

Workload, Work Environment, and Hotel Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Job Stress

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ABSTRACT

Purpose — This study examines the influence of workload and work environment on employee performance, with job stress as a mediating variable, at a starred resort and convention hotel in Bandung Regency, Indonesia.

Design/methods/approach — A quantitative descriptive and verificative design was applied through an explanatory survey. All 128 operational employees were taken as respondents through saturated sampling. Data were collected with a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analysed using descriptive analysis and partial least squares structural equation modelling in SmartPLS 3.

Findings — Workload, work environment, job stress, and employee performance were all in the high category. Workload reduced employee performance and raised job stress, whereas work environment improved employee performance but did not influence job stress. Job stress reduced employee performance and partially mediated the workload pathway, transmitting about 35 per cent of its total influence, but did not mediate the work environment pathway. The model explained 48.8 per cent of the variance in employee performance.

Research limitations/implications — The cross-sectional design and single-organisation scope restrict causal inference and generalisation. Future research should add other job resources, adopt a longitudinal design, and compare several hotel properties.

Originality/value — The study tests a demand pathway and a resource pathway simultaneously in one structural model, showing that a job demand and a job resource reach the same outcome through different mechanisms in Indonesian hospitality.

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Introduction

The hospitality industry is a service sector in which organisational success rests almost entirely on the quality of the interaction between employees and guests. Facilities and infrastructure may be adequate, but without employees who are capable of delivering consistent service, a hotel cannot sustain guest loyalty or defend its market position. Employee performance therefore operates as the central determinant of service quality and competitiveness. Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, De Vet, and Van der Beek (2014) conceptualised individual work performance as goal-relevant behaviour that can be observed through task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour. In a hotel operation, these four dimensions are tested

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daily by rapid service demands, intensive shift rotation, and increasingly complex guest expectations.

Empirical conditions at Grand Sunshine Resort & Convention, a starred resort and convention hotel in Bandung Regency, West Java, indicate that performance achievement has not developed consistently. Internal performance appraisal data for the period 2022 to 2024 recorded a performance rate of 85.95 per cent in 2022, which rose to 87.50 per cent in 2023 and then fell to 83.30 per cent in 2024. Over the same period the underperformance rate moved from 14.05 per cent to 12.50 per cent before increasing again to 16.70 per cent. A preliminary survey of 20 employees reinforced this indication: 45 per cent of the respondents stated that they had not been able to reach the work targets set for them, and 40 per cent stated that they had not been able to complete their work on time. The decline in 2024 therefore did not appear as an isolated statistic but was accompanied by a perception of unmet targets among the employees themselves.

The Job Demands–Resources theory provides a framework for explaining why such a decline occurs. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) argued that every occupation contains job demands, which are the aspects of work that require sustained physical and psychological effort, and job resources, which are the aspects that help employees achieve work goals and buffer the cost of those demands. The two categories operate through distinct pathways: demands trigger a health impairment process that produces strain, while resources trigger a motivational process that supports engagement and performance. In a later review, Bakker and Demerouti (2023) emphasised that the predictive value of the theory increases when strain is modelled explicitly as an intervening state rather than treated as an outcome in its own right.

Workload is the job demand most frequently examined in service settings, because it captures the volume of physical and mental tasks that must be completed within a limited period. Chowhan and Pike (2023) demonstrated that workload deteriorates job performance both directly and indirectly through stress and reduced satisfaction. Kokoroko and Sanda (2019) reported a comparable pattern among nurses, where a heavier caseload raised job stress, and Janib, Rasdi, and Abu Samah (2021) found that workload impaired the performance of academic staff. In the Indonesian context, Rizky and Afrianty (2018) as well as Setyowati and Ulfa (2020) confirmed that increasing workload was followed by higher job stress. The evidence consistently positions workload as a demand rather than a neutral characteristic of the job.

Work environment, in contrast, functions as a job resource. Sedarmayanti (2017) distinguished the physical work environment, which covers lighting, air circulation, noise, cleanliness, and workplace safety, from the non-physical work environment, which covers relationships with supervisors and colleagues, communication, and conflict resolution. Nabawi (2019) found that a supportive work environment improved employee performance, and Ambarita, Hanafi, and Yuliani (2022), Muslih and Damanik (2022), and Nurhaliza, Putra, and Ramadhan (2024) reported the same direction of influence across different organisational settings. Whether a favourable work environment also reduces strain, however, remains less settled than its association with performance.

Job stress occupies the intervening position in this mechanism. Robbins and Judge (2018) described it as a condition of tension that affects emotion, thought processes, and physical condition as a consequence of work pressure. Pandey (2020), AbuAlRub and Al-Zaru (2021), and Tziner, Buzea, and Rabenu (2022) all reported that elevated job stress lowered performance. Several studies have gone further and modelled stress as a mediator: Sari, Putra, and Dewi (2022) and Hermanto, Wijaya, and Putri (2024) found that job stress transmitted part of the effect of workload and work environment on performance, while Rahman, Islam,

and Hossain (2023) and Johan and Satrya (2023) obtained similar mediation results in non-hospitality samples. Okarina and Ardana (2022), on the other hand, found the mediating role of job stress in the work environment pathway to be weak, and Rachman (2021) reported that the influence of the work environment on outcomes operated mainly through satisfaction rather than through stress. These divergent findings indicate that the mediating position of job stress cannot be assumed uniformly across the two antecedents.

Two gaps follow from this literature. First, the majority of studies test direct relationships between workload, work environment, and performance, so the psychological mechanism that connects working conditions to work outcomes is left implicit. Second, studies that integrate a demand and a resource within a single Job Demands–Resources model, with job stress as the intervening variable, remain limited in the Indonesian hospitality sector, even though this sector is characterised by high service pressure and dynamic operational schedules. Addressing these gaps, this study examines the influence of workload and work environment on employee performance, both directly and through job stress, in a starred resort and convention hotel. The contribution of the study lies in testing a demand pathway and a resource pathway simultaneously within one structural model, which allows the two mechanisms to be compared rather than inferred separately from different studies.

Methods

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive and verificative design carried out through an explanatory survey. The descriptive component was intended to portray the level of workload, work environment, job stress, and employee performance, while the verificative component was intended to test the hypothesised relationships among those variables. The unit of analysis was the individual operational employee of Grand Sunshine Resort & Convention, a starred resort and convention hotel located in Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia. Data were collected once, during the first semester of 2026, so the design is cross-sectional.

The population comprised all 128 operational employees of the hotel. Because the population was finite and fully accessible, saturated sampling was applied and the entire population was taken as respondents, which yielded 128 responses. This census approach removes sampling error and satisfies the sample size requirement for a structural model containing four latent variables and five structural paths.

Four latent constructs were measured reflectively on a five-point Likert scale. Workload was measured through the dimensions of mental workload, physical workload, time pressure, and effort level, adapted from the task load index developed by Hart and Staveland (1988). Work environment was measured through the physical and non-physical dimensions proposed by Sedarmayanti (2017). Job stress was measured through psychological symptoms and behavioural symptoms following Robbins and Judge (2018). Employee performance was measured through task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour, using the individual work performance framework of Koopmans (2018). The questionnaire was supported by direct observation and semi-structured interviews with several employees, which were used to interpret the survey findings rather than as a separate source of quantitative evidence.

Data were analysed in two stages. Descriptive analysis compared the actual score of each variable with its ideal score and positioned the result on a continuum line divided into five categories. Verificative analysis used partial least squares structural equation modelling, executed in SmartPLS 3, which is appropriate for prediction-oriented models with a moderate sample size and does not require the assumption of multivariate normality (Ghozali & Latan,

2021). The measurement model was evaluated through outer loading, average variance extracted, the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the heterotrait–monotrait ratio, cross loading, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability. Indicators were retained when the outer loading reached 0.70, convergent validity was accepted when the average variance extracted exceeded 0.50, and reliability was accepted when both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability exceeded 0.70. The structural model was evaluated through the inner variance inflation factor, the coefficient of determination, the effect size, and model fit indices. Significance was obtained through bootstrapping, and a path was declared significant when the t statistic exceeded 1.96 and the probability value fell below 0.05 (Sugiyono, 2021).

Seven hypotheses were formulated. Workload has a negative influence on employee performance (H1); work environment has a positive influence on employee performance (H2); workload has a positive influence on job stress (H3); work environment has a negative influence on job stress (H4); job stress has a negative influence on employee performance (H5); job stress mediates the influence of workload on employee performance (H6); and job stress mediates the influence of work environment on employee performance (H7). The relationships among the constructs are presented in Figure 1.

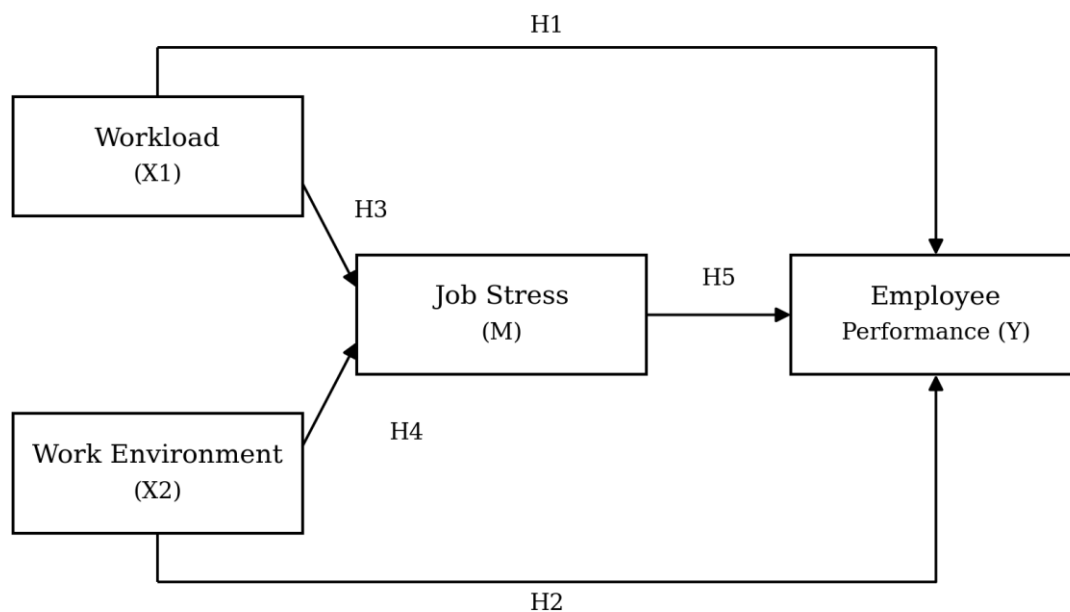


Figure 1. Research Model
Source: Developed by the authors, 2026

Results

The 128 respondents consisted of 77 men and 51 women. The age group of 20 to 25 years dominated the sample, and most respondents held a diploma or a bachelor's degree. In terms of tenure, 54 respondents had worked for one to three years, 43 respondents for less than one year, and 31 respondents for four to six years. The profile therefore reflects a relatively young operational workforce that has nonetheless accumulated sufficient experience to assess its own working conditions.

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 presents the descriptive results for the four variables. All of them fall in the high category, but the pattern within that category is informative. Workload reached 80.49 per cent of the ideal score, driven by the time pressure dimension at 84.25 per cent and the

mental workload dimension at 83.36 per cent, which indicates that the pressure experienced by employees is concentrated in deadlines and concentration demands rather than in physical exertion. Work environment reached 81.46 per cent, the highest achievement among the four variables, with the physical dimension at 83.59 per cent. Job stress reached 72.29 per cent, with psychological symptoms at 76.58 per cent clearly exceeding behavioural symptoms at 63.71 per cent. Employee performance reached 74.11 per cent, in which task performance at 79.09 per cent stood above adaptive performance at 69.17 per cent. The coexistence of high workload, high job stress, and high performance suggests that employees are sustaining output under pressure, a condition that carries a cost the structural analysis makes visible.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of the Research Variables

Variable	Actual Score	Ideal Score	Achievement (%)	Category
Workload (X1)	7,212	8,960	80.49	High
Work Environment (X2)	3,128	3,840	81.46	High
Job Stress (M)	5,552	7,680	72.29	High
Employee Performance (Y)	6,640	8,960	74.11	High

Source: Processed research data, 2026

Evaluation of the Measurement Model

The measurement model was evaluated before the structural relationships were tested. As reported in Table 2, all retained indicators produced outer loadings above 0.80, the average variance extracted of every construct exceeded 0.70, and both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability exceeded 0.90. Discriminant validity was confirmed through the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the heterotrait–monotrait ratio, and cross loading, where each indicator loaded most strongly on the construct it was intended to measure. The measurement model therefore satisfies the criteria for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability.

Table 2. Evaluation of the Measurement Model

Variable	Outer Loading	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Remarks
Workload (X1)	0.822–0.912	0.754	0.975	0.977	Valid and reliable
Work Environment (X2)	0.825–0.913	0.776	0.942	0.954	Valid and reliable
Job Stress (M)	0.807–0.914	0.744	0.969	0.972	Valid and reliable
Employee Performance (Y)	0.825–0.893	0.737	0.972	0.975	Valid and reliable

Source: Processed with SmartPLS 3, 2026

Evaluation of the Structural Model

The structural model was free of multicollinearity: the inner variance inflation factor ranged from 1.019 to 1.702, well below the threshold of 5.000. The coefficient of determination was 0.405 for job stress and 0.488 for employee performance, both in the moderate category, which means that workload and work environment jointly explain 40.5 per cent of the variance in job stress, while workload, work environment, and job stress jointly explain 48.8 per cent of the variance in employee performance. The effect size confirmed the relative weight of each path: workload exerted a large effect on job stress at 0.670, work environment exerted a large effect on employee performance at 0.351, workload exerted a medium effect on employee performance at 0.150, job stress exerted a small effect on employee performance at 0.110, and work environment exerted no effect on job stress at 0.000. Model fit indices supported the model, with a standardised root mean square residual of 0.053, a normed fit index of 0.819, and a root mean square theta of 0.107.

Table 3 reports the direct effects. Four of the five paths were significant. Workload reduced employee performance, work environment improved employee performance, workload raised job stress, and job stress reduced employee performance. Only the path from work environment to job stress failed to reach significance. Table 4 reports the specific indirect effects and shows that job stress transmitted a significant portion of the influence of workload on employee performance, but did not transmit the influence of the work environment. The complete estimated structural model, including outer loadings and path coefficients, is displayed in Figure 2.

Table 3. Direct Effect Test Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	SD	t	p	Decision
H1	Workload → Employee Performance	-0.362	0.078	4.630	0.000	Supported
H2	Work Environment → Employee Performance	0.428	0.063	6.776	0.000	Supported
H3	Workload → Job Stress	0.637	0.059	10.855	0.000	Supported
H4	Work Environment → Job Stress	-0.008	0.073	0.110	0.912	Not supported
H5	Job Stress → Employee Performance	-0.308	0.084	3.652	0.000	Supported

Source: Processed with SmartPLS 3, 2026. β = path coefficient (original sample); SD = standard deviation.

Table 4. Specific Indirect Effect Test Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	SD	t	p	Decision
H6	Workload → Job Stress → Employee Performance	-0.196	0.060	3.286	0.001	Supported
H7	Work Environment → Job Stress → Employee Performance	0.002	0.023	0.110	0.913	Not supported

Source: Processed with SmartPLS 3, 2026. β = path coefficient (original sample); SD = standard deviation.

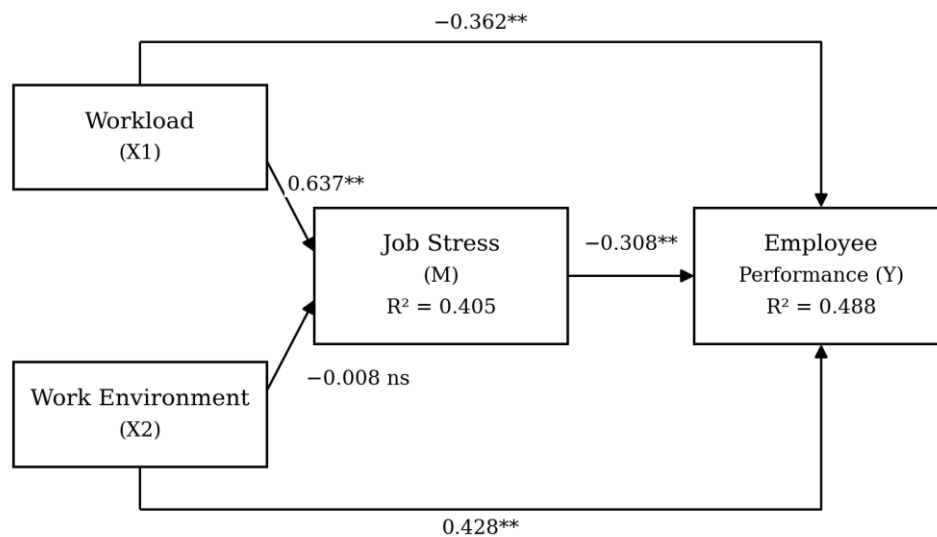


Figure 2. Estimated Structural Model

Source: Processed with SmartPLS 3, 2026. ** significant at $p < 0.01$; ns = not significant

Discussion

The finding that workload reduces employee performance is consistent with the health impairment process of the Job Demands–Resources theory, in which excessive demands deplete the physical and psychological energy required to complete tasks accurately (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The descriptive result reinforces this interpretation: time pressure was the strongest dimension of workload, and adaptive performance was the weakest dimension of employee performance. When employees operate under persistent deadline pressure, the capacity that suffers first is the capacity to adjust to changing situations rather than the capacity to complete routine assignments. The result corroborates Janib, Rasdi, and Abu Samah (2021) and Chowhan and Pike (2023), and is reinforced by Sumiyati, Widjajanta, Masharyono, and Izzati (2021) and Setiani (2023) in Indonesian samples. It extends that evidence to a resort and convention setting where occupancy fluctuates sharply between ordinary periods and holiday peaks.

Work environment improved employee performance with the largest direct coefficient in the model, which places it as the most influential single antecedent of performance here. This supports the motivational process of the Job Demands–Resources theory and aligns with Nabawi (2019), Ambarita, Hanafi, and Yuliani (2022), Muslih and Damanik (2022), and Nurhaliza, Putra, and Ramadhan (2024). The descriptive data locate the source of that influence more precisely: the non-physical dimension, particularly colleague support when work difficulties arise, carried the highest outer loading. Performance in this hotel therefore appears to be supported less by facilities than by the quality of working relationships, which is consistent with the interdependent nature of hotel operations, where a single guest experience is produced by several departments acting in sequence.

Workload raised job stress with the strongest path coefficient in the entire model and a large effect size, confirming that workload behaves as a genuine job demand rather than a neutral task characteristic. The result is consistent with Kokoroko and Sanda (2019), Rizky and Afrianty (2018), Setyowati and Ulfa (2020), and Cahyaningtyas and Santosa (2021). Its magnitude matters practically: among all the relationships tested, this is the one management can influence most directly through task distribution and scheduling, and it is also the one that produces the largest movement in the intervening variable.

Work environment did not influence job stress significantly, and the coefficient was close to zero. This result is the most instructive departure from the expected pattern. It does not indicate that the work environment is irrelevant, since its direct influence on performance was both positive and strong, but rather that a favourable environment does not neutralise the strain generated by workload. In Job Demands–Resources terms, the resource operated through the motivational process without buffering the health impairment process. A plausible explanation is that the pressure reported by employees originates in time and workload constraints, which a supportive environment can accompany but cannot remove. The finding is consistent with Okarina and Ardana (2022) and Rachman (2021), who also found the environment–stress pathway to be weak or indirect, and it stands in contrast to studies conducted in settings where environmental deficiencies are themselves the dominant source of pressure.

Job stress reduced employee performance, in line with Pandey (2020), AbuAlRub and Al-Zaru (2021), Tziner, Buzea, and Rabenu (2022), and Wisudawati and Pratama (2021), and with Martini (2018), whose hotel sample in Bali produced the same direction of influence. The descriptive result adds an important qualification. Job stress was dominated by psychological symptoms, at 76.58 per cent, rather than by behavioural symptoms, at 63.71 per cent. Strain in this workforce is thus experienced internally, as tension and pressure, before it becomes visible in overt behaviour such as absence or withdrawal. This helps to explain why performance can remain in the high category while stress is also high: the cost is being absorbed by employees rather than being expressed in observable indicators, which makes it easy for management to overlook until performance eventually declines.

The mediation results complete the picture. Job stress partially mediated the influence of workload on employee performance, because both the indirect path and the direct path were significant. The total influence of workload on employee performance reached -0.558 , of which -0.362 was direct and -0.196 was transmitted through job stress, so approximately 35 per cent of the total influence travelled through the psychological mechanism. This result supports Sari, Putra, and Dewi (2022), Hermanto, Wijaya, and Putri (2024), Rahman, Islam, and Hossain (2023), and Johan and Satrya (2023). By contrast, job stress did not mediate the influence of work environment on employee performance, which follows logically from the non-significant path between work environment and job stress: without a significant first segment, the indirect path cannot be significant. Taken together, the two mediation results show that the demand pathway and the resource pathway in this model operate through different mechanisms. Workload affects performance partly by generating strain, whereas the work environment affects performance directly, without passing through strain.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of workload and work environment on employee performance with job stress as a mediating variable at a starred resort and convention hotel in Bandung Regency. Descriptively, workload, work environment, job stress, and employee performance were all in the high category. Structurally, workload reduced employee performance and raised job stress, work environment improved employee performance but did not influence job stress, and job stress reduced employee performance. Job stress partially mediated the relationship between workload and employee performance, transmitting approximately 35 per cent of the total influence, but it did not mediate the relationship between work environment and employee performance. The model explained 40.5 per cent of the variance in job stress and 48.8 per cent of the variance in employee performance.

Theoretically, the study shows that a job demand and a job resource may reach the same outcome through different mechanisms within a single Job Demands–Resources model. The demand pathway ran partly through strain, whereas the resource pathway ran directly to performance. Treating job resources as a general buffer against strain therefore overstates their function in this setting, and the two processes are better modelled separately than merged into a single expected pattern.

Practically, the results indicate that management attention should be directed at two distinct levers. Because workload is the strongest driver of job stress, the distribution of tasks during peak operational periods requires deliberate management through reserve staffing, simplified workflows in the units that most frequently absorb additional work, and realistic targets accompanied by adequate time and resources. Because the non-physical work environment carries the strongest influence on performance, the mechanisms that sustain working relationships deserve equal attention, particularly a clear procedure for resolving work conflicts, mediation capability among unit leaders, and habitual open communication between colleagues. Attending to only one of these levers would address either the strain or the motivation process, but not both.

The study is limited by its cross-sectional design and its single-organisation scope, which restricts causal inference and generalisation. The model also leaves 51.2 per cent of the variance in employee performance unexplained. Future research could extend the model with additional job resources such as supervisor support, autonomy, or compensation, employ a longitudinal design to observe how strain accumulates across occupancy cycles, and compare several hotel properties so that the demand and resource pathways can be tested across different operational characteristics.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

The lead author participated in the study's conceptualisation and design, analysis, interpretation of data, and initial drafting of the paper. Each author contributed to the critical revision of the content for intellectual rigor and provided final approval for the published version. All authors are responsible for every aspect of the work.

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Data availability statement

The data supporting this study's findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. However, due to privacy and ethical considerations, the data are not publicly accessible.

Declaration of Interests Statement

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