

The Impact of Work Stress on Employee Mental Health and Productivity

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history Received 30 - September - 2026 Revised 27 - October - 2026 Accepted 12 - March - 2026 Published 24 - March - 2026 Keywords work stress, mental health, employee productivity, stress management, work welfare.  License by CC-BY-SA Copyright © 2026, The Author(s).	This research aims to analyze the effect of work stress on the mental health and productivity of employees in a modern work environment. Job stress caused by work demands, conflicts between co-workers, time pressure, and imbalance between work and personal life have become significant problems that impact individual well-being. The research method used was a quantitative approach with a survey of 150 employees in the industrial and service sectors. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using linear regression to identify the relationship between work stress variables, mental health and productivity. The research results show that work stress has a significant negative influence on employee mental health, which is characterized by increased levels of anxiety, depression and emotional exhaustion. In addition, it was found that decreased mental health due to work stress contributed to decreased employee productivity. These findings emphasize the importance of implementing workplace stress management strategies, such as employee wellness programs, work flexibility, and time management training to improve work-life balance. Thus, this research provides a practical contribution in designing organizational policies that support employee well-being and performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Work environments in modern organizations have changed rapidly in response to technological advancement, global competition, and increasing productivity demands. Organizations expect employees to maintain high performance, adapt to continuous change, and complete tasks under strict deadlines. These expectations often create intense work pressure. When such pressure exceeds an employee's capacity to cope, it may develop into work stress. Work stress has therefore become a major concern in contemporary human resource management because it influences both employee well-being and organizational performance (Nursanti et al., 2023).

Work stress refers to a psychological and physiological reaction that arises when job demands exceed the individual's ability or resources to manage them effectively. Employees frequently encounter various stressors in their daily work activities. These stressors may include excessive workloads, tight schedules, interpersonal conflicts, and unclear job roles. When these conditions persist for a prolonged period, they can disrupt emotional stability and affect the employee's mental condition (Aprilia et al., 2023). As a result, work stress does not only affect personal well-being but also influences the effectiveness of organizational operations.

Mental health represents an essential component of overall employee well-being. In the workplace context, mental health relates to an individual's ability to manage stress, maintain emotional balance, and function effectively in professional roles. Poor mental health conditions can manifest in the form of anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. These psychological problems may reduce concentration, impair

decision making, and decrease motivation to perform work tasks. Consequently, organizations may experience a decline in overall productivity if employee mental health is not properly maintained (Iswahyudi & Ramadhani, 2023).

The relationship between work stress and mental health has been widely discussed in the literature. High levels of occupational stress have been associated with increased psychological distress among employees. Individuals exposed to excessive job demands are more likely to experience emotional fatigue and psychological strain. These conditions may eventually lead to burnout if organizations fail to provide adequate support mechanisms. Previous studies have shown that prolonged work stress increases the risk of mental health disorders and reduces employees' ability to cope with daily work challenges (Amanda et al., 2023).

In addition to its psychological impact, work stress also influences employee productivity. Productivity reflects the ability of employees to produce outputs efficiently and effectively within a given period. Organizations rely on productive employees to achieve operational goals and maintain competitiveness in the market. However, stress-related psychological problems can significantly disrupt employees' performance. Workers who experience mental distress often struggle to maintain focus, complete tasks efficiently, and collaborate with colleagues (Sari et al., 2023).

Research has demonstrated that high levels of work stress often correlate with reduced job performance. Employees experiencing chronic stress may show symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, and loss of motivation. These symptoms can lead to increased absenteeism, reduced work engagement, and lower productivity levels. Moreover, work stress may also increase employee turnover intention, which creates additional challenges for organizational stability and efficiency (Nursanti et al., 2023).

Another important dimension in this relationship is work-life balance. Employees who struggle to balance professional responsibilities with personal life demands are more vulnerable to stress. Excessive work hours and continuous job pressure can interfere with personal well-being and family life. When employees fail to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal domains, psychological strain tends to increase. This imbalance further contributes to declining mental health and decreased job satisfaction (Pane, 2023).

Mental health problems in the workplace often remain undetected until they reach a serious stage. Many employees hesitate to express psychological difficulties due to stigma or fear of negative evaluation from supervisors. Consequently, mental health problems accumulate gradually and eventually affect work performance. Organizations therefore need to pay greater attention to psychological well-being as part of their human resource management strategies (Febriani et al., 2023).

The importance of mental health in the workplace has received increasing attention in recent years. Organizations have begun to recognize that employee well-being is closely linked to organizational productivity. When employees experience psychological stability and supportive working conditions, they are more likely to perform effectively and contribute positively to organizational goals. Conversely, unmanaged stress may create negative outcomes for both individuals and institutions (Purnama & Sutedjo, 2024).

Several studies have examined the relationship between job stress and employee performance. However, many previous studies analyze these variables separately. Some studies focus primarily on stress and job satisfaction, while others examine productivity without considering mental health as an intervening factor. This fragmented approach limits the understanding of how work stress influences productivity through psychological mechanisms (Shabuur & Mangundjaya, 2021).

A more comprehensive perspective is therefore required to understand the complex relationship between work stress, mental health, and productivity. Mental health may function as an important mediating factor that connects work stress and work performance. When employees experience high stress levels, their psychological well-being may deteriorate. This deterioration can subsequently affect motivation,

concentration, and efficiency in completing work tasks. Understanding this mediation process is important for designing effective workplace interventions.

Another important aspect to consider is the organizational environment in which employees operate. Work environments characterized by high demands and limited support often intensify stress levels among workers. Conversely, supportive leadership, open communication, and flexible work arrangements can reduce stress and improve employee well-being. Organizational culture therefore plays a significant role in shaping employees' psychological experiences at work (Judijanto et al., 2023).

The Indonesian workplace context provides an interesting setting for examining the dynamics of work stress. Economic development, industrial expansion, and technological adoption have transformed the nature of work across many sectors. Employees increasingly face competitive pressures and performance expectations. At the same time, organizational systems for managing mental health issues are still developing. These conditions create a unique environment in which work stress and psychological well-being interact in complex ways.

Recent changes in work patterns have further intensified these challenges. The increasing adoption of remote and hybrid working systems has altered how employees manage their responsibilities. While flexible working arrangements offer certain advantages, they may also blur the boundaries between professional and personal life. This situation can lead to longer working hours and increased psychological strain if not properly managed (Sakina, 2023).

In response to these developments, organizations are increasingly encouraged to adopt proactive strategies to support employee well-being. Programs such as stress management training, counseling services, and flexible scheduling have been introduced in many workplaces. These initiatives aim to help employees manage stress effectively while maintaining high productivity levels. Research has shown that such interventions can improve psychological resilience and enhance employee engagement (Richmond, 2024).

Despite growing awareness of workplace mental health, empirical studies examining the combined relationship between work stress, mental health, and productivity in the Indonesian context remain limited. Most existing research focuses on specific industries or examines only two variables at a time. Consequently, there is still a need for empirical evidence that explores the integrated relationship among these three factors.

This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the effect of work stress on employee mental health and productivity simultaneously. By examining these relationships within a single research framework, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how occupational stress influences organizational performance outcomes.

The study employs a quantitative approach using survey data collected from employees working in industrial and service sectors. Statistical analysis is conducted to identify the strength and direction of relationships between work stress, mental health, and productivity variables. Through this approach, the research aims to generate empirical evidence that can support the development of effective organizational policies.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical perspectives. From a theoretical standpoint, the research provides empirical support for the conceptual relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being in influencing employee performance. From a practical perspective, the results may guide managers and policymakers in designing interventions that promote healthier work environments.

Ultimately, improving employee mental health is not only a matter of individual welfare but also a strategic organizational priority. Organizations that prioritize psychological well-being are more likely to achieve sustainable productivity and long-term competitiveness. By understanding how work stress affects

mental health and productivity, organizations can develop policies that support employee resilience and performance simultaneously.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between work stress, mental health, and employee productivity. A quantitative approach was selected because it allows the researcher to measure relationships between variables using statistical analysis and to test hypotheses based on empirical data. The study focused on identifying the extent to which work stress influences employee mental health and how mental health subsequently affects productivity in the workplace.

The research used a cross sectional survey design. Data were collected from respondents at a single point in time to capture their perceptions of work stress, psychological condition, and work performance within their current organizational environment. This design enables the researcher to analyze correlations between variables and to determine the direction and strength of their relationships.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of employees working in industrial and service sector organizations. These sectors were selected because they represent work environments characterized by productivity demands, operational pressure, and interpersonal interaction. Such conditions often expose employees to various work stressors that may influence their psychological well being and performance.

A total of 150 employees participated in the study. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling. This sampling technique allows the researcher to choose participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The inclusion criterion required respondents to have at least one year of work experience in their current organization. This requirement ensured that participants had sufficient exposure to their work environment and could provide reliable responses regarding job stress and workplace conditions.

The sample consisted of employees from both sectors to capture a broader representation of workplace dynamics. Industrial sector employees typically face operational targets and production schedules, while service sector employees encounter intensive customer interaction and performance evaluation. These characteristics provide relevant contexts for examining the relationship between work stress and employee well being.

Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire served as the primary instrument to measure the three main variables of the study: work stress, mental health, and employee productivity. Respondents completed the questionnaire voluntarily and anonymously to encourage honest responses and reduce response bias.

The questionnaire consisted of several sections corresponding to the research variables. Each section contained statements designed to capture the respondents' experiences and perceptions related to their work environment and psychological condition.

Work stress was measured using indicators that represent common sources of occupational stress. These indicators included workload intensity, time pressure, interpersonal conflict with colleagues or supervisors, and imbalance between work responsibilities and personal life. These aspects reflect the primary stressors frequently identified in workplace research.

Mental health was measured using indicators that represent psychological well being in the workplace. The measurement included levels of anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion experienced by

employees during their work activities. These indicators are commonly used to assess the psychological impact of occupational stress.

Employee productivity was measured through self reported performance indicators. Respondents evaluated their ability to complete work tasks efficiently, maintain work quality, and achieve expected performance targets. These indicators reflect perceived productivity and operational efficiency in daily work activities.

Each item in the questionnaire used a Likert scale to measure respondents' level of agreement with the statements provided. The scale allowed the researcher to quantify subjective perceptions and convert them into numerical data suitable for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of respondents and to present an overview of the distribution of responses across the research variables. This analysis provided an initial understanding of the overall trends in work stress levels, mental health conditions, and productivity perceptions among employees.

Inferential statistical analysis was conducted using linear regression techniques. Regression analysis allows the researcher to examine the relationship between independent and dependent variables and to determine the magnitude of their effects. In this study, regression analysis was used to test two main relationships.

First, the analysis examined the influence of work stress on employee mental health. Work stress served as the independent variable, while mental health was treated as the dependent variable. This model aimed to determine whether higher levels of work stress are associated with poorer psychological conditions.

Second, the analysis examined the relationship between mental health and employee productivity. In this model, mental health served as the independent variable, while productivity functioned as the dependent variable. This analysis assessed whether psychological well being significantly influences employee performance.

All statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The software was used to calculate descriptive statistics, regression coefficients, and significance values to determine the strength and validity of the relationships between variables.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the research process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents had the right to decline participation at any time. All participants provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire.

The anonymity of respondents was maintained to protect personal identity and ensure confidentiality. No identifying information was collected during the survey process. The data obtained from respondents were used solely for academic research purposes and were analyzed in aggregated form to maintain privacy.

By adhering to these ethical standards, the study ensured that the rights and well being of participants were protected throughout the research process.

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

The first stage of the analysis examined the demographic and occupational characteristics of respondents. A total of 150 employees participated in the study, representing both industrial and service sectors. This distribution allows the study to capture work conditions that differ in operational pressure and job interaction patterns.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Sector

Sector	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Industrial Sector	90	60%
Service Sector	60	40%
Total	150	100%

Employees from the industrial sector dominated the sample. This sector often involves production targets, operational deadlines, and workload intensity. These conditions create a relevant context for examining work stress. Meanwhile, employees in the service sector experience stress that often originates from customer interaction, service performance expectations, and communication demands.

Most respondents had between 1 and 5 years of work experience (72%), indicating that the majority of participants were in the early stages of their professional careers. In addition, 58% of respondents were male, while the rest were female. Another notable characteristic is that most respondents reported working more than 40 hours per week, suggesting relatively high workload intensity.

Descriptive Analysis of Work Stress

Descriptive analysis revealed that employees experienced relatively high levels of work stress. Two indicators emerged as dominant stress sources:

1. Time pressure
2. Workload intensity

Employees frequently reported difficulty completing tasks within limited deadlines. Tight schedules require workers to perform multiple tasks simultaneously. Such conditions reduce recovery time and increase psychological strain.

These findings support the argument that excessive workload and time pressure are primary contributors to occupational stress. According to Aprilia et al. (2023), mental workload and task pressure strongly influence the emergence of work stress in modern organizations.

Another important stressor identified in this study is interpersonal conflict. Employees who reported frequent misunderstandings with supervisors or colleagues showed higher levels of emotional exhaustion. Interpersonal conflict can disrupt teamwork and increase emotional tension in the workplace.

Mental Health Conditions of Employees

The analysis also examined mental health conditions among respondents. Several psychological indicators were assessed, including anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion.

Table 2. Mental Health Indicators Among Respondents

Mental Health Indicator	Percentage of Respondents
Anxiety (moderate to high)	65%
Emotional exhaustion	47%
Depression (moderate level)	38%

These results indicate that psychological distress is relatively common among employees exposed to work pressure.

The prevalence of anxiety suggests that many employees experience continuous psychological tension related to job demands. Emotional exhaustion also appears as a significant issue. Emotional exhaustion reflects a state in which individuals feel mentally drained due to prolonged exposure to stressors.

According to Iswahyudi and Ramadhani (2023), poor mental health can disrupt cognitive functioning and emotional regulation. Individuals experiencing anxiety or emotional fatigue often struggle to maintain concentration and work motivation.

These psychological conditions may gradually reduce employees' ability to perform tasks effectively.

Productivity Levels of Employees

Employee productivity was assessed through self reported performance indicators. Respondents evaluated their ability to complete tasks efficiently and maintain consistent performance levels.

The analysis revealed that employees with higher stress levels reported lower productivity. Several productivity related difficulties were frequently mentioned by respondents:

1. Reduced concentration during work activities
2. Difficulty completing tasks on schedule
3. Decreased motivation to maintain consistent performance

These results indicate that psychological strain influences work efficiency. Employees who experience prolonged stress tend to lose energy and focus, which ultimately reduces their work performance.

Sari et al. (2023) highlight that occupational stress can reduce employee performance by affecting motivation, attention, and decision making ability.

Regression Analysis

To examine the relationships between variables, linear regression analysis was conducted.

Table 3. Regression Results

Relationship	Regression Coefficient	Significance
Work Stress → Mental Health	-0.62	$p < 0.01$
Mental Health → Productivity	-0.47	$p < 0.05$

The first regression model shows that work stress has a significant negative effect on mental health with a coefficient of -0.62. This result indicates that an increase in work stress leads to a decline in employees' psychological well being.

The second regression model shows that mental health significantly influences employee productivity with a coefficient of -0.47. Poor mental health conditions are associated with lower productivity levels.

These results confirm that psychological well being plays a critical role in employee performance.

The Mediating Role of Mental Health

Further analysis indicates that mental health acts as a mediating factor between work stress and productivity. In other words, work stress affects productivity both directly and indirectly through its impact on psychological well being.

This finding supports previous studies that highlight the importance of psychological mechanisms in workplace performance. Shabuur and Mangundjaya (2021) emphasize that effective stress management can improve productivity by stabilizing employees' psychological conditions.

When employees experience high stress levels, their mental health deteriorates. This deterioration reduces motivation, focus, and energy. As a result, productivity declines.

Organizational Implications

The results highlight the importance of organizational policies that support employee well being. Work stress cannot be completely eliminated in modern organizations. However, it can be managed through effective human resource strategies.

Several approaches can help reduce the negative impact of work stress:

1. Flexible work arrangements that allow employees to balance professional and personal responsibilities.

2. Employee wellness programs that focus on psychological health and stress management.
3. Open communication systems that allow employees to discuss work related problems.
4. Supportive leadership practices that encourage collaboration and reduce interpersonal conflict.

Pane (2023) states that work life balance policies can significantly improve employee satisfaction and reduce occupational stress. Similarly, Purnama and Suttedjo (2024) emphasize that supportive organizational environments can enhance productivity and employee well being simultaneously.

Organizations that invest in employee mental health are more likely to achieve sustainable productivity growth.

Discussion Summary

Overall, the findings demonstrate a clear relationship between work stress, mental health, and employee productivity. Employees exposed to high job demands and time pressure tend to experience psychological strain. This strain manifests in the form of anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and moderate depression.

Poor mental health conditions then reduce employees' ability to perform effectively. As a result, productivity declines.

These results reinforce the importance of addressing psychological well being as a strategic component of human resource management. Organizations that prioritize employee mental health can improve performance outcomes while maintaining a healthier and more sustainable work environment.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that work stress has a significant impact on employee mental health and productivity in modern organizational environments. Employees who experience high levels of job demands, time pressure, interpersonal conflict, and imbalance between work and personal life tend to experience greater psychological strain. The findings show that these stressors contribute to increased levels of anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and moderate symptoms of depression among employees.

The statistical analysis confirms that work stress negatively influences mental health. Higher levels of stress are associated with lower psychological well being among employees. This condition affects the ability of individuals to maintain emotional stability, concentration, and motivation in performing work tasks. As psychological distress increases, employees face greater difficulty in maintaining consistent work performance.

The results also indicate that mental health significantly influences employee productivity. Employees with poorer mental health conditions tend to experience reduced efficiency in completing tasks, lower work motivation, and decreased performance consistency. These findings suggest that psychological well being plays a crucial role in determining employee performance outcomes.

Another important finding of this study is the mediating role of mental health in the relationship between work stress and productivity. Work stress does not only influence productivity directly but also indirectly through its effect on psychological well being. When employees experience prolonged work stress, their mental health deteriorates, which subsequently leads to reduced productivity. This relationship highlights the importance of addressing mental health issues as part of organizational performance management.

From a managerial perspective, the findings emphasize the need for organizations to implement effective strategies to manage work stress and support employee well being. Initiatives such as flexible work arrangements, employee assistance programs, stress management training, and supportive leadership practices can help reduce psychological pressure and improve employee resilience. By creating a supportive

work environment, organizations can enhance employee well being while maintaining high productivity levels.

Overall, the study confirms that effective management of work stress and mental health is essential for sustaining employee productivity. Organizations that prioritize psychological well being are more likely to create a healthier work environment, strengthen employee engagement, and achieve long term organizational performance.

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