

# Unpacking the Pressure: The Mediating Role of Work Stress and Emotional Exhaustion in the Workload–Performance Link

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of workload and job demands on employee performance, with job stress and emotional exhaustion as intervening variables among the Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus (APIP) in the Regional Inspectorates throughout the Riau Islands Province. Internal government supervision is a crucial element in realizing transparent, accountable, and efficient governance. However, high job demands and heavy workloads can increase job stress and emotional exhaustion, ultimately contributing to reduced employee performance. This research uses a quantitative approach with the Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 180 respondents, consisting of APIP personnel from various Regional Inspectorates in the Riau Islands Province. The variables in this study include workload and job demands as independent variables, job stress and emotional exhaustion as mediating variables, and employee performance as the dependent variable. The results show that workload and job demands have a significant effect on employee performance. Furthermore, this study analyzes the effects of workload and job demands on employee performance, with work stress and emotional exhaustion as mediators. The results show that workload and job demands negatively affect employee performance through increased work stress. However, emotional exhaustion does not mediate the relationship between workload or job demands and employee performance. These findings indicate that work stress plays a more important role than emotional exhaustion in explaining how workload and job demands influence employee performance. The study emphasizes the need for effective stress management to maintain employee performance. The insignificant result between emotional exhaustion and employee performance may be attributed to employee performance often being influenced by other factors, such as competence, motivation, and the work environment. When employees receive social support, this can mitigate the impact of emotional exhaustion.

**Keywords:** Workload, Job Demands, Job Stress, Emotional Exhaustion, Performance, Regional Inspectorate.

## INTRODUCTION

The Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus, hereinafter abbreviated as APIP, is a Government Agency established with the task of carrying out internal supervision within the central government and/or local government, consisting of the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP), Inspectorate General / Inspectorate / Internal Supervision Unit at Ministries / Institutions / Local Governments and Internal Supervision Units at other Government Legal Entities in accordance with statutory regulations. APIP in the Regional Inspectorate has two functional positions: the Functional Position of Auditor and the Functional Position of Regional Government Affairs Supervisor (PPUPD).

The role and function of the Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus (APIP) to assist management to achieve organizational goals is carried out through providing *assurance activities* and *consulting activities* in accordance with applicable standards, to provide improvements and add value in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of governance, risk management, and internal control of the organization. In addition, according to Government Regulation Number 60 of 2008 concerning the Government Internal Control System stipulates that the implementation of internal audits within government agencies is carried out by officials who have the task of carrying out supervision and who have met the requirements for competence expertise as auditors. Internal

supervisory function in government internal audit is carried out by the Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus (APIP), namely the Inspectorate. In accordance with the provisions of Government Regulation Number 41 of 2007 concerning Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD), the Inspectorate is a supervisory element of local government administration. The regional inspectorate has the task of supervising the implementation of government affairs in the region/province, implementing guidance on governance in the Regency / City area.

The role and function of the Provincial, Regency / City Inspectorate is generally regulated in the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 64 of 2007. The article states that in carrying out the task of supervising government affairs, the Provincial, Regency / City Inspectorates have functions as planning supervisory programs, formulating supervisory policies and facilities, examining, investigating, testing, and assessing supervisory tasks. Based on the Joint Circular of the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the Chairman of the Corruption Eradication Commission of the Republic of Indonesia, and the Head of the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency Number 11 of 2024 concerning Strengthening Regional Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus where in strengthening aspects of the role and services of Regional APIP are required to, carry out supervision with the priority of strengthening local governance and preventing state / regional financial losses; increase the role and services of APIP which includes compliance audits, performance audits, governance *assurance*, risk management, organizational control and consulting services.

To support the implementation of more effective and efficient supervisory activities and performance, each Provincial, Regency / City Inspectorate prepares an Annual Supervisory Work Program (PKPT). PKPT is a guideline for APIP and PPUPD in carrying out supervision, as well as supporting the Inspectorate's performance achievements. To support these performance achievements, it is supported by adequate resources, namely, based on the number of APIP consisting of Functional Auditor Positions and PPUPD. APIP in carrying out supervision has a work area that includes Regional Apparatus / Agencies, Districts, and Cities for the Provincial Inspectorate, and Villages, which are supervisory areas for the District Inspectorate. The following is data on the number of Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus (APIP) and the number of working areas for each government in the Riau Islands Province:

**Table 1: Number of APIP and Working Areas of Inspectorates in Riau Islands Province**

No	Name of Institution	Number of APIP (Person)		Number of Working Areas		Category
		Auditor	PPUPD	Regional Apparatus	District / City / Village	
1	Regional Inspectorate of Riau Islands Province	36	22	34	7	City
2	Regional Inspectorate of Tanjungpinang City	19	14	32	-	City
3	Regional Inspectorate of Batam City	53	14	46	-	City
4	Regional Inspectorate of Bintan District	8	11	39	36	Village
5	Regional Inspectorate of Karimun District	30	9	42	42	Village
6	Regional Inspectorate of Lingga District	34	4	41	75	Village
7	Regional Inspectorate of Natuna District	32	13	47	70	Village
8	Regional Inspectorate of Anambas Islands District	19	5	34	52	Village
<b>Number</b>		<b>231</b>	<b>92</b>			
<b>Total Auditors + PPUPD</b>		<b>323</b>				

Source: Regional Inspectorate of Riau Islands Province

In an organization, it must be supported by adequate resources to support the performance of the organization. But sometimes, when an organization is not supported by adequate human resources, with the many demands of the work faced, a heavy workload with a short time makes a person experience stress and emotional exhaustion so that it has a significant impact on individuals, organizations, and society. Individuals are at risk of poor physical and mental health (Clements & Kinman, 2021)

With high job demands and heavy workloads, there is a risk of increasing emotional exhaustion. As mentioned earlier, the Government Internal Audit Apparatus (APIP) faces heavy demands related to workload, where each individual will carry out one assignment with a period that varies between 5 (five) to 30 (thirty working days) depending on the type of assignment. Sometimes APIP is required to handle several types of assignments at the same time. This becomes particularly dangerous when the workload exceeds the capacity of the apparatus to complete it and when there are conflicting expectations placed on them.

Other researchers have identified that higher workload can be a major contributing factor to stress, this can occur due to the demands of the job which can affect employee performance (Dhaneesh & Iswarya, 2023). It is also important to note that supervisors are also susceptible to stress and will affect emotional exhaustion leading to decreased performance, uncontrollable workload by individuals will significantly increase stress (Schiff & Leip, 2019). Thus, workload pressures that cause stress in supervisors can directly or indirectly affect the quality of relationships between subordinates and their supervisors.

The *Job Demands-Resources* (JDR) model predicts that stress arises from an imbalance between job demands and the resources employees have to deal with them (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). This model categorizes job characteristics as demands, which require a response from the individual, and resources, which the individual can use to deal with these demands. The demands faced by the Government Internal Audit Apparatus (APIP) as mentioned earlier that public demands for clean, fair, transparent, and accountable government to realize good and clean governance are increasing and require serious attention. Not to mention the demands from internal parties such as superiors and the government environment that require the implementation of a reliable internal control function and an effective internal control system, and demands from external parties, from Supreme Audit Agency and the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) which expect the Government Internal *Supervisory* Apparatus (APIP) to optimize its role through audit, review, evaluation, assistance and *advisory* activities for a more effective system improvement to prevent irregularities and repeated findings.

Other research has also shown that job demands lead to *burnout* through decreased adaptive coping and increased maladaptive coping (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). This may partly be a result of psychological stress interfering with decision-making, resulting in the selection of unfavorable strategies, such as problem avoidance. The complexity of the tasks carried out, supported by the competence of an employee, is an interrelated value to see employee performance as the key to the success of an organization (S. Kumar & Shazania, 2021). Employees who have emotional stability and thoroughness in carrying out their duties are due to having control over their work (Bashkirova et al., 2023). This makes the importance of matters related to determining employee performance. Employees who have stable emotions tend to be able to manage stress and job pressure and be able to maintain good performance quality.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model was introduced by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli in the early 2000s as a framework that explains the balance between job demands and job resources in determining employee well-being and performance. This theory assumes that every job has two main characteristics, job demands and job resources, which interact with each other and influence a person's work outcomes (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Good work performance is a key factor for the success of an organization because it shows the extent to which employees and all members of the organization are able to carry out their tasks and responsibilities effectively and efficiently (Juyumaya et al., 2024). However, when employee performance is influenced by factors such as conditions or situations in the workplace that impede the smooth flow and efficiency of work processes and work pressure, it can reduce an organization's performance (P. Kumar et al., 2021).

These inhibiting factors can increase stress in individuals. Workplace stress typically occurs when the workload exceeds the available resources to handle it (Dhaneesh & Iswarya, 2023). To reduce work stress and improve performance, managerial intervention is needed, which includes steps and strategies designed to address problems in the workplace, improve working conditions, strengthen human resources, and create a healthy and productive work environment (Ari, 2025). Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that work performance is important for the success of an organization, but factors such as discomfort and work pressure can reduce performance and increase stress.

However, researchers emphasize that job demands do not always function as negative stressors, but can also produce positive stress or eustress when perceived as a challenge (challenge appraisal). When work challenges are high but supported by strong resources, employees tend to be more engaged, motivated, and perform better (Behavior et al., 2023). Meanwhile, in the workplace, this is referred to as eustress, which is stress that drives improved performance rather than diminishing it. Stress here can be categorized as short-term positive stress that can improve performance (Haq et al., 2020). Therefore, the concept of eustress in Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) broadens the understanding of how job demands in public organizations not only have the potential to cause distress but can also be strategically managed to improve performance through challenge appraisal.

### **The Influence of Workload on Work Stress**

Increased workload is directly related to increased stress levels, which can affect physical and mental health. A study focusing on healthcare workers found that excessive work demands, coupled with staff shortages and prolonged working hours, led to increased stress and fatigue, which negatively impacted their physical health (Saedpanah *et al.*, 2023). Previous research results also found that prolonged work demands exacerbated emotional exhaustion and reduced resilience, especially among healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study highlights the importance of effective interventions to reduce work stress and improve the mental well-being of healthcare workers during a global health crisis (Zhong *et al.*, 2023).

The research results of Dhaneesh & Iswarya (2023) also state that workload influences work stress. Work stress can be influenced by several factors, including workload, daily working hours, salary, social support received, and the individual's role in an organization. This is in line with the research by Kokoroko & Sanda (2019), where a stressful work environment and high workload are the main causes of stress, which can increase the risk of work stress. Another study conducted on the police force also found that a high workload on police significantly increases work stress. Employees with lower ranks feel their work exceeds their personal capacity, which can increase stress, such as emotional exhaustion and psychological pressure (Sadiq, 2022).

### **H1: Workload influencing to Work Stress**

#### **The Influence of Workload on Emotional Exhaustion**

In previous research, the authors investigated the influence of workload on emotional exhaustion among teachers. They found that heavy workload is a significant stressor, which contributes to emotional exhaustion in teachers. Teachers who feel overwhelmed with excessive workload are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion (Pogere *et al.*, 2019). According to the research results of Clements & Kinman (2021), workload is related to emotional exhaustion both directly and indirectly, where job demands in the form of workload contribute significantly to emotional exhaustion. Other research also shows that when the workload is high, a person tends to experience emotional exhaustion and decreased job satisfaction, and these conditions directly impact the decline in service quality in an organization (Maghsoud *et al.*, 2022). Research by García-Arroyo & Segovia (2019) also found that excessive workload has a proven positive and significant relationship with emotional exhaustion.

Another study also found that excessive workload has a significant direct impact on the onset of emotional exhaustion in healthcare workers, especially in the public sector environment. High job demands that are not proportional to the availability of resources, coupled with the pressure to always provide perfect service, cause prolonged psychological stress. This condition leads healthcare workers to experience fatigue, frustration, and loss of energy, which are the main characteristics of emotional exhaustion in the burnout syndrome (López-Cabarcos *et al.*, 2019).

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## **H2: Workload influencing to Emotional Exhaustions**

### **The Influence of Job Demands on Work Stress**

Previous research investigated the relationship between perceived stress levels due to mental demands in the workplace and chronic stress, excessive workload, and job dissatisfaction. The results of this study found that higher perceived stress levels due to mental demands are associated with increased levels of chronic stress, excessive workload, and job dissatisfaction (Jung *et al.*, 2023). Other researchers also found that high job demands have the potential to cause work stress if not accompanied by adequate job control and appropriate recognition from the organization (Jachens & Houdmont, 2019). In such conditions, individuals feel burdened both physically and psychologically because they have to meet large work expectations without having full control over how to complete them, and without commensurate rewards or recognition for the efforts made.

The research by Babapour *et al.*, (2022) also found that high job demands faced by a person contribute to increased levels of work stress. These demands negatively impact the quality of life. Excessive workload can disrupt the physical and mental health of employees, reduce work effectiveness, and hinder the optimal provision of services. Consequently, the quality of work results is also affected. Other research also found that daily job demands can trigger work pressure which eventually becomes a source of stress through a decrease in self-regulation ability, both emotionally (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Other researchers have found that high job demands have the potential to cause work stress if they are not accompanied by adequate job control and appropriate rewards from the organization (Jachens & Houdmont, 2019).

### **H3: Job Demands Influencing Work Stress**

#### **The Influence of Job Demands on Emotional Exhaustion**

Previous research found that employees who experience periods of excessive job demands will lead to emotional exhaustion, causing a person to withdraw from the job (Singla *et al.*, 2021). This effect is especially evident in professions with a high level of responsibility such as healthcare, education, and emergency services, where the mental burden is inherently very large. In other research, it was found that high job demands, such as workload, emotional demands, and the need for high patient involvement, are strongly associated with increased emotional exhaustion among health professionals during the pandemic. According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, these job demands can lead to exhaustion if not balanced with adequate resources (Barello *et al.*, 2021). Job demands, especially emotional demands, are closely related to increased emotional exhaustion. Job demands that can be influential include working hours, disturbances at home, and time pressure (Scanlan & Still, 2019). When employees face high job demands, they will experience emotional exhaustion which then reduces their ability to complete tasks optimally (Aina *et al.*, 2020).

This is also in line with the research by Rhéaume, (2022), where high job demands, including excessive workload, have a direct relationship with negative health outcomes, especially emotional exhaustion. High job demands without sufficient recovery time tend to trigger chronic work fatigue and lead to burnout in the long term. In accordance with the research conducted by Rahmfeld *et al.*, (2023), when a person faces high job demands, especially time pressure, this contributes significantly to emotional exhaustion, particularly in demanding work environments such as nursing. When the workload exceeds the individual's capacity without adequate support or control, it can trigger prolonged stress, which leads to psychological fatigue, loss of spirit, and a decrease in the ability to cope with work pressure.

### **H4: Job Demands Influencing Emotional Exhaustion**

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

A study found that generally, healthcare workers who have increased work stress tend to experience a decrease in performance. Conversely, when the level of work stress is low, work performance will be high (Ari, 2025). Other research also states that bank employees who experience high work stress definitely face emotional and physical exhaustion in the workplace. This can lead to a decrease in work motivation, making them less enthusiastic to work, which will affect their performance later (Kim & Yeo, 2024). Another study by Al Nahyan

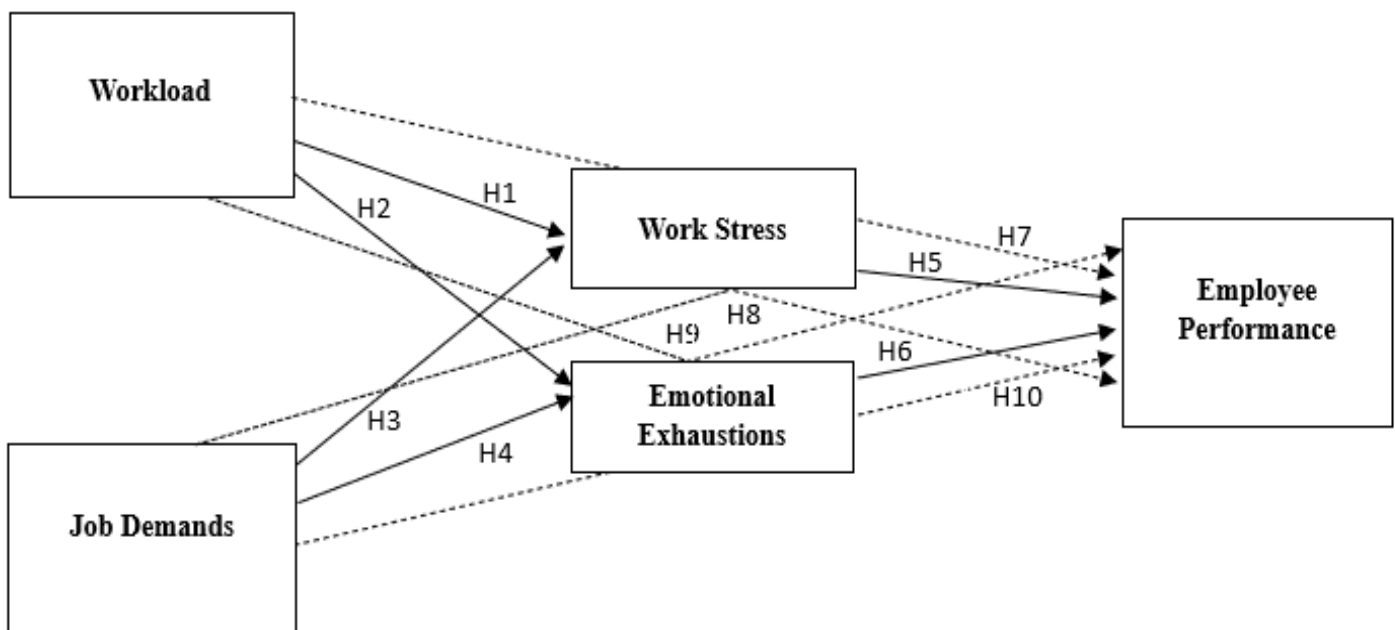
*et al.*, (2024) shows that an organization's efforts to improve employee performance to achieve company goals may not be successful if employees experience stress and lack self-confidence. Therefore, developing training programs and providing opportunities for employees to reflect on their tasks and acquire new knowledge can help reduce work stress (Setyawan & Nelson, 2021). This can ultimately increase self-confidence and encourage improved performance in the workplace.

**H5: Work Stress Influencing Employee Performance**

**The Influence of Emotional Exhaustion on Employee Performance**

Previous research results found that emotional exhaustion significantly affects job performance. The influence of heavy workload and stress experienced by employees often leads to emotional exhaustion, which is a feeling that arises as a response to stress from both within and outside the company, leading to a decrease in job performance (S. Kumar & Shazania, 2021). Other research by Meliala *et al.*, (2020) suggests that emotional exhaustion can also arise due to an imbalance between work and oneself, which then triggers emotional tension and drains emotional resources. Therefore, emotional exhaustion is very important to pay attention to because it is directly related to employee attitudes and behavior. When a person's level of emotional exhaustion is high, it tends to lead to the emergence of negative attitudes and behavior in that employee.

**H6: Emotional Exhaustions Influencing Employee Performance**



**Figure 1: Research Model**

**RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a quantitative approach using analyzing based on the results of data processing. The data analysis method used in this study was the Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) statistical data analysis method. The objective of this type of research is to obtain broad and in-depth understanding to generate a hypothetical model of relationships that can be developed into a theory. Population in this study consists of all Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus (APIP) in the Inspectorates throughout the Riau Islands Province, including: 1) Regional Inspectorate of Riau Islands Province, 2) Regional Inspectorate of Tanjungpinang City, 3) Regional Inspectorate of Batam City, 4) Regional Inspectorate of Bintan Regency, 5) Regional Inspectorate of Karimun Regency, 6) Regional Inspectorate of Lingga Regency, 7) Regional Inspectorate of Natuna Regency, and 8) Regional Inspectorate of Anambas Islands Regency. The total population of the study based on the number of APIP at the Regional Inspectorates throughout the Riau Islands Province is as follows Table 2. To determine the research sample to be analyzed, the study applies the non-probability

sampling and purposive sampling method. The population criteria are employees of the Regional Inspectorates (Regency/City/Province) with the Functional Positions of Auditor and PPUPD. The minimum sample size is determined using the Slovin formula as can be seen below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{323}{1 + 323 (0,05)^2} = 178,699$$

**Table 2: Research Population Size**

No	Agency Name Regional Inspectorate of Riau Islands Province	Number of Employees (APIP)
1	Regional Inspectorate of Riau Islands Province	58
2	Regional Inspectorate of Tanjungpinang City	33
3	Regional Inspectorate of Batam City	67
4	Regional Inspectorate of Bintan Regency	19
5	Regional Inspectorate of Karimun Regency	39
6	Regional Inspectorate of Lingga Regency	38
7	Regional Inspectorate of Natuna Regency	45
8	Regional Inspectorate of Anambas Islands Regency	24
<b>Total</b>		<b>323</b>

The questionnaire consists of 24 (twenty-four) statement items representing the research variables. Respondents were given answer choices according to a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

**Table 3: Research Questionnaire**

No	Variable	Item Total	Source
1	Workload	4	Kim & Yeo, (2024)
2	Job Demands	8	Singla <i>et al.</i> , (2021)
3	Work Stress	4	Kim & Yeo, (2024)
4	Emotional Exhaustion	4	Abdel Hadi <i>et al.</i> , (2021)
5	Employee Performance	4	Adiguzel & Sonmez Cakir, (2022)
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The distributed questionnaire included several personal data points that respondents needed to fill out, which can then be classified based on certain categories, including gender, age, latest education, workplace, tenure as Auditor/PPUPD, and current position.

**Table 4: Respondent Demographics**

Variable	Category	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	93	50,5
	Female	91	49,5
Age	< 20 years	0	0
	21-25 years	11	6

Variable	Category	Count	Percentage
	26-30 years	17	9,2
	31-35 years	29	15,8
	36-40 years	35	19
	41-45 years	30	16,3
	46-50 years	42	22,8
	> 51 years	20	10,9
Latest Education	SMA/Vocational	0	0
	Diploma	19	10,3
	Bachelor's	123	66,8
	Master's	42	22,8
	Doctoral	0	0
Workplace	Riau Islands Provincial Regional Inspectorate	38	20,7
	Tanjungpinang City Regional Inspectorate	21	11,4
	Batam City Regional Inspectorate	21	11,4
	Bintan Regency Regional Inspectorate	10	5,4
	Karimun Regency Regional Inspectorate	27	14,7
	Lingga Regency Regional Inspectorate	32	17,4
	Natuna Regency Regional Inspectorate	14	7,6
	Anambas Islands Regency Regional Inspectorate	21	11,4
Tenure as Auditor/PPUPD	< 5 years	98	53,3
	6-10 years	41	22,3
	11-15 years	21	11,4
	16-20 years	16	8,7
	> 21 years	8	4,3
Current Position	Main Expert Auditor	1	0,5
	Senior Expert Auditor	20	10,9
	Young Expert Auditor	43	23,4
	First Expert Auditor	54	29,3
	Supervisory Auditor	1	0,5
	Skilled Auditor	4	2,2
	Proficient Auditor	10	5,4
	Senior PPUPD	12	6,5
	Young PPUPD	17	9,2
	First PPUPD	22	12

Validity Test Results The validity test is carried out to measure whether a questionnaire is valid or not. As shown in Table 5, all outer loading values are > 0.6, which indicates that all statements in the questionnaire are passing the test before continuing to outer model testing in validity and reliability.

**Table 5: Outer Loading Results**

	BK	KE	KP	SK	TP
BK1	0.885				
BK2	0.879				
KE1		0.789			
KE2		0.834			
KE3		0.908			
KE4		0.851			
KP1			0.899		
KP2			0.902		
KP3			0.899		
KP4			0.883		

SK1				0.936	
SK2				0.939	
TP5					0.812
TP6					0.806
TP7					0.911
TP8					0.786

Reliability Test Results A questionnaire is said to be reliable if an individual's answers to the statements are consistent over time. The questionnaire is proven reliable if it meets the Rule of Thumb where the Composite Reliability value must be > 0.7, while the Cronbach's Alpha value must be > 0.6 (Ghozali & Latan, 2016).

**Table 6: Reliability test results**

	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Composite reliability (rho_c)</i>	<i>Average variance extracted (AVE)</i>
<b>BK</b>	0.713	0.875	0.777
<b>KE</b>	0.867	0.910	0.716
<b>KP</b>	0.918	0.942	0.802
<b>SK</b>	0.861	0.935	0.878
<b>TP</b>	0.850	0.898	0.689

Note: BK (Workload), KE (Emotional Exhaustion), KP (Employee Performance), SK (Work Stress), TP (Job Demands)

**Direct Effect Testing Results**

The relationship of variables are declared significant if the T-statistics value is > 1.96 and the P-values are < 0.05. Table 4.5 displays the path coefficients test results and shows that out of 6 hypotheses, 5 hypotheses have a significant influence, while 1 hypothesis is rejected

**Table7: Direct Effect Testing Results**

<b>Variable Paths</b>	<i>Path Coefficient</i>	<i>T-Statistics</i>	<i>P Values</i>	<b>Results</b>
Workload -> Work Stress	0.473	6.933	0.000	Accepted
Workload -> Emotional Exhaustion	0.172	2.170	0.031	Accepted
Job Demands -> Work Stress	-0.303	4.348	0.000	Accepted
Job Demands -> Emotional Exhaustion	0.696	15.338	0.000	Accepted
Work Stress -> Employee Performance	0.629	6.269	0.000	Accepted
Emotional Exhaustion -> Employee Performance	0.110	1.482	0.139	Rejected

**H1: Workload has an influence on Work Stress**

This result supports previous research Saedpanah *et al.*, (2023) showing that facing excessive workload, due to staff shortages, low freedom of action, and long working hours, becomes a cause of stress and fatigue, which can endanger physical health. Previous studies have also found that prolonged work demands exacerbate emotional exhaustion and reduce resilience, especially among healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study highlights the importance of effective interventions to reduce work stress and improve the mental well-being of healthcare workers during a global health crisis (Zhong *et al.*, 2023).

Study by Dhaneesh & Iswarya (2023) also state that workload has a significant positive effect on work stress. Work stress can be influenced by several factors, including workload, number of hours worked per day, salary, social support received, and the individual's role in an organization. This is in line with the research by Kokoroko & Sanda (2019), which found that a stressful work environment and high workload are the main causes of stress, increasing the risk of significant work stress. Other studies have also found that high workloads significantly

increase work stress. Employees with lower ranks feel that their work exceeds their personal capacity, which can increase stress, such as emotional exhaustion and psychological pressure (Sadiq, 2022). These findings reinforce the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) claim that workload is one of the strongest job demands that triggers stress, as it depletes employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional capacities.

## **H2: Workload has an influence on Emotional Exhaustion**

This is consistent with research finding that workload is related to emotional exhaustion both directly and indirectly, where job demands in the form of workload contribute significantly to emotional exhaustion (Clements & Kinman, 2021). This is also in line with previous research (Pogere *et al.*, 2019) which found that heavy workloads are a significant stressor that contributes to emotional exhaustion in teachers; teachers who feel burdened by excessive workloads are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion.

These results support other studies showing that when workloads are high, individuals tend to experience emotional exhaustion and decreased job satisfaction, conditions that directly impact the quality of service within an organization (Maghsoud *et al.*, 2022). Research by García-Arroyo & Segovia, (2019) also found that excessive workload is positively and significantly related to emotional exhaustion. Excessive workload has a significant direct impact on the onset of emotional exhaustion. High job demands that are not matched by the availability of resources, coupled with pressure to always provide perfect service, cause prolonged psychological stress. This condition causes a person to experience fatigue, frustration, and loss of energy, which are the main characteristics of emotional exhaustion in burnout syndrome (López-Cabarcos *et al.*, 2019). This is consistent with the energy depletion pathway in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, whereby excessive job demands in the form of heavy workload can drain energy resources and trigger emotional exhaustion.

## **H3: Job Demands have an influence on Work Stress**

These results indicate that high job demands lead to decreased work stress, which is contrary to research findings that higher levels of perceived stress due to higher mental demands are associated with increased levels of chronic stress, excessive workload, and job dissatisfaction (Jung *et al.*, 2023). A study by Babapour *et al.*, (2022) states that high job demands contribute to increased work stress levels, and these demands have a negative impact on quality of life. Excessive workloads can disrupt employees' physical and mental health, reduce work effectiveness, and hinder optimal service delivery. As a result, the quality of work output is also affected. These results are not in line with previous studies, which found that daily work demands can trigger work pressure, which ultimately becomes a source of stress through a decrease in self-regulation abilities, both emotionally (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Other researchers have found that high job demands have the potential to cause work stress if they are not accompanied by adequate job control and appropriate rewards from the organization (Jachens & Houdmont, 2019). This condition is not felt by APIP in the Regional Inspectorate of the Riau Islands Province, as individuals do not feel physically or psychologically burdened when they have to meet high work expectations.

In the classical Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, job demands are often viewed as stressors that increase the risk of energy depletion, exhaustion, and burnout (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). However, this study provides a theoretical contribution by showing that not all job demands are negative. Some demands can be perceived as challenges that actually enhance motivation and performance. This is likely due to the fact that the majority of respondents are in the productive age range of 31–50 years. This age group is often emotionally and psychologically mature, able to manage work pressure more rationally, so that high demands become motivation or challenges. When work challenges are high but supported by strong resources, employees tend to be more engaged, motivated, and perform better (Behavior *et al.*, 2023). Meanwhile, in the work environment, this is called eustress, which is stress that drives performance improvement rather than decline. Here, stress can be categorized as positive stress, which is short-term and can improve performance (Haq *et al.*, 2020).

## **H4: Job Demands have an influence on Emotional Exhaustion**

These results support research by Singla *et al.*, (2021), which found that employees who experience excessive job demands will lead to emotional exhaustion, causing them to withdraw from their work. This effect is particularly evident in professions with high levels of responsibility, such as healthcare, education, emergency services, and supervision/inspection, where the mental load is inherently very high. Where high job demands,

such as workload, emotional demands, and physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job are strongly associated with increased emotional exhaustion (Barello *et al.*, 2021). When employees face these high job demands, it leads to emotional exhaustion, which then reduces their ability to perform tasks optimally (Aina *et al.*, 2020).

Job demands, especially emotional demands, are closely related to increased emotional exhaustion. Job demands that can have an impact include working hours, disturbances at home, and time pressure (Scanlan & Still, 2019). This is also in line with research by Rhéaume, (2022), which found that high job demands, including excessive workloads, are directly related to negative health outcomes, particularly emotional exhaustion. High job demands without sufficient recovery time tend to trigger chronic work fatigue and lead to burnout in the long term. This is also in line with research conducted by Rahnfeld *et al.*, (2023), which found that when a person faces high job demands, especially time pressure, this contributes significantly to emotional exhaustion, especially in demanding work environments, including at APIP in the Regional Inspectorate of the Riau Islands Province. When the workload exceeds an individual's capacity without adequate support or control, it can trigger prolonged stress that leads to psychological fatigue, loss of enthusiasm, and a decline in the ability to cope with work pressure.

### **H5: Work Stress has an influence on Employee Performance**

When work stress increases, employee performance will also increase. This result is contrary to the findings of Kim & Yeo (2024), which show that a decline in work motivation makes people feel less enthusiastic about working. This is also a side effect of work stress, which significantly affects the overall health of workers. Other studies also suggest that, in general, employees who experience increased work stress tend to experience a decline in performance. Conversely, when work stress levels are low, work performance will be high (Ari, 2025). These results also contradict the research by Al Nahyan *et al.*, (2024), which states that organizational efforts to improve employee performance to achieve company goals may not be successful if employees experience stress and lack confidence. Therefore, developing training programs and providing opportunities for employees to reflect on their tasks and acquire new knowledge can help reduce work stress. This can ultimately increase confidence and encourage improved performance in the work environment.

The reason behind these results is that work stress within reasonable limits can be an effective strategy to encourage employees to optimize their work potential (Jaafar, 2021). Neither workload nor cognitive demands directly trigger stress, but cognitive demands remain important in work design because they can motivate and support the learning process in completing a job (Kubicek *et al.*, 2023). Stress here can be categorized as short-term positive stress, which is characterized by feelings of motivation, enthusiasm, and improved performance (Haq *et al.*, 2020).

### **H6: Emotional Exhaustion has an influence on Employee Performance**

The analysis of the effect of Emotional Exhaustion on Employee Performance revealed a T-statistic of 1.482 (which is below the 1.96 threshold) and a P-value of 0.139 (which is greater than 0.05). These results indicate that Emotional Exhaustion does not have a significant influence on Employee Performance. This finding is consistent with supporting research, which suggests that emotional exhaustion does not affect performance due to the presence of commitment and satisfaction in completing work. Furthermore, this relationship is influenced by an individual's ethics and moral obligation to maintain responsibility for their job (Ul Haq & Huo, 2024).

Furthermore, the insignificant result between Emotional Exhaustion and Employee Performance may be attributed to employee performance often being influenced by other factors, such as competence, motivation, and the work environment. When employees receive social support, this can mitigate the impact of emotional exhaustion. This is potentially reflected in the respondent demographics, where the largest age category was 46-50 years old. This suggests that the respondents are at an age where they likely receive substantial social support from both family and close friends, enabling them to overcome the effects of emotional exhaustion. Another possibility is that when an organization supports employees by providing training, this serves as an effective method for enhancing performance. (Unguren & Arslan, 2021).

This finding contradicts previous research, which found that emotional exhaustion significantly affects job

performance. In those studies, the influence of heavy workloads and stress experienced by employees often led to emotional exhaustion, a feeling that arises in response to stress from both internal and external organizational sources, ultimately causing a decline in job performance (S. Kumar & Shazania, 2021). This also contrasts with the research by Meliala *et al.*, (2020), which suggests that emotional exhaustion can also arise from an imbalance between work and personal life, subsequently triggering emotional strain and depleting emotional resources. Therefore, emotional exhaustion is crucial to address, as it directly relates to employee attitudes and behaviors. When an individual's level of emotional exhaustion is high, it tends to cause the emergence of negative attitudes and behaviors in that employee.

**Indirect Effect Test Results**

The following are the results of the indirect effect testing, mediated by the variables work stress and emotional exhaustion. Indirect effect testing is conducted to examine the indirect influence of a latent exogenous variable on a latent endogenous variable through an intermediate (endogenous) variable. The relationship is considered significant if the T-statistic shows a value greater than 1.96 and the P-Value is less than 0.05. Table 8 presents the results of the indirect effect test, which indicate that 2 hypotheses were rejected and 2 hypothesis was accepted.

**Table8: Indirect Relationship Test Results**

Variable Paths	Path Coefficient	T-Statistics	P Values	Results
Workload > Work Stress > Employee Performance	0.298	4.240	0.000	Accepted
Job Demands > Work Stress > Employee Performance	-0.191	3.631	0.000	Accepted
Workload > Emotional Exhaustion > Employee Performance	0.019	1.150	0.251	Rejected
Job Demands > Emotional Exhaustion > Employee Performance	0.077	1.456	0.146	Rejected

**Workload affects Employee Performance mediated by Work Stress**

This result suggests that workload has a significant positive influence on employee performance mediated by work stress. This is consistent with previous studies where employees experiencing stress tend to lose concentration, lack motivation, and are unable to complete tasks efficiently. This aligns with the research by Aina *et al.*, (2020), which states that high work stress interferes with an individual's ability to think clearly and make decisions, thereby lowering performance. It can be concluded that the higher the workload perceived by employees, the more their work stress levels tend to increase, which ultimately lowers performance. This study also demonstrates that work stress mediates the relationship between workload and employee performance, reinforcing the importance of stress management within the organizational context.

When the workload exceeds an individual's capacity, it can deplete energy and trigger various performance issues. Stress in the workplace generally occurs when job demands are unbalanced with available resources, negatively impacting employee performance. Factors that can impede performance may increase stress in individuals. Specifically, stress in the workplace usually occurs when the job burden exceeds the available resources to handle it (Dhaneesh & Iswarya, 2023). An increase in work stress leads to a decrease in performance; conversely, when the level of work stress is low, job performance will be high (Ari, 2025). Other research also notes that employees experiencing high work stress inevitably face emotional and physical exhaustion in the workplace. This can lead to a decrease in work motivation, making them less enthusiastic about working, which will subsequently affect performance (Kim & Yeo, 2024). Further research by Al Nahyan *et al.*, (2024) indicates that organizational efforts to improve employee performance to achieve company goals may not succeed if employees experience stress and lack self-confidence.

**Job Demands affect Employee Performance mediated by Work Stress**

This means that high job demands tend to increase work stress, which ultimately lowers employee performance. This is consistent with previous research where job demands combined with demands at home are closely related to emotional exhaustion, which can negatively affect job performance (Abdel Hadi *et al.*, 2021). This also aligns

with the findings of (Aina *et al.*, 2020), which show that employees with high levels of job demands experience a reduced ability to complete tasks optimally, worsening the quality and productivity of work. The underlying reason for this result may be related to the respondent demographics, where the majority have less than 5 years of service. This group is potentially subject to higher stress as they are in the phase of adapting to tasks and work pressure, thereby making the mediating effect of work stress more pronounced in the context of the relationship between job demands and performance.

### **Workload affects Employee Performance mediated by Emotional Exhaustion**

This result contradicts previous research which stated that when an organization is not supported by adequate human resources, facing many job demands and heavy workloads with short deadlines, individuals experience stress and emotional exhaustion, thus having a significant impact on individuals, organizations, and society. Individuals are at risk of experiencing poor physical and mental health (Clements & Kinman, 2021). It also contradicts the research by S. Kumar & Shazania (2021), where the influence of heavy workloads and stress experienced by an individual often causes emotional exhaustion, a feeling that arises in response to stress from both internal and external company sources leading to a decline in job performance. Other research also states that workload indirectly lowers performance through increased emotional exhaustion. In other words, employees who face high job demands will experience emotional exhaustion, which then reduces their ability to complete tasks optimally (Aina *et al.*, 2020).

This finding also contradicts the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory by Bakker & de Vries (2021) which explains that high workload without adequate resources will cause work stress and emotional exhaustion. According to Scanlan & Still (2019), job demands such as long working hours, time pressure, and disturbances from the home environment can worsen conditions of emotional exhaustion. This result is further reinforced by Rhéaume (2022), who found that excessive workload has a direct relationship with negative health, particularly emotional exhaustion. However, the previous research results did not indicate that Work Stress was capable of mediating the relationship between the Workload variable and Employee Performance among APIP throughout the Regional Inspectorate of the Riau Islands.

### **Job Demands affect Employee Performance mediated by Emotional Exhaustion**

This result contradicts previous studies that mention that high job demands and heavy workloads pose a significant risk of increasing emotional exhaustion—a feeling that arises in response to stress from both internal and external company sources—leading to a decline in job performance (S. Kumar & Shazania, 2021). This means that the influence of job demands on performance does not occur indirectly through an increase in emotional exhaustion.

Employees facing heavy workloads, time pressure, and excessive emotional demands experience the depletion of psychological resources, causing a decrease in energy, morale, and cognitive ability. Consequently, they are unable to maintain optimal work performance. This is inconsistent with previous research by Barello *et al.*, (2021) and (Aina *et al.*, 2020), which found that emotional exhaustion is the primary mechanism explaining how high work pressure can lower employee performance. In the organizational context, excessive work pressure such as tight time demands, complex responsibilities, and unbalanced task load forces employees to exert both physical and emotional energy. This condition can lead to a decrease in the psychological and physiological capacity of employees to maintain focus, motivation, and optimal work engagement. This is consistent with research conducted by Rahnfeld *et al.*, (2023), where facing high job demands significantly contributes to emotional exhaustion, especially in the demanding work environment of APIP Regional Inspectorates throughout the Riau Islands Province.

### ***Goodness of Fit Model***

The R-Square test is conducted to measure the correlation between related variables; a larger value indicates that the independent variable is increasingly capable of providing overall information (Ghozali and Latan, 2016). As shown in Table 4.7, the R-square test results indicate that the variables in the structural model are able to explain Work Stress (SK) by 26.6% (categorized as weak), Emotional Exhaustion (KE) by 54.3%, and Employee Performance (KP) by 39.9% (both categorized as moderate). The SRMR test results in Table 4.7 also show that

the rule of thumb ( $<0.1$ ) has been met, with values of 0.069 for the saturated model and 0.072 for the estimated model, thus the model can be declared consistent with the data. Based on the GoF (Goodness of Fit) value, the model criterion can be said to be small because it is  $\geq 0.10$ , specifically 0.129.

**Table 9: Goodness of Fit Model Testing Results**

<i>Goodness of Fit Model</i>		<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<b>Description</b>
SRMR	<b>Saturated Model</b>	0,069	Meets Criterion
	<b>Estimated Model</b>	0,072	Meets Criterion
<i>Adjusted R-square</i>	<b>Work Stress</b>	0,266	Weak
	<b>Emotional Exhaustion</b>	0,543	Moderate
	<b>Employee Performance</b>	0,399	Moderate
<i>Goodness of Fit (GoF) Index</i>	<b>GoF</b>	0,129	Small

## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION, RECOMMENDATION, AND LIMITATION

Based on the conclusion of the research findings, the workload variable significantly and positively influences work stress and emotional exhaustion, and both workload and job demands positively affect employee performance, mediated by work stress. This indicates that the Regional Inspectorate throughout the Riau Islands Province needs to address workload by implementing a realistic and fair workload optimization.

Stress in the workplace typically occurs when the job burden exceeds the available resources to handle it (Dhaneesh & Iswarya, 2023). Therefore, the Regional Inspectorate throughout the Riau Islands Province can conduct periodic workload analysis by regularly evaluating the number of tasks, targets, and deadlines given to the APIP (Apparatus of Government Internal Supervision). Each Regional Inspectorate must ensure that the workload is commensurate with the available capacity and resources. Furthermore, they should implement a fair distribution of workload by ensuring that tasks are distributed evenly among employees, according to their respective qualifications and experience. The accumulation of tasks on certain individuals should be avoided.

Another crucial aspect is job demands; employees facing high job demands tend to experience chronic exhaustion and psychological detachment from their work, while job resources also play an important role in influencing the level of exhaustion (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Therefore, the Regional Inspectorate throughout the Riau Islands Province can clearly and measurably manage job demands. Unclear or excessively high job demands can also negatively trigger stress and emotional exhaustion. This can be achieved by ensuring every APIP clearly understands their roles, responsibilities, and expected outcomes, and by setting realistic performance standards. Although the quality of APIP work is highly important, unrealistic standards can lead to frustration and emotional exhaustion.

This study has several limitations that future research should address. Firstly, the model's explanatory power shows that the influence of Workload and Job Demands on Employee Performance, mediated by Emotional Exhaustion, accounts for 54.3% of the variance, meaning that 45.7% is explained by factors not included in this study. Therefore, it's suggested that future research incorporates other variables that may influence the relationship between Workload, Job Demands, and Employee Performance, such as decreased motivation, cognitive impairment, or health problems that potentially contribute to performance. Secondly, the study population consisted of employees before the new recruitment process in the Regional Inspectorate throughout the Riau Islands Province, thus limiting the data scope. Finally, the data collection method relied solely on questionnaire distribution without supplementary interviews, which restricted the researcher's ability to thoroughly explore the underlying reasons or explanations behind the respondents' answers.

Several suggestion for future studies should expand the model by adding other variables, such as decreased motivation, cognitive impairment, or health problems. This is necessary to explain the remaining 45.7% of the variance in employee performance not covered by the current study. Also Wider Population/Sample to utilize a broader and more representative population and sample from all Regional Inspectorates in the Riau Islands Province, specifically after the new APIP recruitment, to ensure wider and more representative data coverage. More comprehensive by using mixed methods approach by including in-depth interview techniques alongside

questionnaires. This will allow researchers to delve deeper into the reasons behind respondent answers, especially for results that contradict established theory regarding Workload, Job Demands, and APIP Performance.

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