

## Perception of Workload and Work Stress on Human Resources Performance Moderated by Religious Coping

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**Abstract.** *This study is explanatory research that aims to examine the influence of workload and work stress on human resource performance (HR performance), with religious coping as a moderating variable. The study was conducted to provide practical contributions to the organization where the researcher works, namely the KPP Madya Semarang Office. The population consists of all HR personnel in the office, with data collected through questionnaires distributed both directly and online via Google Forms. Additionally, secondary data were obtained through documentation such as books, records, newspapers, magazines, and other relevant sources related to the variables of workload, work stress, HR performance, and religious coping. The questionnaire used a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach. the results showed that both workload and work stress had a significant positive effect on HR performance, indicating that pressure within certain limits can enhance employee performance. However, religious coping the relationship between workload and performance, meaning that a higher level of religiosity may reduce the positive impact of workload on performance. Furthermore, religious coping did not show a significant effect in moderating the relationship between work stress and performance, suggesting that religious approaches are not always effective in reducing the impact of work stress on employee performance.*

**Keywords:** *HR Performance; religious coping; workload; work stress.*

### 1. Introduction

The Semarang Medium Tax Service Office (KPP Madya) plays a strategic role in optimizing tax revenue and ensuring taxpayer compliance. Achieving these goals requires optimal employee performance, which is influenced by job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a crucial factor that can impact employee productivity, loyalty, and effectiveness in carrying out their duties.

In achieving its objectives, the Semarang Medium Tax Office (KPP Madya) faces challenges such as high workloads, increasing tax revenue targets, and high demands for professionalism, which can impact employee job satisfaction. Low job satisfaction can potentially reduce employee motivation and performance, ultimately impacting service effectiveness and the achievement of organizational targets. However, under conditions of excessive workloads and high stress levels, performance often declines, which can lead to increased turnover and low employee engagement.

In an increasingly dynamic and competitive work environment, workload and work stress are the main factors that influence HR performance.(Firdaus et al., 2024). High workloads can cause physical and mental fatigue, which ultimately impacts employee job satisfaction and performance.(Hermawan, 2022). Poorly managed work stress also has the potential to reduce individual and organizational performance as a whole.(Sijabat & Hermawati, 2021)Therefore, understanding how workload and job stress affect performance is crucial for human resource management.

Quality resources are demonstrated by, among other things, high performance and productivity.(Sakban et al., 2019). One of the factors that can influence HR performance is the perception of HR in accepting existing tasks not as a burden but as a challenge that must be conquered, the demand for quality HR has resulted in many companies expecting their employees to be able to multitask so that work can be more efficient, employee perceptions of workload balance or imbalance as a result of the perceived difference between their workload and other organizational members can cause dissatisfaction which affects HR performance(Dewi & Kurniawan, 2023a). According to equity theory, an employee will feel unfairly treated if he sees that coworkers who put in the same effort at work as he does earn more than he does, or if he earns the same amount as those who have lower motivation or work effort than he does.(Deutsch, 1975).

Employee workload is a crucial factor that influences productivity and turnover rates.(Sijabat & Hermawati, 2021)When the workload falls below the required standard, it can trigger laziness and create opportunities for unproductive behavior, such as group politics, which negatively impact performance. Conversely, excessive workloads can leave employees feeling overwhelmed, potentially leading to various problems such as burnout, depression, and dissatisfaction, ultimately lowering their performance.

Every organization or company consists of various interdependent units and individuals who work together to achieve common goals. Employees within them face varying levels of workload every day. Changes in workload can affect stress levels and employees' perceptions of fairness in task distribution, which in turn impacts performance.(Inegbedion et al., 2020a). An increased workload can increase employee psychological stress, thereby reducing job satisfaction. Conversely, a workload that is too low can hinder employees' potential to develop and utilize their abilities optimally.(Mansour & Tremblay, 2016).

The research findings show that work stress has a positive correlation with performance, where this role can be accepted by employees in achieving their performance.(Rachman, 2021)However, other studies show that work stress is negatively and significantly correlated

with job performance.(Jaafar et al., 2020). So coping is proposed as a moderating variable to describe the existing gap.

One strategy that can be used to reduce the negative impact of workload and stress on performance is through religious coping.(Azkiati Z et al., 2019a; Szcześniak et al., 2020)*Coping*Religious is an individual mechanism for dealing with work pressure and challenges by using a spiritual or religious approach.(Zhafira et al., 2019)These strategies can take the form of prayer, spiritual reflection, faith in God's will, and involvement in religious activities as a way to manage psychological and emotional stress.(Pargament et al., 1998a).

Previous research shows that individuals who practice religious coping tend to have lower stress levels and are better able to manage work pressure.(Chow et al., 2021a)This is because religious beliefs and practices can provide a sense of calm, optimism, and meaning in work, which ultimately has a positive impact on job satisfaction.(Bagheri-Nesami et al., 2017a). Furthermore, social support within a religious community can help employees feel more valued and have a place to share experiences and find solutions to work challenges.

*Religious coping* refers to the use of religious beliefs or practices to cope with stressful life situations (Bagheri-Nesami et al., 2017b) One such mechanism is religious coping, which is defined as the use of religious beliefs or behaviors to facilitate problem solving to prevent or reduce the negative emotional consequences of stressful life circumstances. (Yıldırım et al., 2021a).

*Coping* religious includes religiously framed cognitive, emotional, or behavioral responses to stress.(Chow et al., 2021b)Religious coping is related to many things including achieving meaning in life, closeness to God, hope, peace, relationships with others, self-development, and personal restraint.(Wajanathawornchai & Blauw, 2018a)Religion is indeed a coping mechanism for dealing with the fear of death, the threat of great loss, the grief of losing a loved one, and our lack of control over the world around us.(Azkiati Z et al., 2019b). Studies have shown that the brain has areas stimulated by religious thinking that have the potential to ease our fears and provide the illusion of control. (Thomas & Barbato, 2020).

## 2. Research Methods

The type of research used in this study is explanatory research. According to (Widodo, 2010) Explanatory research is explanatory in nature, meaning it emphasizes the relationships between variables by testing hypotheses. The descriptions contain descriptive texts, but the focus is on the relationships between variables. In this case, the study examines the effect of workload and job stress on HR performance, with religious coping as a moderator. The researcher chose this method so that the results can be directly applied to the organization where the researcher works.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Descriptive Analysis of Research Data

In this section, a descriptive analysis is conducted to obtain an overview of respondents' responses to the research variables. This analysis is conducted to obtain perceptions about respondents' tendencies to respond to the indicator items used to measure these variables and to determine the status of the variables studied at the research site.

The variable descriptions are grouped into 3 categories based on the index value formula as follows:

$$\text{Index Value} = ((\%F1x1) + (\%F2x2) + (\%F3x3) + (\%F4x4) + (\%F5x5))/5$$

Information:

F1 is the frequency of respondents who answered 1

F2 is the frequency of respondents who answered 2

F3 is the frequency of respondents who answered 3

F4 is the frequency of respondents who answered 4

F5 is the frequency of respondents who answered 5

Grouping of index values is done by calculating the lowest, highest, range and length of the interval class as follows:

$$\text{Lowest value: } (\%F1)/5 = (100x1)/5 = 20$$

$$\text{Highest value: } (\%F5)/5 = (100x5)/5 = 100$$

$$\text{Range: } 100 - 20 = 80$$

$$\text{Class Interval Length: } 80 : 3 = 26.7$$

By using the three-box method criteria, the answers will be divided into three categories as the basis for interpreting the index values as follows:

a. Low = 20 - 46.6

b. Medium = 46.7 – 73.3

c. Height = 73.4 – 100

Based on this categorization, the index values for each variable can be presented as follows:

##### 3.1.1. Workload

The description of respondents' responses in the form of descriptive statistics of the Workload variable data can be presented as follows:

Descriptive Statistics of Workload Variables

No	Workload Indicator	STS (1)		TS (2)		CS (3)		S (4)		SS (5)		Index Value	Category
		f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)		
1	Physical workload	16	26.7	29	48.3	13	21.7	2	3.3	0	0.0	40.33	Low

2	Mental burden	14	23.3	33	55.0	8	13.3	5	8.3	0	0.0	41.33	Low
3	Time burden	13	21.7	35	58.3	9	15.0	3	5.0	0	0.0	40.67	Low
Average Index Value												40.78	Low

Source: Appendix 3.

Table shows that the average overall Workload data index value of 40.78 is in the low category range (20.0 - 46.6). This means that respondents perceive the workload of tasks assigned by the agency to be low. The results of the data description on the Workload variable obtained with the highest index value being the Mental Workload indicator (41.33), while the lowest index was the Physical Workload indicator (40.33).

### 3.1.2. Work Stress

The description of respondents' responses in the form of descriptive statistics of the Work Stress variable data can be presented as follows:

#### Descriptive Statistics of Job Stress Variables

No	Job Stress Indicators	STS (1)		TS (2)		CS (3)		S (4)		SS (5)		Index Value	Category
		f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)		
1	Psychologically negative time burden	9	15.0	34	56.7	15	25.0	2	3.3	0	0.0	43.33	Low
2	Negative emotional response	5	8.3	35	58.3	16	26.7	4	6.7	0	0.0	46.33	Low
3	Cognitive negative response	9	15.0	32	53.3	15	25.0	4	6.7	0	0.0	44.67	Low
4	Negative behavioral response	11	18.3	35	58.3	13	21.7	1	1.7	0	0.0	41.33	Low
Average Index Value												43.92	Low

Table shows that the overall average work stress index value of 43.92 falls within the low category (20.0 - 46.6). This means that employee work stress levels are relatively low. The data description of the work stress variable shows that the highest index value is for the negative emotional response indicator (46.33), while the lowest index value is for the negative behavioral response indicator (41.33).

### 3.1.3. Religious Coping

The description of respondents' responses in the form of descriptive statistics of the Coping Religious variable data can be presented as follows:

#### Descriptive Statistics of Religious Coping Variables

No	Religious Coping Indicators	STS (1)		TS (2)		CS (3)		S (4)		SS (5)		Index Value	Category
		f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)		
1	Collaborative	0	0.0	7	11.7	2	3.3	35	58.3	16	26.7	80.00	Tall
2	Self-directing	0	0.0	6	10.0	3	5.0	34	56.7	17	28.3	80.67	Tall
3	Deferring	1	1.7	5	8.3	2	3.3	26	43.3	26	43.3	83.67	Tall
Average Index Value												81.44	Tall



Table shows that the overall average religious coping index value of 81.44 falls within the high category (73.4–100). This means that employees' religious coping is considered good. The data description for the religious coping variable shows that the highest index value is for the Self-Directing and Deferring indicators (83.67), while the lowest index value is for Collaborative (80.00).

### 3.1.4. HR Performance

The description of respondents' responses in the form of descriptive statistics of HR Performance variable data can be presented as follows:

Descriptive Statistics of HR Performance Variables

No	HR Performance Indicators	STS (1)		TS (2)		CS (3)		S (4)		SS (5)		Index Value	Category
		f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)		
1	Quality	3	5.0	5	8.3	3	5.0	34	56.7	15	25.0	77.67	Tall
2	Quantity	1	1.7	5	8.3	4	6.7	32	53.3	18	30.0	80.33	Tall
3	The need for supervision	0	0.0	3	5.0	6	10.0	34	56.7	17	28.3	81.67	Tall
4	Interpersonal influence	2	3.3	7	11.7	8	13.3	31	51.7	12	20.0	74.67	Tall
Average Index Value												78.58	Tall

The data presented in Table 4.8 shows that the average overall HR Performance data index value of 78.58 is in the high category range (73.4 – 100). This means that employees generally have good performance. The results of the data description on the HR Performance variable obtained with the highest index value being the Need for Supervision indicator (81.67), while the lowest index was Interpersonal Influence (74.67).

### 3.2. The Influence of Workload on HR Performance

Workload has been shown to have a significant negative impact on HR performance. The results of this study confirm several studies that also show that excessive workload can negatively impact HR performance.(Herawati et al., 2023; Inegbedion et al., 2020c; Mansour & Tremblay, 2016).

The workload variables in this study were identified through three reflective indicators: physical workload, mental workload, and time pressure. These three indicators significantly contribute to improving human resource performance, as measured by four main indicators: work quality, output quantity, need for supervision, and interpersonal influence.

Of the three workload indicators, mental stress showed the highest outer loading value, indicating that psychological stress is the most dominant element in shaping employees' perceptions of their workload. Meanwhile, within the HR performance dimension, interpersonal influence recorded the highest outer loading value, underscoring the importance of an individual's ability to build social relationships, influence others, and interact effectively in the workplace as key components of assessed performance.

The results of this study revealed a negative relationship between mental stress and interpersonal influence. The greater the mental stress experienced by employees, the less

likely they are to build effective interpersonal relationships. High levels of mental stress can affect emotional stability, reduce concentration levels, and disrupt a person's social sensitivity, ultimately reducing their ability to interact and work together harmoniously. Therefore, managing mental stress is a crucial aspect in maintaining the quality of relationships between employees and supporting effective teamwork.

On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest outer loading value for the workload variable is physical workload. Meanwhile, within the HR performance variable, the aspect of the need for supervision has the lowest outer loading value. This suggests that when employees face a high physical workload, they tend to be more independent and focused on completing tasks, thus reducing the need for supervision from superiors. This situation is likely triggered by physical pressure that demands high efficiency and concentration, encouraging employees to focus on optimal task completion without much external intervention.

Therefore, it is concluded that workload has a negative and significant impact on human resource performance, meaning that the higher the level of workload perceived by employees, the lower their performance. Excessive workload, whether physical, mental, or time-consuming, tends to drain energy, reduce concentration, and weaken motivation, thus impacting productivity, the quality of work relationships, and the effectiveness of task completion. These findings emphasize the importance of balanced workload management to maintain sustainable employee performance and well-being.

### **3.2.1. The Influence of Work Stress on HR Performance**

Job stress has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on HR performance. The results of this study support research (Muafi, 2021) which states that high levels of work stress can reduce employee work effectiveness and increase the risk of emotional exhaustion. In addition, research conducted by (Andiani & Jayanagara, 2023) shows that work stress is negatively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction, which can ultimately have an impact on decreasing employee performance.

The work stress variable in this study was measured using four indicators: time pressure with psychological impacts, and negative emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses. These four indicators have been shown to reduce the quality of human resource performance, which in this study is represented by four main dimensions: quality of work results, quantity of output, level of need for supervision, and ability to establish interpersonal influence.

From the analysis results, negative cognitive responses are the indicators with the highest outer loading value in describing work stress, indicating that pressure that disrupts the thinking process, such as the emergence of negative thoughts, excessive fear, or indecisiveness in decision making, are the most dominant forms of stress felt by employees.

On the other hand, the interpersonal influence indicator was recorded as the most prominent component in measuring HR performance, indicating that the ability to communicate, collaborate, and influence coworkers is a key aspect determining employee

performance. The relationship between the two shows a negative pattern, where increased cognitive stress tends to reduce employees' ability to build positive social relationships. Disrupted thinking due to stress can reduce empathy and flexibility in interactions, and hinder teamwork. Furthermore, indicators of negative behavioral responses were found to be the lowest component of job stress, including passivity, withdrawal, or decreased work participation. Meanwhile, the need for supervision was the lowest indicator of HR performance. This leads to an interesting negative relationship: the higher the negative behavioral responses arising from stress, the lower the employee's tendency to be supervised. Employees in this state generally display withdrawal from work and are less engaged, thus no longer being the primary focus of supervision. Therefore, it is important for organizations to be alert to signs of stress, especially behavioral ones, to prevent performance decline and maintain the effectiveness of the supervision system.

Overall, however, this research suggests that work stress, within certain limits, can have a positive impact on performance, as it can encourage individuals to be more alert, responsible, and results-oriented. Well-managed stress can improve discipline, initiative, and speed in completing tasks, making stress a factor that has the potential to strengthen performance if not allowed to develop into excessive stress.

### **3.2.2. Moderation of Religious Coping in the Influence of Workload on HR Performance**

This study demonstrates that religious coping has a significant positive effect in moderating the impact of workload on human resource performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that high levels of positive religious coping can mitigate the negative impact of workload on human resource performance. In other words, religious coping can mitigate the negative impact of workload on human resource performance.

Employees who implement religious coping strategies, such as praying, surrendering to God, and believing that their work is part of worship, tend to be better able to cope with work pressure and maintain productivity. (Azkiati Z et al., 2019a; Dolcos et al., 2021; Salleh et al., 2015; Zhafira et al., 2019).

The religious coping variable in this variable is measured through three indicators: collaborative, self-directing, and deferring. Meanwhile, workload is reflected by three main indicators: physical burden, mental stress, and time pressure. Human resource performance is measured using four indicators: quality, quantity, need for supervision, and interpersonal influence. The analysis results show that of the three indicators of religious coping, the collaborative aspect is the most dominant, describing an individual's ability to face pressure by involving spiritual strength and social support. In the workload variable, mental stress emerged as the strongest indicator, indicating that psychological stress is the most significant form of burden felt by respondents. Meanwhile, in the performance variable, interpersonal influence is the main aspect, indicating that the ability to interact and build relationships is an important key in assessing employee performance.

The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that religious coping with a collaborative approach can reduce the negative impact of mental stress on interpersonal skills. By



increasing spiritual closeness, praying, sharing burdens with others, and actively surrendering, employees can maintain emotional stability and psychological resilience, thereby maintaining the quality of social relationships in the workplace even under high pressure. On the other hand, the indicator of religious coping with the lowest contribution is self-direction, namely the ability to manage oneself based on spiritual values independently. Physical workload was recorded as the lowest indicator in the workload variable, while the need for supervision was the lowest in the HR performance variable. This suggests that increasing self-direction can reduce the negative impact of physical workload on the need for supervision. Employees who are able to manage themselves with the support of religious values tend to be more responsible and have a lesser need for external supervision, even when facing high physical demands.

The results of this study demonstrate that religious coping plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between workload and HR performance, with a significant negative effect. The higher an individual's level of religious coping, the less negative impact workload has on performance. Thus, a spiritual approach has proven effective in helping employees manage work stress and maintain overall productivity and performance quality.

### **3.2.3. Moderation of Religious Coping in the Influence of Work Stress on HR Performance**

The results of the study indicate that religious coping does not significantly moderate the relationship between workload and HR performance. In other words, even if individuals have high levels of religious coping, it is not effective enough to mitigate the negative impact of workload on employee performance.

This study shows that religious coping does not significantly moderate the relationship between workload and human resource performance. This means that the religious approaches individuals use to cope with work pressure are not consistently able to reduce the negative impact of workload on performance. This is likely due to variations in the interpretation and application of religious values among individuals, as well as a mismatch between spiritual coping strategies and practical and operational work demands. In other words, despite having strong religious beliefs, individuals still require more concrete managerial strategies or work system support to maintain performance amidst high workloads.

This result contradicts the results of previous research which stated that religious coping can reduce the negative impact of work stress on HR performance by providing a healthier mechanism for controlling emotions and thoughts. (Pogere et al., 2019; Rabenu et al., 2017).

*Coping* Religiosity in this study is reflected through three indicators: Collaborative, Self-directing, and Deferring. Measurement of Work Stress Variables in this study was measured using four indicators. namely indicators Negative psychological time burden, negative emotional responses, negative cognitive responses, and negative behavioral responses. These aspects can reduce HR performance, which in this study was measured by reflecting on four indicators. namely indicators Quality, Quantity, Need for supervision, and Interpersonal influence.

In this study, the religious coping variable showed that the indicator with the strongest contribution was the collaborative aspect, which reflects an individual's ability to overcome stress through spiritual cooperation with God and support from the social environment. For the work stress variable, the most dominant indicator was a negative cognitive response, reflecting the emergence of negative thoughts, pessimism, and perceptions of inability to face work demands. Meanwhile, in the human resource performance variable, the indicator with the highest value was interpersonal influence, indicating the importance of the ability to build relationships, influence, and interact effectively with coworkers.

These findings reveal that even though individuals have collaborative religious coping approaches, these are not yet effective enough in mitigating the impact of cognitive stress on interpersonal skills. This means that when work pressures trigger negative mental responses, such as excessive anxiety or self-doubt, individuals' ability to build relationships and communicate in the workplace remains impaired, even if they have religious coping strategies. This indicates that spiritual approaches need to be supported by more concrete psychological interventions or social skills training to truly protect and maintain the quality of interpersonal relationships in stressful work situations.

In this study, the indicator with the lowest outer loading value on the religious coping variable was self-direction, which is an individual's ability to rely on spiritual strength to regulate and manage themselves independently when facing pressure. Meanwhile, on the work stress variable, the indicator with the lowest contribution was negative behavioral responses, which included non-adaptive reactions such as withdrawal, decreased discipline, or unproductive work behavior. On the human resource performance variable, the indicator with the lowest value was the need for supervision, which reflects the extent to which employees require control and monitoring from superiors.

These findings suggest that strong self-direction skills are not effective enough to mitigate the impact of negative behaviors arising from work stress on the need for supervision. In other words, even if someone is able to regulate themselves spiritually, this does not necessarily prevent the emergence of maladaptive behaviors when faced with pressure, so supervision from superiors is still necessary. This indicates that an individual spiritual approach is not strong enough to overcome work stress that triggers negative behavioral reactions, and that additional approaches such as organizational support or stress management training are needed to reduce the need for supervision in the workplace.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, the conclusion of this study is that workload and job stress are proven to have a negative and significant influence on human resource performance, which means that the higher the level of workload and stress experienced, the employee's performance tends to decline. On the other hand, religious coping is proven to have a positive and significant influence in moderating the negative impact of workload on performance, indicating that coping strategies based on spiritual values can act as an effective protective mechanism in dealing with work pressure. Thus, religious coping is able

to reduce the negative effects of excessive workload on employee performance. However, religious coping does not show a significant influence in moderating the relationship between work stress and performance, which suggests that a spiritual approach is not always adequate to overcome the mental and emotional pressures that arise from work stress. The conclusion of the results of the hypothesis proof is: 1) Workload has a negative and significant impact on HR performance, meaning that a higher workload has been proven to reduce employee performance. 2) Work stress has a negative and significant impact on HR performance, meaning that higher work stress has been proven to reduce employee performance. 3) This study shows that high religious coping can weaken the negative influence of workload on performance, meaning that the stronger a person's religious approach, the smaller the positive impact of workload on their performance. 4) This study also found that religious coping had no effect on the relationship between work stress and performance, meaning that even if someone has a high level of religiosity, this may not necessarily reduce the influence of work stress on their performance.

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