

## Effect of Interpersonal Relationships, Work Stress, and Work Environment on Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

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### Abstract

*In the era of globalization and increasingly fierce business competition, organizations face pressure to maximize employee performance as a critical asset in achieving their business objectives. This research examines how interpersonal relationships, work stress also the work environment influence employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating aspect. The study employs a quantitative approach, using employees of Pertamina gas stations in Malang as the population and sample. A saturated sampling technique was used for sample selection, resulting in 33 respondents, with primary data collected for the research. SmartPLS 4 was utilized as the data analysis tool. The outcome reveal that interpersonal relationships have a significant positive impact on employee performance, whereas work stress and the work environment do not show a significant impact. Furthermore, the mediation of job satisfaction in the relationship between interpersonal connections and work stress on employee performance is insignificant. In contrast, the work environment does demonstrate a substantial positive influence. These results emphasize the necessity of fostering strong interpersonal relationships, managing stress effectively, and enhancing the work environment to boost employee performance.*

**Keywords:** Employee Performance; Interpersonal Relationships; Work Stress; Work Environment; Job Satisfaction.

## INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, where business competition is becoming increasingly fierce, organizations face pressure to maximize their employees' performance as a critical asset in achieving business objectives. Optimal employee performance contributes to achieving organizational goals and influences the dynamics of relationships among team members. Employee performance is affected not only by internal factors, such as individual ability and motivation, but also by external factors related to the work environment and social interactions, including interpersonal relationships, work stress, and working conditions, all of which play a significant role in influencing employee performance (Silas et al., 2019). Performance refers to the success achieved by an individual in completing their work within a specified timeframe, compared to previously agreed-upon performance standards and targets (Widyastuti & Rahardja, 2018). According to Pristiyaniti (2016), employee performance results from an individual's accomplishments in fulfilling their tasks and responsibilities. Can & Yasri (2016) state that performance is the successful completion of tasks by a person or group, following their authority and responsibilities within an organization. Aziz and Dewanto (2022) performance measures the achievement level in systematizing a activity, program, or policy to fulfill the organization's objectives, goals, vision, and mission, as articulated in its critical preparation. Additionally, Rizqi and Nabila (2022) view performance as a totality of the work attributed to an individual.

Moreover, healthy interpersonal relationships can enhance individual and overall team performance. Effective communication, teamwork, and social support among colleagues, superiors, and subordinates can boost employee motivation and productivity. Conversely, interpersonal conflicts and disharmony in the workplace can hinder performance and create an unhealthy work environment. Interpersonal relationships refer to interactions between individuals in work situations and within organizations, motivating productive collaboration to achieve economic, psychological, and social satisfaction (Stephen & Judge, 2007). Suranto (2011) interpersonal communication influences employee

behavior and performance by providing motivation and support. According to Desmita (2019) Interpersonal relationships are connections established through social interactions between individuals. Robbin (2002) notes that various factors influence employee job satisfaction, including challenging work, recognition, working conditions, and interpersonal relationships. According to the research by Dendhana et al. (2023) and Shinta et al. (2023) interpersonal communication does not significantly impact employee performance. In contrast, studies by Wismaningsih (2021) and Rahman et al. (2021) suggest that interpersonal relationships have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Furthermore, interpersonal relationships on work stress is also an essential issue in the context of employee performance. Work stress typically arises from high job demands and a lack of resources to cope with those pressures. Excessive workloads, time constraints, task conflicts, and job uncertainty can lead to stress that negatively effects employees' psychological and physical well-being and their performance at work and decreases job satisfaction. Robbins & Molan (2006) explain that work stress emerges from the relationship between employees and their roles, characterized by shifts that compel individuals to move away from their typical responsibilities. Gibson et al. (1987) define stress as an adaptive reaction influenced by personal perceptions and psychological processes arising from activities, situations, or external events that create overwhelming psychological or physical demands. Work stress refers to the pressure employees feel about their jobs. Symptoms of work stress can include emotional instability, restlessness, a desire for solitude, sleep disturbances, increased smoking, difficulty relaxing, anxiety, tension, nervousness, elevated blood pressure, and digestive problems (Mangkunegara, 2009). Hasibuan (2016) states that stress can affect employee performance and job satisfaction due to the work environment experienced by employees. Employees at gas stations often face high workloads, especially during busy hours or peak periods, which can lead to physical and mental exhaustion due to the demands of standing continuously and serving customers. Customer pressures like dealing with angry or dissatisfied clients can add stress and emotional strain. Furthermore, a hectic and unpredictable work schedule, along with a lack of opportunity to celebrate holidays together, such as Eid al-Fitr, compounded by changing shifts, can disrupt the work-life balance and increase stress levels experienced by employees.

The work environment refers to conditions related to workplace characteristics affecting employee behavior and attitudes, relating to psychological changes resulting from experiences in their work or specific situations that organizations must continuously monitor, including job boredom, monotonous tasks, and fatigue (Ellen & Schultz, 2006). Nitisemito (2000) explains that the work environment encompasses everything surrounding the workforce, influencing employee performance while they carry out their tasks. According to Sunyoto (2013), the work environment includes lighting, music, cleanliness, room layout, facilities, and other elements that can impact employees' ability to complete their responsibilities. Hidayati et al. (2021) Claim that a supportive work environment could improve employee performance. Sedarmayanti (2017) Agrees, noting that the work environment can potentially influence employee performance. Suitable conditions allow individuals to perform their activities effectively and achieve optimal results. Bambang (2005) Further emphasizes that the work environment have a essential aspects in affecting employee performance, suggesting that individuals in a supportive setting are more likely to achieve superior outcomes. Conversely, employees in inadequate and unsupportive work environments may become demotivated and fatigued, leading to lower performance. An uncomfortable work environment, such as physical conditions influenced by extreme weather, inadequate facilities, or poor cleanliness, can affect employee comfort and health, negatively impacting their performance. Additionally, a potentially hazardous work environment, such as fire risks or chemical exposure, requires strict adherence to safety procedures to ensure employees feel safe and confident that safety protocols are correctly implemented. Furthermore, a lack of adequate equipment or facilities can make work more challenging and increase the risk of workplace accidents, contributing to decreased employee performance.

Londok et al. (2019), describe job satisfaction as the emotional condition of someone who enjoys and values their work. Dewi (2016) Job satisfaction is an emotional case that can be positive or negative, indicating how employees perceive their roles. It manifests in an individual's feelings toward their work, which is evident in their behaviors and attitudes in daily life. It is often shown through positive responses at work. Handoko (2020) Job satisfaction is employees' pleasant or unpleasant feelings regarding their jobs, as reflected in their work behavior and experiences. Robbins (2003) posits

that job satisfaction is the attitude that underlies an individual's work, demonstrating the discrepancy between the appreciation received and what they believe they deserve.

In the past five years, employees with more than three years of service have demonstrated excellent performance and adaptability to new regulations implemented by Pertamina each year, effectively managing their interpersonal relationships, work stress, and work environment. In contrast, employees with less than three years of service, such as those with one to two years, can quickly adapt to new regulations. However, employees still in training often need help and turnover due to needing to fully understand the old regulations before facing new ones. This is attributed to their perception that this job is full of rules and pressures. Conversely, more experienced employees tend to understand that regulations are always subject to change, allowing them to adapt quickly to new situations.

Consequently, there is a need to investigate further the factors influencing employee turnover patterns at gas stations and the managerial implications for operational efficiency and human resource management. It is, therefore, crucial for Pertamina Malang gas station management to address these issues seriously. This study aims to offer in-depth insights into how interpersonal relationships, work stress, and working conditions affect employee performance and how job satisfaction mediates in these relationships. By filling this research gap, the findings are expected to offer a more profound understanding for managers and organizational leaders in managing these factors to enhance employee performance and overall organizational productivity.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Sample Criteria

This type of research is quantitative, the process of finding knowledge by using data in numbers to find information about what we want to know (Sugiyono, 2011). This research is *explanatory* because of the relationship and influence through hypothesis testing. So, the explanatory approach explains the relationship between a phenomenon from one variable to another (Ekowati et al., 2024). It was conducted at Pertamina gas station 54.651.63 in Malang, situated at Jl. Panji Suroso 10 B, Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The study's population and sample included 33 employees from different hierarchical levels, encompassing both managerial and non-managerial staff. Non-probability sampling was used, specifically through a saturated sampling method.

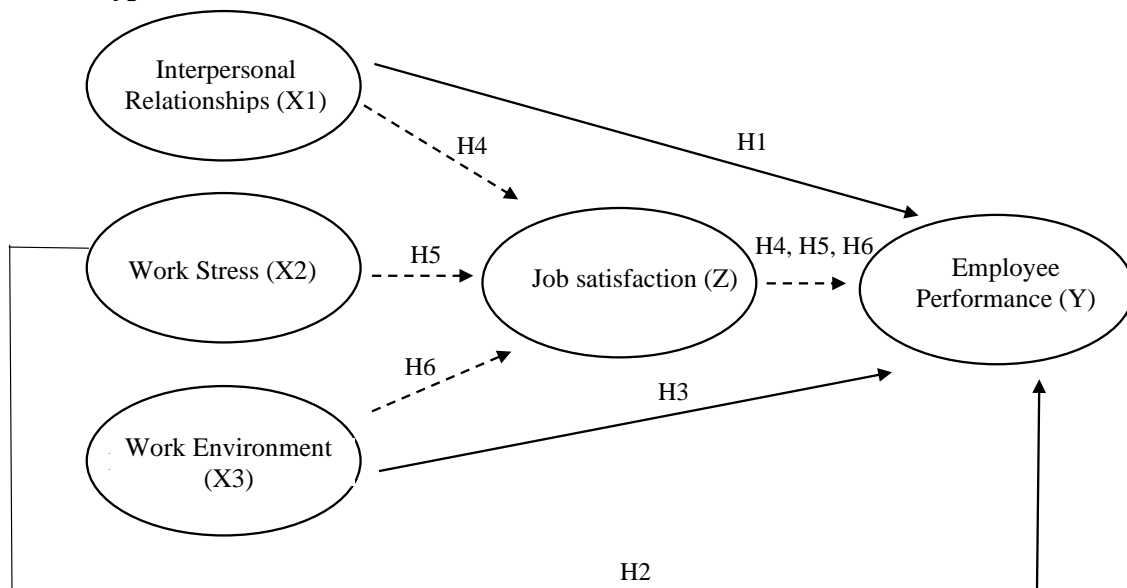
### Measurement and Research Design

The primary data in this study are the answers from respondents to questions in an questionnaire. The secondary data in this study includes documents, print media, and others. Then, the measurement scale in this study uses the Likert assessment scale through criteria, namely Strongly Agree (SS) with a value of 5, Agree (S) with a value of 4, Hesitate (R) with a value of 3, Disagree (TS) with a value of 2, and Strongly Disagree (STS) with a value of 1. The Variable Operational Definition (DOV) is Interpersonal Relationships (X1), indicators: *Openness, Empathy, Supportiveness, Positiveness, and Equality* (Suranto, 2011 & Vemmylia, 2009)). Work Stress (X2) indicators: employment conditions, role, career development (Robbins & Timothy, 2021; & Sugiarto & Nanda, 2020). Work Environment (X3), indicators: physical work environment, non-physical work environment (Sedarmayanti, 2011; Allifayah et al., 2024). Employee Performance (Y), indicators: quantity, quality, responsibility, cooperation, initiative (Mitasari et al., 2023 & Aziz & Dewanto, 2022). Job Satisfaction (z), indicators: The job itself, Salary Coworkers, Superiors, promotions (Luthans, 2011; Robbins & Timothy, 2021).

### Data Analysis Techniques

This study's first data analysis technique uses the *IBM SPSS Statistics 25* application to test data quality, including the Validity Test and Reliability Test. Then, the second data analysis technique in this study uses the *SmartPLS v.4.1.0.6* application to test research hypotheses directly, including Measurement Model Evaluation (*Outer Model*) and Structural Model Evaluation (*Inner Model*). The Sobel test is used to test research hypotheses through mediation (Innayah et al., 2022).

### Research Hypothesis Model



Source: Research Data, 2024.

### Research Hypotheses

- H1: Interpersonal relationships (X1) significantly impact employee performance (Y).  
H2: Work stress (X2) significantly affects employee performance (Y).  
H3: The work environment (X3) significantly influences employee performance (Y).  
H4: Job satisfaction (Z) serves as a mediator for the relationship between interpersonal relationships (X1) and employee performance (Y).  
H5: Job satisfaction (Z) mediates the impact of work stress (X2) on employee performance (Y).  
H6: Job satisfaction (Z) mediates the influence of the work environment (X3) on employee performance (Y).

In this research, the variables are defined as follows: Interpersonal relationships (X1) encompass aspects such as openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality, as outlined by Suranto (2011) and Vemmylia (2009). Work stress (X2) includes job conditions, role expectations, and career development, based on the work of Robbins & Molan (2006) and Mulyadi (2003). The work environment (X3) is characterized by both physical and non-physical elements, according to Sedarmayanti (2011) and Nitisemito (1992). Employee performance (Y) is assessed through the quality of work, the quantity of work, responsibility, teamwork, and initiative, as noted by Mangkunegara (2013) and Aziz & Dewanto (2022). Finally, job satisfaction (Z) encompasses the job itself, salary, coworkers, supervisors, and promotions, referring to Luthans (2011) and Robbins & Judge (2013).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### Outer Model

##### Convergent Validity

The outcome of the convergent validity testing suggest, the Interpersonal Relationship variable (X1) is measured using 10 indicators, namely HI.1 to HI.10, which have loading factor values of 0.868, 0.784, 0.912, 0.600, 0.777, 0.826, 0.785, 0.714, 0.545, and 0.522; all these values show that the indicators are valid. Next, the Work Stress variable (X2) is measured through 5 indicators, SK.2 to SK.6, with loading factor values of 0.681, 0.773, 0.782, 0.863, and 0.821, all of which meet the validity criteria. The Work Environment variable (X3) consists of 6 indicators, LK.1 to LK.6, with loading factor values of 0.844, 0.852, 0.621, 0.808, 0.853, and 0.815, all meeting the validity criteria. For the Employee Performance variable (Y), there are 9 indicators (KK.1 to KK.10, excluding KK.6) with loading factor values of 0.872, 0.816, 0.845, 0.759, 0.842, 0.804, 0.787, 0.682, and 0.762; all these values are valid as well. Lastly, the Job Satisfaction variable (Z) consists of 10 indicators (PK.1 to PK.10) with loading factor values of 0.800, 0.866, 0.886, 0.824, 0.705, 0.840, 0.883, 0.796, 0.853, and 0.869.

In this test, the evaluation is based on the loading factor values. A loading factor is considered valid if it exceeds 0.7; however, preliminary research establishing measurement scales requires a loading factor between 0.5 and 0.6. (Ghozali, 2011). Therefore, this study adopts a criterion of loading factor values above 0.5. Based on the testing results presented above, which show the re-estimated loading factor results, all items from interpersonal relationships, work environment, work stress, employee performance, and job satisfaction demonstrate loading factor values above 0.5. As a result, all items satisfy the standard for convergent validity, allowing for the closure that all constructs are valid.

### Discriminant Validity

Based on the outcomes of the discriminant validity testing, the AVE values for the Interpersonal Relationships variable (X1) are 0.554, Work Stress (X2) is 0.618, Work Environment (X3) is 0.644, Employee Performance (Y) is 0.638, and Job Satisfaction (Z) is 0.695. All AVE values, which are above 0.5, indicate that each variable has met the criteria for discriminant validity. Thus, that could be deduced, all variables in this research are valid in terms of convergent also discriminant validity.

Discriminant validity indicates how effectively each indicator distinguishes the square root of each construct's average variance extracted (AVE) values from those of other constructs. An AVE value is considered valid if it is  $AVE < 0.5$ . Based on the testing results above, all items exhibit AVE values exceeding 0.5, indicating, all items are valid.

### Reliability

**Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha and Reliability Values**

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Interpersonal Relationships (X1)	0.907	0.938	0.923
Work Stress (X2)	0.845	0.853	0.890
Work Environment (X3)	0.888	0.904	0.915
Employee Performance (Y)	0.928	0.935	0.940
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.951	0.955	0.958

Source: Research Data, 2024.

Reliability testing is conducted to determine the consistency, precision, and accuracy of measurement tools in construction. In this study, reliability is assessed using two methods: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Cronbach's Alpha is considered reliable if its value is  $\geq 0.7$ , while Composite Reliability is deemed reliable if it is  $\geq 0.7$  (Chin, 1998). Table 1 shows that all items exhibit Cronbach's Alpha and 38 Composite Reliability values greater than 0.7, indicating reliability.

### Inner Model

#### R-Square

**Table 2. R-Square Values**

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employee Performance (Y)	0.761	0.727
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.831	0.814

Source: Research Data, 2024.

Ghozali (2011) An R-squared value of 0.67 indicates a robust model, 0.33 represents a moderate model, and 0.19 signifies a weak model. Table 2 presents an R-squared value for employee performance of 0.761, indicating a relationship that influences other variables by 72.7%. Meanwhile, the R-squared value for job satisfaction is 0.831, demonstrating a solid relationship that affects other variables by 81.4%

#### Q-Square

**Table 3. Q-Square Values**

Variable	Q Square Predict	RMSE	MAE
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Employee Performance (Y)	0.544	0.750	0.568
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.747	0.554	0.375

Source: Research Data, 2024.

A Q-Square value exceeding 0 suggest that the model has predictive relevancy, while a value below 0 suggests a lack of predictive relevancy (Chin, 1998). The Q-Square predictive relevance test reveals that the employee performance variable has a value of 0.544, or 54.4%, and the job satisfaction variable has a value of 0.747, or 74.7%. These findings demonstrate that the model is predictively relevant, as both values are more significant than 0.

## Hypothesis Testing

**Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results**

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
X1 -> Y	0.244	0.234	0.123	1.977	0.050
X2 -> Y	-0.037	-0.093	0.179	0.204	0.838
X3 -> Y	0.020	-0.058	0.238	0.083	0.934
X1 -> Z -> Y	0.048	0.055	0.075	0.634	0.527
X2 -> Z -> Y	-0.100	-0.114	0.093	1.073	0.286
X3 -> Z -> Y	0.504	0.513	0.174	2.901	0.004

Source: Research Data, 2024.

Based on Table 4, several conclusions can be drawn. The relationship between interpersonal relationships also employee performance has a coefficient of 0.244, with a t-statistic of 1.977, exceeding the threshold of 1.96, and a p-value of 0.050, indicating a significant positive effect. In contrast, the influence of work stress on employee performance shows a coefficient of -0.037 and a t-statistic of 0.204, below 1.96, along with a p-value of 0.838, suggesting that work stress does not significantly affect employee performance. The effect of the work environment on employee performance has a coefficient of 0.020, a t-statistic of 0.083, and a p-value of 0.934, indicating a positive but non-significant effect. Regarding mediation, the effect of interpersonal relationships on employee performance, mediated by job satisfaction, has a coefficient of 0.048, a statistic of 0.634, and a p-value of 0.527, indicating that job satisfaction does not mediate this relationship. Similarly, the influence of work stress on employee performance, mediated by job satisfaction, shows a coefficient of -0.100, a t-statistic of 1.073, and a p-value of 0.286, indicating that job satisfaction is not a mediator. Conversely, the effect of the work environment on employee performance mediated by job satisfaction has a coefficient of 0.504, a t-statistic of 2.901, and a p-value of 0.004, demonstrating that job satisfaction does mediate the impact of the work environment on employee performance.

## Discussion

### The Influence of Interpersonal Relationships on Employee Performance

The outcome of the study indicate, interpersonal relationships have a significant positive effect on employee performance. This suggests that good interpersonal relationships among employees contribute positively to their performance improvement and highlight the crucial of positive social interactions in enhancing work effectiveness at SPBU Pertamina 54.651.63 Malang. This study is consistent with preceding researchs by Wismaningsih (2021) and Rahman et al. (2021), demonstrating that interpersonal relationships positively and significantly influence employee performance.

Field findings support the views of Suranto (2011) and Vemmylia (2009), which states that when the indicators of interpersonal relationships are effectively implemented, they contribute to improved employee performance. This indicates that positive employee interactions can enhance work effectiveness within the organization. The results align with Suranto (2011) assertion that the aim of interpersonal communication is to affect employee behavior and performance over motivation and support. Effective communication in interpersonal relationships builds support among employees and strengthens motivation to achieve common goals, which is crucial in the work context. Desmita (2019) explains that interpersonal relationships are personal connections built through social interactions. This underscores the quality of employee social interactions, which can affect team dynamics and individual performance.

### **The Influence of Work Stress on Employee Performance**

The study's outcome indicate that work stress does not significantly influence employee performance. This finding aligns with previous research by Marisa (2021) and Aniversari (2022), which also stated that work stress does not significantly influence employee performance. This suggests that although stress can arise from various factors, such as the work environment and job interactions, its influence is not strong enough to affect performance significantly.

Field findings contradict the views of Robbins and Molan (2006), who assert that work stress arises from conditions resulting from the interaction between individuals and their jobs. Stress can lead to changes in behavior that deviate from normal functioning. This starkly contrasts the conditions of SPBU Pertamina 54.651.63 Malang employees, who may have developed effective coping mechanisms or possess a high level of resilience to stress, thereby minimizing its negative impact. Employees may also perceive stress as a challenge that motivates them to enhance their performance rather than as an obstacle.

### **The Influence of Work Environment on Employee Performance**

The findings indicate that the work environment does not significantly influence employee performance. This finding aligns with Nitisemito (1992) view that both physical also non-physical elements of the work environment can shape employee experiences, leading to indirect impacts on performance. However, this outcome contradicts Sedarmayanti (2017) claim that a positive work environment improves an individual's task performance, ultimately enhancing overall performance. This implies that a supportive work environment should facilitate better employee performance.

Furthermore, these outcomes are consistent with prior study by Nabawi (2019), which found that the work environment does not significantly influence employee performance. Employees can adapt and effectively complete their tasks even in less-than-ideal work conditions, but their performance may be influenced more by other dominant factors.

### **The Influence of Interpersonal Relationships on Employee Performance Mediated by Job Satisfaction**

The research findings indicate that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between interpersonal relationships and employee performance. This observation contrasts with the results of Hasnita et al. (2023), which suggests a significant impact of interpersonal relationships on job satisfaction. Additionally, Paparang et al. (2021) prove that job satisfaction has a substantial influence on employee performance. That also contradicts Robbin (2002), who asserts that several factors affect employee job satisfaction, including the nature of the work, rewards, working conditions, and interpersonal relationships.

This suggests that although interpersonal relationships should positively contribute to job satisfaction, in the context of this research, their influence needs to be more robust to affect employee performance significantly. The findings indicate that interpersonal relationships, which are expected to enhance both performance and satisfaction, instead show a non-significant negative influence. This may reflect that employees at the gas station do not perceive increased satisfaction from their interactions, or other more dominant factors may affect their satisfaction and performance. This aligns with Stephen and Judge (2007), who explain that interpersonal relationships in the workplace function as motivation for productive collaboration, which should lead to economic, psychological, and social satisfaction. Therefore, employees must first be motivated to experience job satisfaction, ultimately impacting performance improvement.

### **The Influence of Work Stress on Employee Performance Mediated by Job Satisfaction**

The findings outcome that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between work stress and employee performance. This indicates that, although work stress has the potential to affect performance, it does not contribute to job satisfaction at the Pertamina Gas Station 54.651.63 in Malang. The findings do not support Sasono's (2004) view that high levels of work stress will drastically negatively impact employee performance. Similarly, Handoko (2008) contends that both work stress and job satisfaction can affect employee performance. Work stress may influence job satisfaction, which in turn impacts employee performance.

The field findings contradict the study by Fardah and Ayuningtias (2020), which demonstrates that work stress affects employee job satisfaction, suggesting that lower work stress leads to higher

perceived job satisfaction. Similarly, research by Ningmabin and Adi (2022) shows that job satisfaction significantly impacts employee performance. Job satisfaction does not mediate in this context because, on average, employees do not feel adequately satisfied with their work environment. Consequently, human resource managers must prioritize enhancing job satisfaction, as dissatisfaction can hinder employees from meeting expected norms and standards.

### The Influence of Work Environment on Employee Performance Mediated by Job Satisfaction

The research results indicate that job satisfaction mediates the work environment and employee performance. This means that SPBU Pertamina 54.651.63 Malang employees feel that a good work environment can enhance their performance when satisfied. This indicates that work condition improvements contribute to employee satisfaction and significantly impact performance. This research is consistent with earlier studies by Hasnita et al. (2023), which identified a significant impact of the work environment on employee job satisfaction. Additionally, a study by Suryawan and Salsabilla (2022) demonstrates that job satisfaction has a notable effect on employee performance.

The outcome align with Bambang (2005), who noted that the work environment is a crucial aspect affecting an individual's performance. An employee working in a supportive work environment is likely to perform optimally. In contrast, an employee in an inadequate and unsupportive environment may become lethargic and fatigued, resulting in lower performance. The findings are also consistent with Handoko (2020), who describes job satisfaction as a positive or negative feeling about a job, which is emulated in employees' positive rutinity toward their work also their experiences within the work environment. This is evident in employees' positive attitudes toward their tasks and surroundings. Thus, a supportive work environment positively influences employee job satisfaction. Enhanced job satisfaction resulting from a positive work environment improves employee performance. Nitisemito (2000) Further, the work environment contain all factors surrounding the workforce that be able influence their performance. Therefore, this research confirms that a good work environment and high job satisfaction contribute to employee well-being and positively impact performance.

### CONCLUSION

This study shows that interpersonal relationships significantly positively affect employee performance. In contrast, work stress and the work environment do not significantly influence the performance of employees at SPBU Pertamina 54.651.63 Malang. Moreover, job satisfaction does not mediate the effects of interpersonal relationships and work stress on employee performance, yet it does mediate the relationship between the work environment and employee performance. These findings highlight the importance of fostering strong interpersonal relationships, managing stress effectively, and improving the work environment to enhance employee performance.

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