have a sense of ownership, they are more likely to be committed to achieving those goals; (4) Regular feedback on progress toward goal achievement is crucial. Feedback helps individuals assess their performance, adjust their strategies if necessary, and stay motivated. It provides a sense of accomplishment when milestones are reached and helps individuals stay on track toward goal attainment; (5) Goals should be broken down into smaller sub-goals or action steps to manage complexity. Breaking down larger goals into manageable tasks provides a clear roadmap and allows individuals to focus on one step at a time, making progress more achievable.



The goal setting theory operates through several mechanisms that influence individual performance and motivation: (1) Goals provide a sense of direction and purpose, guiding individuals' efforts toward specific outcomes. Clear goals help individuals prioritize their tasks and align their actions with organizational objectives; (2) Specific and challenging goals motivate individuals to exert higher levels of efforts to accomplish them. Goals act as energizers, stimulating individuals to allocate more resources, time, and effort to task completion; (3) Challenging goals can foster perseverance and sustained effort over time. When individuals encounter obstacles or setbacks, the clarity and importance of the goals can help maintain their motivation and overcome challenges; (4) Goals influence individuals' choice of strategies and allocation of attention. Well-defined goals provide a framework for individuals to structure their actions, make decisions, and prioritize their tasks effectively; (5) Goals have a direct impact on task performance by focusing individuals' efforts on achieving desired outcomes. When individuals set specific performance targets, they are more likely to perform better than when goals are absent or less defined; (6) Achieving challenging goals can enhance individuals' job satisfaction, as they experience a sense of accomplishment and recognition for their efforts. Satisfaction derived from goal achievement can reinforce positive attitudes and further motivate individuals ([Locke & Latham, 2002](#)).

## METHOD

This research was conducted at PT Hutchison 3 Indonesia (H3I) Makassar Branch. The types of the data used are qualitative and quantitative, while the primary and secondary data serve as the data sources. The population and a sample or census sampling in this study comprised all employees of PT Hutchison 3 Indonesia (H3I) Makassar Branch. The research uses a survey method in its data collection and the multiple linear regression as its technique of analyses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents in this study are people in engineering, sales, marketing, customer service and IT divisions.

Table 1. Respondents' backgrounds

Descriptive	$\Sigma$	%
Gender: Man	24	72,73
Gender: Female	9	27,27
Age: $\leq$ 30 years old	14	42,42
Age: $\geq$ 31 years old	19	57,58
Last education: Diploma	6	18,18
Last education: S1	26	78,79
Last education: S2	1	3,03
Working period: $\leq$ 4 years	23	69,70
Working period: $\geq$ 5 years	10	30,30

A variable can be valid if the score is significantly correlated with the total score using the corrected item. The validity Test can be seen in the table below.

Table 2. Research instrument test

Variable	Indicators	Corrected Item	Decision	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
WS	WS.1	0,757	Valid	0,846	Reliabel
	WS.2	0,664			
	WS.3	0,671			
WM	WM.1	0,696	Valid	0,878	Reliabel
	WM.2	0,732			
	WM.3	0,800			
	WM.4	0,745			
EPf	EPf.1	0,591	Valid	0,895	Reliabel
	EPf.2	0,761			
	EPf.3	0,725			
	EPf.4	0,792			
	EPf.5	0,553			

Table 2 explains that this research instrument has a corrected item value greater than 0.50, so that all items in the instrument are valid. Cronbach's alpha for all instruments (job stress, WM, and performance variables) is greater than 0.60. The results of multiple regression analysis are shown as follows:

Table 3. Regression output

Variable	Regression Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	P-value	F	P-value	Adjusted R-Square
<i>Constant</i>	0,226	0,808	0,280	0,782			
WS	0,368	0,170	2,159	0,039	8,542	0,000	0,414
WM	0,279	0,137	2,045	0,050			

The regression coefficient of the WS variable is 0.368. The coefficient indicates a positive and significant relationship between WS and EPf. This can be interpreted as an increase in WS will have an impact on improving EPf. The regression coefficient of the WM variable is 0.279. The coefficient indicates a positive and significant relationship between WM variables on EPf. This can be interpreted by increasing WM will have an impact on improving EPf. The calculated F score is  $8.542 > 2.934$  (F table) with a significance level (F-statistic) of 0.00 (smaller than 0.05). Thus it can be concluded that the regression model can be used to predict all independent variables significantly affect the dependent variable (EPf).

The probability value of the WS variable is 0.039, which is smaller than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates that there is a positive and important impact of WS on EPf. The probability value of the WM variable is 0.050, this value is equal to  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This concludes that there is a positive and significant influence between WM variables on EPf. Based on the statistical tests, it was found that

all independent variables had positive and crucial impacts on EPf, thus all hypotheses were accepted.

### CONCLUSIONS

WS and motivation play crucial roles in determining EPf within the context of a telecommunications industry. The telecommunication industry is known for its high-paced and demanding work environment, making it particularly important to understand the impact of WS and motivation on EPf. WS, stemming from factors such as heavy workloads, time pressure, and organizational demands, can have detrimental effects on EPf. High levels of WS can lead to decreased productivity, increased errors, absenteeism, and turnover rates. Therefore, it is essential for telecommunications firms to recognize and manage WS to ensure optimal EPf.

Motivation, on the other hand, is a key drive to EPf. Motivated employees demonstrate higher levels of engagement, commitment, and effort, which lead to the improved performance outcomes. By creating an environment that fosters motivation through intrinsic and extrinsic factors, telecommunications firms can enhance EPf. The effect of WM on EPf shows that the influence of the variable is in the same direction. The probability value of the WM variable indicates a positive and crucial effect between the WM variables on EPf. Additionally, there is a positive and significant influence between WM on EPf. This shows that the quality of WM can improve EPf.

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